# Governmentality and the genealogy of politics[I]

Colin Gordon[I]

## Abstract

The article offers a series of reflections on the presentation of a phase of work by Michel Foucault and some of his co-researchers in the volume *The Foucault Effect: studies in governmentality* (1991), co-edited by the author. These reflections fall into three parts. First, there is a review of some important aspects of Foucault's 'governmentality' lectures that, due to different reasons, were left aside when the book was published. Second, there is the account of important themes that, although presented in the book, have not received so much consideration from the readers. And last, in the axis that occupies the greater part of the article, the author examines Foucault's later discussions of what Gordon calls "the multiple births of politics", in order to show the continuing pertinence of Michel Foucault's enterprise during the 1970s, made possible by this notion of governmentality, at once so strange and so operative. That this is an enterprise of continuing contemporary relevance is indicated not only by the spread of governmentality studies since the appearance of Michel Foucault's lectures at Collège de France, but specially by the dilemmas and "dead-ends" that our political culture has brought us to. In this sense, the article concludes with a sort of research agenda for continuing Foucault's unfinished investigation, one that invites us to deepen our understanding of the relationships between philosophical critique, governmental rationality and political culture, understood as a set of forms of conduct and sociability, modes of life, and styles of subject-formation and truth-telling.

## Palavras-chave

Governmentality  —  Michel Foucault  — Political culture  —  Demagogy.

# Governamentalidade e a genealogia da política[I, II]

Colin Gordon[III]

## Resumo

*O artigo oferece uma série de reflexões a respeito de uma fase dos trabalhos de Michel Foucault e de alguns de seus colaboradores apresentada no volume* The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality *(1991), coeditado pelo autor. Tais reflexões se organizam em três partes. Primeiro, há uma revisão de alguns aspectos das aulas de Foucault sobre* governamentalidade *que, por diferentes razões, foram deixados de lado quando o livro foi publicado. Em seguida, faz-se um balanço de temas importantes que, embora presentes no livro, não receberam suficiente atenção dos leitores. Finalmente, no eixo que ocupa a maior parte do artigo, examinam-se as últimas discussões de Foucault a respeito do que o autor denomina* múltiplos nascimentos da política, *a fim de demonstrar a continuidade da pertinência do empreendimento foucaultiano nos anos 1970, tornado possível devido à noção de governamentalidade, ao mesmo tempo tão estranha e operacional. Tal atualidade é indicada não somente pelo incremento dos estudos sobre governamentalidade após o aparecimento dos cursos que Foucault deu no Collège de France, mas principalmente pelos dilemas e aporias que a cultura política em que estamos mergulhados nos trouxe. Nesse sentido, o artigo se encerra com uma espécie de agenda de pesquisa para dar continuidade ao trabalho inacabado de Foucault, uma agenda que nos convida a aprofundar nossa compreensão das relações entre a filosofia crítica, a racionalidade política e a cultura política, compreendidas como um conjunto de formas de conduta e de sociabilidade, modos de vida e estilos de subjetivação e dizer verdadeiro.*

## Palavras-chave

*Governamentalidade – Michel Foucault – Cultura política –Demagogia.*

## Introduction

Something which it would have been proper to do today but I don't have the competence to attempt would have been to survey and pay proper tribute to the vast, rich and still growing body of studies in governmentality which have been undertaken since we published *The Foucault Effect: studies in governmentality*. Apologies for that and I'm going to offer instead something hopefully suitable to the occasion but more modest, namely some brief afterthoughts on the book, with a couple of decades worth of hindsight and of course in the light of subsequent history and publications, and with an eye to our current interests and problems. After that, but maybe with the help of that, I'd like make some more immodest proposals about what we might aim at in the future with a view to completing or at least continuing Foucault's unfinished project.

## Afterthoughts (1)

A first question then is, what did we, what did I miss or overlook, when we were putting the materials together for this book back in the eighties, that might have proved helpful in writing the history of later presents?

My short answer to that would be that the most significant omissions in my account of what Foucault was saying about governmentality are in lectures 2 and 3 of the 1979 lecture series *The Birth of Biopolitics*, which contain a particularly brilliant series of remarks and analyses which, as Paul Patton and others have noted recently, are highly pertinent to global concerns of recent decades.

One of these is a remark whose implication we have probably even now not finished thinking through - that liberalism is a form of government which both produces and consumes liberty, and little after this there is the equally pregnant remark that liberalism is an art of living dangerously.

Another very important comment in the preceding lecture is the comparison between two approaches to the limitation of governmental power: a French, Rousseauist, revolutionary and right-based approach focussed on a criterion of legitimacy, and a British, Benthamite, radical approach focussed on a criterion of utility and interest – and the comment that while both have survived down to our times, it is the latter which has tended to prevail.

A third very significant and perhaps still insufficiently noticed passage concerns the implications of liberalism for international European and global order.

Foucault here explains that the liberal transformation of governmentality also implies a transformation in the model of international order, and of the 'balance of Europe', prevalent in the period of mercantilism and the police state. Instead of an economic zero-sum competition between states where rivalry can only be stabilised by the game of alliances which prevents any one player from outright domination, the liberal regime of domestic and international market exchange allows a process in which all parties optimise their gains, the enrichment of each player tends to enrich the others, and there is no limit on the sum of potential growth. However, and crucially, this possibility of unlimited and – in principle - peaceful and parallel growth of the several national players in the European space can only be assured if Europe itself is assured of the external availability of an unlimited global market. The availability to European commerce of this market becomes a condition for progress, through the mutually and benignly supportive growth of national economies, towards universal perpetual peace, but also, for that reason, a teleological necessity for ensuring the regional international order of European states. Distinguishing this key development both from

the prior beginnings of European colonisations, and of the subsequent full deployment of colonial imperialism, Foucault illustrates this linkage through comments on the evolving law of the sea, on new schemes for perpetual peace such as those of Immanuel Kant (with its account of the natural foundations of cosmopolitan or commercial law), and on the different hybrids of police and liberal schemes of international order embodied by the Napoleonic Empire and, after its defeat, the Congress of Vienna of 1815.

It's worth noting a certain continuity between this analysis and the 1976 lectures. In the 1976 discussion, the third-estate model of the nation proposed by Sieyes abandons an imperial project of national growth through external conquest, and proposes instead a endogenous growth path for the self-realisation of the nation, in which civil struggle between components of the nation can be conducted within a public historical arena and at a level which remains below the threshold of violence. This enhanced capacity to make and organize internal and external peace is of course matched, as Foucault comments in the 1979 lectures, by an capacity to make national and imperial war on an unprecedented and worldwide scale. So we had here in 1979, if you like, some hints about an important stage where the history of governmentality touches the history of what we now call globalisation.

These were a few little things that got left out in our 1991 bulletin on these extraordinarily rich and endlessly intriguing lectures.

On the general matter of transnational, international and federal political entities and relations – ever more significant themes in the generation since these lectures - it's worth also taking note of Foucault's remarks in the 1976 lectures about the imperial as opposed to royal model of rule which formed a subsequently little-noticed part of French revolutionary ideology, and in the 83 course on the thinking about constitutional forms appropriate to an imperial federation of cities, discussed in Plato's letters of advice to the rulers of Syracuse.

## Afterthoughts (2)

Now if I may turn the afterthought around, so to speak, in another direction: was there anything that did we notice and highlight, and which may have subsequently received less attention than it might merit? In my humble and completely unbiassed opinion, yes, there were a few.

First I would like to think that part of the appeal of *The Foucault Effect* was that as well as introducing a set of new and powerful ideas, it showed those ideas being put to work not only by Foucault himself but by a group of people working in an informal network with and around him. One of the key results which we spent a while trying to demonstrate through the compilation and presentation of these materials was that the work done by these different people actually fitted together to provide the outlines of a chronologically connected and continuous treatment of the history of governmentality.

In Foucault's 1978-79 lectures, little was said about the period between circa 1815 and 1930; but, by taking into account the contribution of his co-workers, plus his own work elsewhere one could put together at least a credible outline of what in my introduction I called (in homage to Perry Anderson) the passages from civil society to the social market. And tracing this passage through the liberal period, rather than hopping straight from Bentham to Becker, seems to me quite important for the quality of genealogical depth and intelligibility, not to say political acuity, which a history of the present should be able to deliver. Perhaps this point is not quite as widely understood as it might be.

I'd also like to mention that these treatments in *The Foucault Effect* of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had a lot more to say than some people have realised about a topic that some people here have been very concerned with, namely the place which these kinds of analyses allow to the role of law. What you find here developed in quite a rich

and suggestive way is the idea that modern developments in governmentality involve very significant efforts in juridical invention and intervention: these include, in the later 19th century, the invention of a concept of social law and the juridical rethinking of risk, danger and responsibility, as part of the necessary technical underpinning of the creation of social insurance, and more recently from the mid-twentieth century, the developing institutional mechanisms to create and regulate the competitive space of the social market, so that as Foucault puts it an enterprise society and a juridical society are two sides of the same reality. If this very interesting work had been read with the attention it deserved, some of the debates about Foucault and law of the past 20 years might conceivably have taken a more productive direction.

The third, and in some ways related way in which the reception of *The Foucault Effect*, while gratifying in so many ways, has been strangely muted is its direct relation to contemporary political choices. Foucault gave these lectures just before and just after an electoral coalition of socialist and communist parties in France had met with an unexpected and decisive defeat in parliamentary elections at the hands a centre-right government of neoliberal persuasion. I reported his observation, after describing the decision of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) in 1959 to accept the principles of the social market, that up to the present time socialism has possessed no distinctive rationality of government; its options have lain between the toolkits of liberalism and the police state. He then added that if it was felt that if this was an unsatisfactory state of affairs, the only remedy would be the invention of such a rationality. This suggestion or challenge seems to me to have been received by his readers, in this country and elsewhere, with a pained and embarrassed silence.

This challenge is I think deeply connected to another challenge which comes to the fore in the 1979 lectures which has to do with the status of critique. I think everything Foucault says about critique in his public comments from 1976 on has something to do with the growing external pressure to situate the intention of his work in public political space. We know that Foucault says that liberal governmentality is a governmentality which internalises critique, as the critique of the pretensions of state reason and excessive and unnecessary government. We know that he says in "What is critique?" that from the Reformation on, critique is fundamentally linked to a will not to be governed or not to be governed in a certain way. Both these comments assign an original and positive sense to the notion of critique. However the 1979 lectures also contain, as I reported in 1991 some quite sweeping challenges to two major styles of contemporary critique. One such challenge is the German Ordoliberals' rebuttal of what Foucault calls the 'Sombartian' left critiques of the ills of modern mass and market societies (the evils, in Foucault's alliterative and mischievously allusive summary, of 'signs. speed and spectacles'). The other challenge is contained in Foucault's own strictures against what he terms an exaggerated and 'inflationist' style of critique, promoted by neoliberals but then enthusiastically adopted by sections of the Left, of the ineluctably expansive and despotic nature of the State.

If both of these anticritical questionings of generic denunciation, respectively of market and state, are taken seriously (and Foucault seems as sympathetic to the neoliberalism position on the former as he is unsympathetic on the latter), wide swathes of contemporary critical culture might require to be re-examined.

## The Multiple Births of Politics

This brings me to the main topic of this talk. A lot of the very rich and voluminous published discussion around Foucault seems to turn around ideas of some form of stand-off or disjunction between Foucault's notion of governmentality and some thing or things

(variously identified as sovereignty, the juridical, rights or political theory) which function as governmentality's other. Without lapsing into undifferentiated eclectic blandness, I would like to suggest we may need to move beyond some of these disjunctions and the brand-differentiated sectarian silos they might be at risk of imprisoning us in. (Chatterjee, 2004; Anderson, 1983, 1998; Ivison, 1997).

Specifically, I'd like here to very quickly draw on the vast new wealth of the posthumous Foucault publications for some pointers indicating that the history of governmentality which Foucault and others undertook enables, implies and demands an accompanying genealogy of politics, in the specific form of a genealogy of forms of political culture, conduct, sociability and subjectivity.

To start with, we can look at a number of suggestions in Foucault's lectures about instances of what one might call the multiple births of politics.

The earliest of these analyses, realist both in Foucault's career and historical setting, is the one which Daniel Defert has just presented in this discussion, the genesis of the political in Greece; when we have had time to digest it I suspect this may well modify our reading of the later analyses.

We find two, interestingly different suggestions in the 1978 and 1979 lectures, respectively. In 1978 Foucault suggests that politics originates in resistances to governmentality, taking the form of notions of counterconduct which become part of a revolutionary tradition comprising its own versions of pastorate. At the conclusion of the 1979 lectures, he suggests an origin of the political located in the competitions and clashes between components and modalities of governmentality.

If you go back a little to the 1976 lecture, you find a third idea: the origin of an emergence of politics through the creation of a space of contention between competing discourses about the nation, its history, and the component actors and forces within that history with their respective claims, accomplishments and capabilities.

In 1979 again, you have as we just saw a contrast between two styles of limitation of governmental power, each of which, as well as their interactions and rivalries, are implicitly shown to be generative and formative of a political space. You also have some fleeting but pointed remarks on revolution and political culture, such as the pastoral practices and sociability of revolutionary movements – a theme which reappears with further elaborations in the lectures of 1980 to 1984.

In the 1979 lectures – adding to this set of hints and clues, which are the dots I'm suggesting we try to join up – Foucault talks about two styles of political party organization, one which is a machine for acquiring the powers and benefits of office, the other whose purpose is the instauration of a new world, and which functions as its own alternative society.

In the 1982 lectures, we find a very striking remark on the relation of self to self as the ultimate basis for resistance to governmentality. In these lectures, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault talks about two epistemic styles which span Western culture, *savoir de connaissance and savoir de spiritualite*, the latter of which is characterised by a necessary, bidirectional link between access to truth and the modification of the knowing subject. Goethe's Faust is the final flowering of this idea of knowledge in European culture. Foucault says that among modern epistemic formations, both psychoanalysis and Marxism, are partly characterised by features of *savoir de spiritualite* as well as of *savoir de connaissance*. Then in 1984 he reintroduces Faust as the final modern figure of the philosophical hero, adding that this ideal of life is displaced and translated to the political domain: as he memorably puts it, 'exit Faust, enter the revolutionary'....

In the 1984 lectures, Foucault also says that he plans to talk about the 17th century mode of political parrhesia consisting in the advice given to the sovereign by the minister of state operating within the rational framework

of reason of state.[1] In the same course, Foucault cites the life of the revolutionary and the life of the modern artist as two avatars of the cynic who scandalously manifests the truth, an 'other life' which expressed the missionary call for an 'other world' and a vocation as unacknowledged legislator of mankind. Within this short discussion he makes an interesting comment (recently described by Michael Hardt in the *New Left Review* as 'controversial') on the alternative modes of life observable in modern revolutionary movements, one in which unconventional and libertine personal behaviour is accepted and valorised, and another which distinguishes itself from its decadent bourgeois adversary through its studied conformism and conventional rectitude.

In the lectures of the 1980's, weaving together his analyses of the respective modalities of true utterance, philosophical life, fearless speech and manifestation of truth – veridiction, care of the self, parrhesia, aletourgia - Foucault discusses the function of philosophical truth-telling as political advice in its respective arenas, the public space of the agora and the soul of the prince.

Truth telling in either of these spaces exists in contrast and competition with the discourses and modes of existence of demagogy, rhetoric and flattery. Foucault discounts the notion (usually attributed to Plato) of the role of the philosopher as nomothete, or author and promulgator of law. Outside of certain emergencies, the role of the philosopher in relation to prince and city is not to prescribe the content of good government (about which philosophy has no competence) but the philosophical mode of life proper to the sovereign; while the meaning of politics for philosophy is as the reality in and through which the truth of philosophy is put to the test.[2]

Further, in one of the most comprehensive summations Foucault ever formulated, Western

philosophy itself is defined as a set of alternative ways of thinking the forms of interdependence of questions of truth, ethos and power.

These asides, fragments or bullet points scattered across the lectures seem to me when brought together to form the basis for a conceptual framework in which a genealogy of the modern political subject (notwithstanding that the topic is as far as I know nowhere explicitly stated as such by Foucault) might have begun to be undertaken.

## Complements

Before trying to take this any further, I'd like also to mention a couple of sources closely complementary the 1978-79 lectures which became known or available after *The Foucault Effect* was published. I'll turn in a moment to one of these, the now very well-known 1978 lecture called "What is Critique?" which was published at the time but largely unknown until the 1990s.

But the text which I would suggest is actually the most important and seriously unnoticed complementary source to Foucault's 1978-79 lectures is the other one I've already mentioned a couple of times, the previous course of lectures given in 1976. I am thinking most especially of the lectures 8 to 10, which are neither about the thesis of the warlike nature of power or about social defence and biopolitics, but about a mutation in historical and political time-consciousness associated with emergence of a conception of the nation as a historical project and construct, of which the Third estate is the principal and most capable agent.

There are some very important threads of continuity and complementarity between the 1976 and 1978-79 lectures. One is the symmetry between the readings of Sieyes' *What is the Third Estate* and Fergusson's *History of Civil Society*, which respectively occupy such strategic places in the 1976 and 1979 courses. A second is some distinctions

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**1-** A recent book by David Colclough, which references Foucault, has looked at the practice of parrhesia during the same period in the English parliament.

**2-** Compare this with the comment in the 1979 lectures, on inflationist styles of critique which he reproaches for refusing to 'pay the price of reality'.

Educ. Pesqui., São Paulo, v. 39, n. 4, p. 1049-1063, out./dez. 2013.

1055

Foucault takes care to make in both 1976 and 1978-79 between totalitarian and non-totalitarian forms of government (respectively, in terms of antisemitism and the delegation of the power to kill, and the implementation of a party state). A third is the implicit but pointed references back, in both 1976 and again in 1979 to the themes of life, labour and language in The Order of Things.

I have been trying to suggest that the history of governmentality enables, implies and needs to be extended into a genealogy of the political, and that there is some evidence which might suggest that some form of the latter was what Foucault had in mind when he held out to his long-suffering audience in early 1984, the prospect an imminent ending of his long-running 'Greco-Roman trip'.

Reading that promise today reminds us of the simple fact that Foucault's work was unfinished, and, as a consequence, that alongside the ever-valid option to *instrumentalise* Foucault's work, in whatever area one chooses and with as much freedom, inventiveness and faithful infidelity as one is capable of, there is also the possibility, within the limits of our powers, of trying to *finish* what Foucault left unfinished, or at least of taking up some of what may have been his work's unfulfilled aims and ambitions.

I don't think we are going to be able to do this just by mining the vast and still sparsely explored riches of Foucault's lifetime output. We can sensibly start, as he would no doubt have done, by also taking on board some things which others have found. So in the rest of this talk I'm going to bring in some other scholars' work on the history of early modern thought and politics (in particular Donald Kelley and Peter Donaldson) and then to point out some brief but promising encounters with the governmentality theme in some other new and important currents of contemporary research (Ann Stoler, Duncan Ivison, Keith Baker, Benedict Anderson and Partha Chatterjee).

### Early modern

**Early modern politics:** Foucault, Pocock, Skinner, Kelley, Donaldson

I'm going to take a few paragraphs to try and illustrate how thinking outwards from the history of governmentality to the genealogy of politics can link some of Foucault's pointers to the findings of scholars whose questions cross paths with his, albeit in most cases either unknowingly or tacitly.

Foucault's 1976 lectures appeared in the same year as John Pocock's *The Macchiavellian Moment* and his 1978 lectures in the same year as Quentin Skinner's *Foundations of Modern Political Thought.* Some of the key themes touched on in the 1976 lectures are addressed around the same time in some remarkable, slightly less celebrated works by Donald R Kelley, notably his *The Beginnings of Ideology; Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation* (1982).

It's possible that Foucault's early Hegelian studies with Jean Hyppolite colour his fairly benign reading of the Sixteenth century as a birth-period of counter-conducts, indocility and critique: the Reformation, like Enlightenment and the Greek *politeia,* seems for Foucault as to serve as a refracting lens for the discernment of modern freedoms and unfreedoms. Kelley's book offers an anatomy of Huguenot politics, in its way highly consonant with themes in Foucault's work, but as a birthplace of the most virulent components of modern revolutionary sectarianism. Quentin Skinner pointed out that an influential strand of Calvinist anti-absolutist doctrine formulates not so much a right to revolt as a binding religious duty to overthrow rulers who impede or prevent the compulsory imposition of true religious doctrine: the desire 'not to be governed in a certain way', which is Foucault's formulation for the first early-modern form of critique, is thus often strongly coupled with a will to govern, and a will for oneself and others to be governed in another, particular and divinely mandated manner.

Rereading Kelley's book in the light of Foucault's lectures and later work, it is striking how his reconstruction of the emergence in the course of the French Reformation of the first forms, or prototypes, of modern political ideology and of the political and revolutionary party, is shown as being linked to the mutation and intensification in forms of the relation of self to self, centred around the linked themes of "Conscience, Conversion and Confession" (Kelley, 1981, p.57), which Kelley calls the "essential ingredients of Protestant psychology".

Foucault's 1980 course, "The Government of the Living", published in November, 2012, focuses its analysis on the evolution of early Christian patristic doctrine of the sacraments of baptism and penitence, in the course of which he distinguishes two key notions, *exomologesis*, or 'publicatio sui' ("publication of self") and *exagoreusis*, the obligatory and exhaustive formulation of one's mental impulses, and discerns a long-term shift of primacy in Christian penitential practice from the former towards the latter principle. Kelley (writing at almost the same time), sees a 16th-century reversal of this shift in Protestantism: "evangelical religion did not discard but rather reshaped and secularized the conventional cure of souls"(Kelley, 1981, p.85): "The emphasis was shifted from the old auricular confession to the more public *exomologesis*. 'Confession is demonstrating publicly that you consent in no way to idolatry', declared one Huguenot pamphleteer on the eve of the wars of Religion, 'and communicating to others the same doctrine that you embrace'"(Kelley, 1981, p.96). The social correlate of this, according to Kelley, is the 'congregation', the term used by Erasmus to designate the Church of primitive Christianity, connoting a community of souls united in belief as distinct from the structured and hierocratic ecclesia of canon law. Hence, "in place of the princely terminology of papal doctrine, the dominant image became that of shepherd and flock. Pastoral theology, the art of the care and feeding of sheep, assumed a new importance." ((Kelley, 1981, p.96).

Foucault's most famous lecture on governmentality of course postulates from the outset a foundational linkage between pedagogy and political doctrine and hence between the formation of self and ruler and the principles of personal, private and public governmental conduct. In his last two years' courses (entitled precisely '*The government of the self and others*') Foucault addressed, within the context of Antiquity, the problematic of the prerequisite moral qualities of ruler and citizen and of the appropriate relations of philosophy and politics. Foucault (for whatever reason) fairly consistently eschews the Machiavellian and Pocockian theme of civil republicanism, and in his subsequent 1978-79 lectures says little in direct terms about the subjective qualities and capabilities required for the rational exercise of functions of political government in the post-Renaissance world.[3]

On the other hand, in his outline of some early concepts of state reason – state secrecy, 'mystery of State', *coup d'etat* – Foucault evokes a specific and new tragic sense linked to a new historical consciousness of the secular perpetuity of state power and (once again taking up a remark in is 1976 lectures) identifies the *coup d'etat* as the essential subject matter of Shakespearian history plays and classical French tragic drama. There are a couple of clear indications in the final lectures that Foucault intended to revisit this subject, and possibly to connect his outline of a history of forms of true utterance and truth-telling to the sixteenth-century politique conception of the role of the minister of state – linking, that is, his histories of veridiction, parrhesia and governmentality – somewhat as he had previously proposed, at the outset of his 1980 course, to explore the links between governmentality *and aletourgia* (the forms of manifestation of truth).

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**3 -** The neo-stoic interest, in the 16th Century, in a new culture of self – of self-knowledge, self-control, self-education – becomes, as already demonstrated by Gerhard Oestreich (1983), important constitutive element of pedagogies and political techniques of the beginnings of Modern State.

Some hints of the material Foucault might have planned to consider here can be found in Peter S Donaldson's *Macchiavelli and Mystery of State* (1988), particularly in his chapter on the seventeenth century writer Gabriel Naudé's treatise on *coups d'etats* and its final section, 'Strong spirits' (Donaldson, 1992, p. 176 e ff.), which indeed fits precisely with what in Foucault's terms might be called the description of a form of 'political spirituality'.

The sixteenth century, as Kelley remarks (1981, p.193 and 203), sees the maturing of the concept of a 'science of politics', but also the emergence of a new and controversial type of public personage, '*homo politicus*'.[4] Kelley cites the blunt saying of Luther – *homo politicus, bose Christus* – political man is a bad Christian.

In the 1978 lecture of 15 March, Foucault presents a point by point comparison between Christian pastoral and reason of state as rationalities of government: one of these points concerns salvation and sacrifice. Whereas the Christian pastor is distinctively enjoined to save the individual lost sheep even at the price of neglecting the flock, and to sacrifice his own good, and if necessary, even his salvation to preserve that of his flock, Naudé and other authors state that necessity and public salvation can demand "a raison d'Etat for which the pastoral will be one of selection and exclusion, of the sacrifice of some for the whole of some for the state." (Foucault, 2008, p.352). Conversely, however, for Naudé's German contemporary Arnold Clapmar, "[...] the public good may require not only that the ruler transgresses ordinary law, but also that he die for the people, or, even worse, take on sins for them or risk damnation for them, in a curious imitation of Christ's sacrifice and his assumption of the burden of human sin." (Donaldson, 1992, p.131)

Donaldson finds a rather different form of spirituality at work in Gabriel Naudé's conception of the secret political art of the coup d'etat as a form of natural magic or secular wonder-working. "That the soul of man participates in and partakes, to one degree or other, in the nature of what it knows is a central features not only of Aristotelian epistemology, but of nearly all ancient and pre-modern Christian theories of knowledge, one that finds exaggerated but not radically exaggerated expression in magical gnosis: The work transforms the man, and the man must be engaged in the process of spiritual transformation in order to accomplish the work." (p.177) This conception of the spiritual preconditions and effects of knowledge is, of course, the same one which Foucault describes and explores in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, in his account of philosophical practices of the care of self, and which he sees as beginning to approach its end in an early modern thought mutation of which Descartes' philosophy is a part – a mutation which overlaps, but does not coincide, with the other mutation discussed in the 1978 lectures, and with which Descartes is also associated, the disconnection of reason of state from the order of the world. "The *esprit fort* is the psychological correlate of knowledge of the [political] arcana. One needs a strong spirit in order to be able to use them, and knowledge of them, in turn, helps to demystify and strengthen the spirit." Naudé's discussion of "what opinions it is necessary to hold in order to perform master strokes of state" is similarly "concerned with amplifying the psychological portrait of the politician, while preparing his spirit" (p.179). The three key opinions are: the mutability of human institutions, including religions; "that it is not necessary to move the world in order to achieve great changes in states" (p.182); and the credulity of the populace.

Donaldson makes the concluding comment that Naudé takes from Macchiavelli, "the idea that there is a necessary psychological strength that must accompany effective

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**4-** Whereas the demonisation of *politiques* appears first as invective, before it is assumed (by a specific group) as a positive identity and agenda, the role of *homo politicus* is claimed and affirmed from the outset by the exponents of the established science of jurisprudence, the jurisconsult: "Jurisconsultus hoc est Homo Politicus". Kelley, 1981, p. 203.

political action. Machiavelli is sometimes read as if he were the originator of a technology of politics, or a positive science, in which effective procedures for achieving political ends are explored without reference to the kind of person one would need to be to use them [...] When one begins to see that Machiavelli sometimes writes of self-transformation, of the preparation of the spirit for difficult choices, one soon realises that he always writes this way, and in fact never discusses technique in isolation from moral and psychological questions." (p.184)

Something one might want add to this is that perhaps the traditional division of labour between commentators on Macchiavelli's two most famous works the *Prince* and the *Discorsi*, (Foucault and Skinner focussing more on the former text - and tending to agree - , and Pocock more on the latter) has tended to occlude something which none of them appears to highlight, although it is very close to Foucault's key thinking – namely, the essential identity of the notions of virtue (the virtues of the lion and the fox) which these works respectively propose to the ruler and the republican citizen alike. The *Discorsi*, as well as providing security guidelines for successful republican conspiracy, stress the need for ruthlessness in behalf of the republican civil cause; when a ruler is violently deposed, his relatives should not be left alive to attempt a restoration; when a warrior Pope audaciously paid an unarmed visit to his rebel subjects, the rebels were timidly foolish in missing the chance to capture and kill or imprison him.

A doctrine of conspiratorial government or revolution from above or for that matter below, operating through violence, secrecy and dissimulation may not look like a wholly recognisable or receivable genealogical starting-point for the problematics of political ethics and conduct as we like to consider them today. Taken in combination however with other early-modern strands such as Lipsius's version of neo-Stoicism for rulers and ruled, the formation of new standards of experimental and administrative veracity[5], and the 'spirit of state' which Hintze, in adapted Weberian language discerned in the government of Calvinist Prussia, it may (as I think Donaldson intends to suggest) be possible to see in these sources some beginnings of what in the early twentieth century Max Weber was to understand by 'politics as a vocation' and its associated 'ethic of responsibility'.

There are many points along these pathways where commentators have noted crossovers and transitions between the political arts of conduct of the ruler and the ruled. There is evidence that the calculating prudence for rulers as expounded by reason of state was explicitly taken up in early modern societies as a model of effective personal action for individuals engaged in public or private careers: Jacob Soll remarks that Balthazar Gracian's best-selling manual, The *Courtier*, was characterised by his publisher Amelot and by Diderot as a "reason of state of the self". (In the inverse direction, Philippe Bezes, a recent French writer on the 20th Century science of administrative reform, toys with the neo-Foucaldian idea that this discipline could be characterised as the '*Souci de soi* of the state'.)

In another early-modern semantic transposal from public to private, the notion of interest seems to have been transplanted from the sphere of states to that of individual actors, and the incalculable private interests, impenetrable to state economic sovereignty, which drive individual choices in *The Fable of the Bees* and empirical philosophy, might appear to have been conceptualised in mixed emulation of and riposte to the qualities of enigmatic secretiveness and dissimulation attributed to the state by its first *raison d'etat* theorists. This philosophy in turn promoted new models of virtue in public action. Nicholas Phillipson has described how, a century after Gracian and a half century after Shaftesbury, Adam Smith's practice of academic paideia

**5 -** See Steven Shapin. *A social history of truth:* civility and science in seventeenth-century England.Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

as a professor at Glasgow was designed to train the middle-sort of North British citizen in personal and social arts of sympathy and empathy necessary for civic and commercial activity – for performance, in other terms, in that emerging public sphere, which Foucault refers to as 'political life'.

## Recent encounters

I move on now to rapidly look at how a genealogy of the political might be advanced or illuminated by some encounters between Foucault's work and some of the other scholars who over the past two decades have explicitly responded to it.

Keith Baker's essay *A Foucaldian French Revolution?* is something of a rarity: in the first place as a sympathetic reflection by a major contemporary English-language historian on Foucault's contribution to the history of thought, and secondly because it takes the form of an imaginative creation or pastiche of something Foucault never wrote nor perhaps ever planned to write, an intellectual analysis of the French Revolution. Baker drew explicitly here on the recently republished Foucault governmentality lecture, although a minor regret is that he did not quite grasp its treatment of the theme of population. The analysis of revolution is in two parts: a description of the components of a revolutionary technology of power, and an enumeration of the historical conditions of possibility for its deployment. The former includes some of suitably barbarous neo-Foucaldian neologisms: 'dedifferentiation' ('a simultaneous individualisation of human subjects and universalization of their relations'); 'transparison', the demand the social and political life be made entirely transparent, each person having to be open to all; politicisation, the production of political subjectivity, or the subjectivization of politics; moralisation; denunciation; and a discourse of epistemological/ontological 'rupture' which placed the Revolution within the realm of the true and made politics

the domain of truth. The revolution is the fusion between two incompatible forms of power, sovereignty and surveillance.

The Foucaldian conditions of possibility for Revolution, according to Baker, are as follows: 1) the invention of society and production of the social body; 2) a crisis of conflict between three successive but coexisting models of state – juridical, police-administrative, and governmental, generating a fusion in the form of a 'political discourse of will' which 'reclaimed sovereignty in the name of the collectivity of the nation as a whole'; 3) the theory of the tribunal of public opinion, with its linked features: the obligation of denunciation, the vilification of despots and the juridical dramatisation by advocates in the theatre of the courts of the status as victims of virtuous citizens suffering under arbitrary power and oppression.

Baker's concluding reflections, turning towards the history of the present, are firstly that the revolution 'completely recharged and revivified the ancient notion of sovereignty by identifying it with popular will', and – here commenting on what he sees as one of Foucault's key questions -  that "[,,,] the Revolution served to fix the relation between sovereignty and surveillance still obtaining in modern society: a kind of dialectical relationship in which neither form of power serves as superstructural justification for the other, but each draws a supercharge from the insititutionalised opposition between them" (Baker, 1994, p.205).

This is pretty interesting stuff, and it is rather a pity that Baker's very thoughtful *jeu d'esprit* hasn't stimulated more discussion. Baker may or may not have been aware that Foucault shared his respect for the work which is of course an important reference in Baker's paper - Francois Furet's 1978 book *Rethinking the French Revolution* with its ground-breaking discussions of political subjectivity and political sociability, discussions which Foucault shortly afterwards cited in a discussion about the Iranian uprising.

What a pity (in the opinion of this Foucault anorak) that Baker's didn't have access when he wrote this paper to 'Society Must be defended', and perhaps what a pity that he hasn't revisited his essay in the light of Foucault's treatments in those lectures of Sieyes, the third estate and the revolution. What a pity, I would also say, that the discussion of nation in those lectures hasn't fed into the recent, interesting point in post-colonial studies where a dialogue between two major figures, Benedict Anderson and Partha Chatterjee involved a brief but significant take-up by both authors of the theme of governmentality. The converse regret is in order concerning another important writer in this field with whom I feel a bond of sympathy – Anne Stoler, who travelled to the Foucault archive in Paris to painfully decipher the tapes of these 1976 lectures, and summarised and belaboured them in her *Race and the Education of Desire* – but didn't at that time pick up then on the follow-through of that analysis in the work on governmentality.

There is a certain charm in that both Anderson and (at least in his opening comments) Chatterjee pick up and use the governmentality, in a pleasingly casual way and without considering that its meaning and provenance need laborious preliminary commentary.

Anderson's libertine usage of the term is actually quite intriguing and unusual in that he associates governmentality in particular with three things: demography, human classifications and electoral institutions.

Anderson, whose thesis was at first sharply criticised by Chatterjee, who is at the same time a generous admirer of Anderson's work, has his own quite distinctive – and justly influential – take, in *Imagined Communities* and later writings, on a range of global and local, European-colonial, west-east dialectics of autonomy and heteronomy around nationality and nationalism as primary demiurgic forces in modernity. He links this in his later paper in *The Spectre of Comparisons* to the (also uncredited, but straightforwardly derived) Sartrean duality of 'bound' and 'unbound' 'serialities'. So Foucault is slotted into place as someone who invented another name for Sartrean unbound seriality.

The other conceptual gadget/neologism which Anderson plays with is the 'modularity', alias replicability, of nationalities, and the identification of a toolkit of technologies, knowledges and conditions of possibility for the creation of a national identity and its consciousness. Anderson illustrates different versions and examples of 19th and 20th centuries nation-building both from above, by the dynastic empires, and from below, by insurgent mobilisers of subjugated populations, within Europe and within European and American colonies. This story can, I think, probably integrate quite neatly and productively to an approach in terms of the archaeology of the human sciences, power/knowledge and governmentality (somewhat as Partha Chatterjee started to show, a good while ago, in his *Texts of Power*).

Chatterjee's *The Politics of the Governed* begins by making what I guess is now a common observation: that a large element of colonial rule is governmentality in its pure state, and this is inherited to a considerable extent in the postcolonial and transnational regimens of development and governance – including in the specific sense that the governed are not political subjects in the normal sense of that term. What Chatterjee shows in some compelling case studies is how, in 'large parts of the world' there is now an activist collective politics of the governed which operates in a kind of direct agonistic encounter with governmental agents (sometimes including elected political officials) in ways which have nothing much to do with traditional democratic political culture or jurisdiction. Chatterjee's subaltern analysis of governmentality appears both illuminating and thought provoking – one thought it provokes being whether this type of politics of the governed is destined to spread to the European province and other territories of the north.

Like Keith Baker's essay, Duncan Ivison's *The Self at Liberty* is a lively ecumenical thought-experiment, one which looks at the possibility of synthesising Foucault's notion of governmentality as conduct of conduct with Cambridge-school civic/juridical republicanism (i..e Pocock, Skinner and Pettit) and Rawlsian political theory of justice. This is one of those responses where governmentality is taken to be in some problematic sense orthogonal or antithetical to the idea of the rule of law, and Ivison's experiment, which he sees as a challenge to, or an overcoming of this antithesis, is to present the politics of John Locke as a rationality of early modern juridical government, with fully developed capabilities for the conduct of conduct under the rule of law in combination with a robust model of republican citizenship. This field of overlaps between Foucault and the Cambridge school is quite an intriguing space of alternative problematisations and genealogies, as Jim Tully has been the first to show.

Graham Burchell and I wrote some papers in the 1980s and 1990s seeking to explore resonances and interplays between the narratives of governmentality and the Macchiavellian civic tradition. Quentin Skinner's *Liberty Before Liberalism*, published in the same year as Ivison's book, makes a polite bow to Foucault while invoking its own sources of historical memory to resuscitate the demand for a strong, forgotten model of political liberty which Liberalism has betrayed. The problem I see with genealogies undertaken in the manner of Skinner's and Ivison's books is that it is liable to work, somewhat in the manner of Boulainvilliers, as an antiquarian, polemical fundamentalism which because of its historical foreshortening does not connect its libertarian missionary message to a strong analysis of the present.

## For future genealogies of politics

Foucault in his lifetime gave us, I think, the elements of such an analysis, albeit an incomplete one. Some of that analysis needs to be understood through the terms of his interventions as well as of his thought, and I believe his thought was increasingly informed and sharpened by the demands and experiences of public action.

We know that he gave some advice to the prince – or to ministers and future ministers – through personal encounters, as well to governmental princes and fellow-citizens alike through the public channels of interpellation and dialogue. His personal Boswell or Diogenes Laertius, Claude Mauriac, records in his diaries how Foucault twice refused lunch invitation from presidents because of decisions about the death penalty: his public comments surgically dissected in each case the calculations of demagogic opportunism which decided between a life and a death.

He intervened in various styles, to alert, to encourage, to object, to warn, and to prompt reflection. His career was spanned by battles to retain independence of public utterance, independence in the earlier days, as Daniel Defert has described, from organised revolutionary leftism, and in the last years from a governing party which included some of his friends. It's clear from interviews that he kept tactical silence at times when the chances of frontal intervention were unfavourable.

The problem of the political party was the issue he explicitly planned to broach in 1984: it seems a fair guess that the philosophical question he was minded to pose was, in part at least, going to be about how the activities and practices of party politics, with their techniques, political and illocutionary subject positions, and blended heritages of the militant, missionary, pastoral and prophetic modalities of utterance, existence and action - how all of this functions in terms of the various modes of relation to truth which he had so careful itemised and differentiated in the previous few years.

It feels as though we have moved in the adult lifetime of my generation from a political culture of ideology to a political culture of

demagogy, and that this is a development which Foucault with his usual exceptional acuity had detected and begun to reflect on this in his final lectures. From Plato and Plutarch to Erasmus, philosophers used – as he describes - to offer advice to rulers and other clients on how to tell a flatterer from a friend. Our problem today is how to tell a truth-teller from a demagogue.

At least in the United Kingdom, the theme of critique, reform or renewal of political culture has itself been subject to demagogic exploitation, although the rewards this yields can often be deservedly ephemeral. Our problems of political culture are deeply enmeshed with our problems of critical culture, and this connection needs further work. For me that could be one take home message of the Foucault effect in 2011. This is what I think Foucault saw as next on his agenda in 1984, and within the limits of our capabilities I think there are good reasons why it should be high on our agenda today.

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