did not mean that these were futile objectives. But government is not jus a power needing to be tamed or an authority needing to be legitimized. I is an activity and an art which concerns all and which touches each. An it is an art which presupposes thought. The sense and object o governmental acts do not fall from the sky or emerge ready formed fron social practice. They are things which have had to be – and which hav been – invented. Foucault observed that there is a parcel of thought ir even the crassest and most obtuse parts of social reality, which is why criticism can be a real power for change, depriving some practices of their self-evidence, extending the bounds of the thinkable to permit the invention of others. The 'Foucault effect' may, or such is our hope, contribute to a renewal of these powers of critique.

CHAPTER ONE

Governmental rationality: an introduction

Colin Gordon

Between 1970 and 1984, Michel Foucault delivered thirteen annual courses of lectures at the Collège de France in Paris. Foucault's duties at the college, as professor in a specially created Chair in the History of Systems of Thought, were not to teach a syllabus but to report on the results of his own researches. Several of these lecture series, Foucault's own official summaries of which have been republished as a volume by the Collège de France,[1] are preliminary explorations of themes taken up in various of Foucault's later books. But others contain rich seams of material which he never chose or had time to work up in a final written form. Perhaps the two most remarkable annual courses of which this is true were those of 1978 and 1979, entitled respectively 'Security, territory and population', and 'The birth of biopolitics'. One of the 1978 lectures was published (although not in French) in Foucault's lifetime, and is reprinted in this volume (Chapter 4). A provision in Foucault's will has been interpreted by his literary executors as precluding posthumous publication of the complete lecture series; but the exceptional interest of the 1978 and 1979 courses has been recognized by the recent publication on cassette tape of the initial lectures of the two series, and a complete tape edition of the two series is currently under consideration. Complete recordings of these lectures are available to researchers in the Foucault archive at the Bibliothèque du Saulchoir in Paris.

In these lectures Foucault defined and explored a fresh domain of research into what he called 'governmental rationality', or, in his own neologism, 'governmentality'. This work was not carried out single-handedly. A group of fellow researchers, several of whom are among the contributors to this volume, took part in seminars held at the Collège de France which paralleled and complemented the programme of the lectures. In the subsequent lecture courses in Paris, Foucault shifted his attention away from these governmental themes in the direction of the topics of his final volumes of the *History of Sexuality*. But he continued to teach and organize research seminars on questions of government on his frequent visits to the United States, particularly at Berkeley. A number of lectures, essays and interviews published in the USA during these later years provide valuable documentation of this area of Foucault's work.

In the present essay I shall attempt a brief outline of the meaning of the theme of 'governmentality' in Foucault's work and the studies which he and others carried out under this heading, constructing a composite picture of the kinds of political and philosophical analysis which this style of working produces in the hands of a number of different and independent researchers. In some ways this is a problematic and even a foolhardy undertaking. A condensed, syncretic account may risk glossing over important differences of perspective between different individual contributions. One is describing a zone of research, not a fully formed product (although happily, it is now possible to refer to major subsequent publications by many of this volume's authors).[2] The inaccessibility and the informal oral structure of the lecture materials makes summarization at once an indispensable and an uncomfortable task. I can only hope that the richness of the material itself will encourage the reader to tolerate these presentational obstacles and their attendant irritations.

As well as summarizing, I shall attempt to connect and to contextualize. We are only gradually becoming aware of, and are still far from having fully documented access to, the astounding range of Foucault's intellectual enterprises, especially in the later years from 1976 to 1984. The governmental theme has a focal place in Foucault's later philosophy; an effort needs to be made to locate this as accurately as possible. To understand the theme's wider resonance, something needs to be said about the interactions between a research agenda and a contemporary political world. To help to situate its distinctive value – and on grounds of good sense – it will be advisable to resist doctrinaire overstatement of this work's unique and unprecedented character, and instead to try to establish lines of communication with twentieth-century enquiries into allied areas of political philosophy and the history of political ideas. Such points of fruitful connection are, as Graham Burchell illustrates (Chapter 6), encouragingly numerous. Finally, and taking due account of widespread extant discussion of Foucault's later published work, something ought to be said about the ethical and political considerations (if any) implicit in this way of working and thinking.

What did Foucault have in mind by the topic 'governmental rationality'? Foucault understood the term 'government' in both a wide and a narrow sense. He proposed a definition of the term 'government' in general as meaning 'the conduct of conduct': that is to say, a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons. 'The government of one's self and of others' was Foucault's title for his last two years' lectures, and for a projected, unpublished book. Government as an activity could concern the relation between self and self, private interpersonal relations involving some form of control or guidance, relations within social institutions and communities and,

finally, relations concerned with the exercise of political sovereignty. Foucault was crucially interested in the interconnections between these different forms and meanings of government; but in his lectures specifically on governmental rationality he concerned himself principally with government in the political domain.

Foucault used the term 'rationality of government' almost interchangeably with 'art of government'. He was interested in government as an activity or practice, and in arts of government as ways of knowing what that activity consisted in, and how it might be carried on. A rationality of government will thus mean a way or system of thinking about the nature of the practice of government (who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed), capable of making some form of that activity thinkable and practicable both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practised. Here, as elsewhere in his work, Foucault was interested in the philosophical questions posed by the historical, contingent and humanly invented existence of varied and multiple forms of such a rationality.

In these two years' lectures, Foucault applied this perspective of analysis to three or four different historical domains: the theme, in Greek philosophy and more generally in antiquity and early Christianity, of the nature of government, and the idea of government as a form of 'pastoral power'; doctrines of government in early modern Europe associated with the idea of reason of state and the police state; the eighteenth-century beginning of liberalism, considered as a conception of the art of government; and, lastly, post-war forms of neo-liberal thought in Germany, the USA and France, considered as ways of rethinking the rationality of government. These different and discontinuous forays were linked together for Foucault by a common focus of interest, encapsulated in the formula of one of his lecture titles: 'Omnes et singulatim' (all and each).[3] Foucault saw it as a characteristic (and troubling) property of the development of the practice of government in Western societies to tend towards a form of political sovereignty which would be a government of all and of each, and whose concerns would be at once to 'totalize' and to 'individualize'.

We can better locate this preoccupation of Foucault's by reconstructing some of the moves which took him there. In his preceding book *Discipline and Punish*, he had famously proposed and expounded a kind of political analysis called the 'microphysics of power', exemplified by the study of the application of disciplinary techniques as part of the invention of the modern penitentiary prison. A whole aspect of modern societies, Foucault was suggesting here, could be understood only by reconstructing certain 'techniques of power', or of 'power/knowledge', designed to observe, monitor, shape and control the behaviour of individuals situated

within a range of social and economic institutions such as the school, the factory and the prison. These ideas encountered considerable interest and extensive criticism. Foucault's responses to some of these criticisms can be read as giving some of the key directions to his subsequent work.

One objection frequently raised by the Marxist left was that this new attentiveness to the specifics of power relations and the detailed texture of the particular techniques and practices failed to address or shed light on the global issues of politics, namely the relations between society and the state. Another was that Foucault's representation of society as a network of omnipresent relations of subjugating power seemed to preclude the possibility of meaningful individual freedom. A third complaint was that Foucault's markedly bleak account of the effects of humanitarian penal reformism corresponded to an overall political philosophy of nihilism and despair.

Foucault introduced his lectures on governmentality as being, among other things, an answer to the first of these objections. The same style of analysis, he argued, that had been used to study techniques and practices addressed to individual human subjects within particular, local institutions could also be addressed to techniques and practices for governing populations of subjects at the level of a political sovereignty over an entire society. There was no methodological or material discontinuity between three respective, microphysical and macrophysical approaches to the study of power. At the same time, moving from the former to the latter meant something different from returning to the theory of the state in the form demanded and practised by Foucault's Marxist critics. Foucault acknowledged the continuing truth of the reproach that he refrained from the theory of the state, 'in the sense that one abstains from an indigestible meal'. State theory attempts to deduce the modern activities of government from essential properties and propensities of the state, in particular its supposed propensity to grow and to swallow up or colonize everything outside itself. Foucault holds that the state has no such inherent propensities; more generally, the state has no essence. The nature of the institution of the state is, Foucault thinks, a function of changes in practices of government, rather than the converse. Political theory attends too much to institutions, and too little to practices. Foucault takes the same methodological course here as in *Discipline and Punish*, where changes in the rationale and meaning of the practice of punishing are prioritized over transformations in the structure of penal institutions.

Foucault had already begun to develop his view of the links between the microphysics and the macrophysics of power in the final chapter of *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1 (1976). Here he had introduced the term 'biopower', to designate forms of power exercised over persons specifically in so far as they are thought of as living beings: a politics concerned with subjects as members of a *population*, in which issues of individual sexual and reproductive conduct interconnect with issues of national policy and power. Foucault reintroduced this theme of biopower or biopolitics in his 1978 lectures, in a way linking it intimately with his approach to the theme of government. One of the key connections here was the perception that modern biopolitics generates a new kind of counter-politics. As governmental practices have addressed themselves in an increasingly immediate way to 'life', in the form of the individual detail of individual sexual conducts, individuals have begun to formulate the needs and imperatives of that same life as the basis for political counter-demands. Biopolitics thus provides a prime instance of what Foucault calls here the 'strategic reversibility' of power relations, or the ways in which the terms of governmental practice can be turned around into focuses of resistance: or, as he put it in his 1978 lectures, the way the history of government as the 'conduct of conduct' is interwoven with the history of dissenting 'counter-conducts'.

In these matters Foucault had some important clarifications to offer, notably in his American essays and interviews, on his views about power, freedom and hope. Foucault seems to have found fault afterwards at least with his rhetoric in *Discipline and Punish*, where this may have seemed to give an impression of certain uses of power as having an almost absolute capability to tame and subject individuals. In his 1982 essay 'The subject and power', Foucault affirms, on the contrary, that power is only power (rather than mere physical force or violence) when addressed to individuals who are free to act in one way or another. Power is defined as 'actions on others' actions': that is, it presupposes rather than annuls their capacity as agents; it acts upon, and through, an open set of practical and ethical possibilities.[4] Hence, although power is an omnipresent dimension in human relations, power in a society is never a fixed and closed regime, but rather an endless and open strategic game:

> At the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom. Rather than speaking of an essential freedom, it would be better to speak of an 'agonism' – of a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle; less of a face-to-face confrontation which paralyzes both sides than a permanent provocation.[5]

Perhaps, then, what Foucault finds most fascinating and disturbing in the history of Western governmental practice and its rationalities is the idea of a kind of power which takes freedom itself and the 'soul of the citizen', the life and life-conduct of the ethically free subject, as in some sense the correlative object of its own suasive capacity. This was one of the crucial points where Foucault found himself among the inheritors of Max

Weber.[6] In the fresh way it re-poses the conjunction of the history of politics and the history of ethics, Foucault's later work rejoins a great theme of modern political sociology.

A little more needs to be said about the political and critical value orientation of this work of Foucault's, beginning with a note on its place and time of gestation. Foucault's 1978 course overlapped with an unexpected defeat in French parliamentary elections of an alliance of Socialist and Communist parties. His 1979 course ended a few weeks before Margaret Thatcher's election as British Prime Minister. This work was being done at a time of the fading in France of the multitudinous blossomings of post-1968 social militancy, at a time when the intellectual prestige of Marxism was about to undergo a rapid collapse (partly stimulated by the influence of Eastern European dissidents, with whose welcome and reception in France Foucault was actively involved), and when the spreading influence of neo-liberal political thought, from the Germany of Helmut Schmidt to the France of Giscard and Barre and the Britain of Callaghan and Healey, had begun to present a challenge to the post-war orthodoxies of governmental thought.

One of the conspicuous attributes of Foucault's governmentality lectures is their serene and (in a Weberian sense) exemplary abstention from value judgements. In a pithy preamble he rejects the use of an academic discourse as a vehicle of practical injunction ('love this; hate that; do this; refuse that . . .'), and dismisses the notion that practical political choices can be determined within the space of a theoretical text as trivializing the act of moral decision to the level of a merely aesthetic preference. The terms of Foucault's accounts of governmental rationalities are devoid of the implicit pejorative sarcasm which Foucault's Nietzschean affiliations have so often led readers to hear in his writing. Foucault's accounts of the liberal and neo-liberal thinkers indeed often evince a sense of (albeit value-neutral) intellectual attraction and esteem. The perspective may be libertarian, but it is not anarchist. His reproach, if there is one, is addressed to critical culture itself. Foucault does not eschew practical maxims where the obligations of thought are concerned. In a nutshell, he suggests that recent neo-liberalism, understood (as he proposes) as a novel set of notions about the art of government, is a considerably more original and challenging phenomenon than the left's critical culture has had the courage to acknowledge, and that its political challenge is one which the left is singularly ill equipped to respond to, the more so since, as Foucault contends, socialism itself does not possess and has never possessed its own distinctive art of governing. The conclusion from this exercise in critical attentiveness to the present lies in the affirmation of the possibility and necessity, for those who wish to pursue certain ends and values, of fresh acts of inventiveness.

Some of these views are well attested in Foucault's later years. In an interview in 1981 where he candidly welcomes the election of a Socialist government, Foucault expressed the hope of seeing a new 'logique de gauche' in the conduct of the regime, replacing the tutelary arrogance of its predecessor towards the governed with a practice of free dialogue between government and governed, 'debout et en face' (upright and face to face). He himself showed willingness to engage in discussion about problems and contradictions in social policy, notably in a long dialogue with a CFDT trade union representative on health funding issues and the need to devise new welfare policy mechanisms capable of providing the means of individual autonomy as well as the means of security. In the course of this discussion Foucault makes an emphatic plea for a renewal of inventiveness in political culture. Foucault also retained a continuing practical concern with the problems of the prisons which had so much occupied him in the 1970s. It is a matter of record that Foucault gave private advice to one governmental figure, the Minister of Justice Robert Badinter, his longstanding ally in the 1970s campaign against the death penalty.[7] Foucault is said also to have been on friendly terms with Michel Rocard, whose subsequent written references to 'le gouvernment des hommes' seem reminiscent of some of our present material. On the whole, however, Foucault seems to have been disappointed by the Socialists and their preferred role for intellectuals as a supporting ideological chorus line rather than as interlocutors in a discussion about how to govern. Paul Veyne recently wrote that, at the time of his death in 1984, Foucault was 'preparing a book against the Socialists'.

I will return below to the practical philosophy contained in Foucault's later work. We must now look more closely at the 'governmentality' lectures. We have seen how Foucault distinguished his topic from that of certain forms of state theory. How does it relate to the more classic domain of political philosophy? Perhaps a classic distinction can be used to draw a doubtless oversimplified contrast. A major part, at least, of classical political philosophy, in its central concern with the legitimate foundations of political sovereignty and political obedience, is about 'the best government'. Governmentality is about how to govern. Foucault continues here his predilection for 'how' questions, for the immanent conditions and constraints of practices. The choice does not carry any immediate polemical implication. Foucault does not say that legitimation theory is empty (though in a lecture he does call the social contract a bluff and civil society a fairy story); but only that a theory of the legitimate basis of sovereignty cannot be relied upon as a means of describing the ways in which power is actually exercised under such a sovereignty.

Even here, though, the concern with 'how' is not a concern with the domain of the purely expedient or factual. Firstly, Foucault's topic is

quite as much about critique, problematizations, invention and imagination, about the changing shape of the thinkable, as it is about the 'actually existing'. Secondly, the perceived internal constraints of the activity of governing are no less capable of carrying normative meaning and content than the principles of legitimation. Thirdly, as we have already seen, the content and object of governing as biopolitics, as the conduct of living and the living, is itself already ethical. Fourthly, Foucault goes on to develop (in the first lecture of his 1980 course), the idea that government in Western cultures carries with it a concern with truth which exceeds the merely utilitarian relationship postulated in his earlier schema of power-knowledge. Extending the idea that sovereignty is seldom grounded on pure violence alone, Foucault advances the thesis of a regular, though variously actualized interdependence between the 'government of men' and what he calls the 'manifestation of truth'. One Western version of the art of government, accordingly, is 'government in the name of the truth'.

EARLY MODERN

Beginning his lectures in 1978 on the topic of 'pastoral power' in ancient culture, Foucault was returning in a new way to a classic theme in his own work. In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault retraces the difficult origins of a style of medical knowledge structured around the interpretation of the individual case. Earlier medicine, he showed, had obeyed an Aristotelian interdict on a science of the individual: science concerned itself with genus and species; the individual difference was infra-scientific. Plato's dialogue, *The Statesman*, concerning the nature of the art of government, discusses the possibility that the ruler's art is like the shepherd's who cares for each individual sheep in his flock. In Plato, this idea is dismissed as impracticable: a ruler's knowledge and attentiveness could never extend so far as to minister to each individual: 'only a god could act thus'. Greek politics chooses the game of citizen and laws, rather than the pastoral game. The pastoral model is adopted and vastly elaborated by Christianity, as the care of souls. In Western Christianity, however, the roles of sacerdotal pastor and secular ruler never come to be unified. The focus of Foucault's interest in modern governmental rationalities consists, precisely, in the realization of what he calls the 'daemonic' coupling of 'city-game' and 'shepherd-game': the invention of a form of secular political pastorate which couples 'individualization' and 'totalization'.

Foucault singles out the emergence of doctrines of reason of state in sixteenth-century Europe as the starting point of modern governmentality, as an *autonomous* rationality. The principles of government are no longer part of and subordinate to the divine, cosmo-theological order of the world. The principles of state are immanent, precisely, in the state itself. To know how to govern, one must know the state and the secret springs of its *interests*, a knowledge which in part may not and cannot be accessible to the ruled, and is liable to dictate governmental acts of a singular, unforeseeable and drastic character. These are the key interlocking terms of the French *politique* theorists of the early seventeenth century: *raison d'état; intérêt d'état; mystère d'état; coup d'état*. As Etienne Thuau has written:

> The notion of state ceases to be derived from the divine order of the universe. The point of departure for political speculation is no longer the Creation in its entirety, but the sovereign state. Reason of state seems to have perverted the old order of values . . . Born of the calculation and ruse of men, a knowing machine, a work of reason, the state encompasses a whole heretical substrate . . . Set above human and religious considerations, the state is thus subject to a particular necessity . . . Obeying its own laws, *raison d'état* appears as a scandalous and all-powerful reality, whose nature escapes the intelligence and constitutes a mystery.[8]

The state has its reasons which are known neither to sentiment nor to religion.

A contemporary synonym of *raison d'état* (condemned by a Pope as 'the devil's reason') was 'civil prudence': part of its genealogy has been seen to lie in the transformation of the Christian doctrine of prudence, considered as the virtue displayed by a ruler capable of just action in circumstances which are singular and specific: the governor as helmsman – another of Plato's metaphors – preserving ship and passengers from the hazards of reef and storm. The meaning of prudence evolves from a context where it can be identified with a knowledge of apt precedent (the singular is never the wholly unprecedented) to a context, as in Machiavellian Italy, where the uncertain and the unexpected come to be perceived as the norm of Fortune's empire. The Machiavellian political art invented in response to this observation has, as Foucault remarks, its own inherent limit: a doctrine whose focus is merely to 'hold out', to retain one's sovereignty, however acquired, can scarcely provide assurance of holding out indefinitely. The importance of shifting the seat of political reason from prince to state is that the latter is capable of being credited with a form of secular perpetuity (itself a notion with complex Christian antecedents, explored by Kantorowicz:) 'States are realities which must needs hold out for an indefinite length of time.'[9] 'The art of governing is rational', Foucault writes, 'if reflexion causes it to observe the nature of what is governed – here, the *state*': reason of state is 'government in accordance with the state's strength'.[10]

Foucault suggests that the style of political thinking which enables continental European *raison d'état* to outgrow its Machiavellian limitations and to become a knowledge of 'the state's strength' can be found most fully embodied and articulated in the corpus of theory, pedagogy and codification developed in German territories after the Thirty Years War, under the rubric of *Polizeiwissenschaft*, or 'science of police' (although the English word 'policy' is arguably a better equivalent to this meaning of *Polizei*). Perhaps one could say, very formulaically, that reason of state's problem of calculating detailed actions appropriate to an infinity of unforeseeable and contingent circumstances is met by the creation of an exhaustively detailed knowledge of the governed reality of the state itself, extending (at least in aspiration) to touch the existences of its individual members. The police state is also termed the 'state of prosperity'. The idea of prosperity or happiness is the principle which identifies the state with its subjects. Police theory shares the mercantilist economic policy of striving to maximize the quantity of bullion in the sovereign's treasury. But it emphasizes that the real basis of the state's wealth and power lies in its population, in the strength and productivity of all and each. This, Foucault writes, is 'the central paradox of police': the aim of the modern art of government, viz., to develop those elements of individual lives in such a way that their development also fosters the strength of the state.' [11] The police state, we might say in other terms, strives towards the prudential by cultivating the pastoral.

Some citations and paraphrases from *Polizeiwissenschaft* writers by Foucault and Pasquino are eloquent on this topic. 'Life is the object of police: the indispensable, the useful, and the superfluous. That people survive, live, and even do better than just that, is what the police has to ensure.' Police 'sees to living': 'the objects which it embraces are in some sense indefinite'. 'The police's true object is man.' Police 'sees to everything pertaining to man's happiness'. 'The sole purpose of police is to lead to the utmost happiness in this life.' [12] Police is a science of endless lists and classifications; there is a police of religion, of customs, of health, of foods, of highways, of public order, of sciences, commerce, manufactures, servants, poverty . . . Police science seems to aspire to constitute a kind of omnivorous espousal of governed reality, the sensorium of a Leviathan. It is also (again in aspiration) a knowledge of inexhaustibly detailed and continuous control. Foucault (borrowing the title of an anti-Gaullist polemic by François Mitterrand) describes government in the police state as a 'permanent coup d'état'. Police government does not limit its action on the governed to the general form of laws: it works by the means of specific, detailed regulation and decree. The exponents of reason of state described its executive actions as those of a 'special justice'; Foucault notes as a defining characteristic of the police state the

marginalization of the distinction between government by law and government by decree.

What kind of a rationality of government is this? Perhaps one may usefully refer here to Max Weber's vocabulary of reflection on the varieties of rationality and rationalization in world history and modern history. Somewhat as Weber remarks of Chinese Confucianism, police is a 'rationalism of order', which conceptually amalgamates the ordered course of the world and the ordering activity of administration.[13] But police resituates both these notions within a secular, non-traditional ethos, under a reign of artifice. Meinecke, in his *Macchiavellism*, evokes the view of the state of Turkey in the writings of the Italian reason of state theorist Trajano Boccalini (1556–1613):

> Turkey brought to life and exemplified what the political thought of the Renaissance had always been striving after: an artificial construction which had been consciously and purposely built up, a State mechanism which was arranged like a clock, and which made use of the various species and strengths and qualities of men as its springs and wheels.[14]

In a somewhat similar sense, the assurance of order in the police state is the assurance of an order which it itself has created. If the problem of Macchiavelli's prince is the securing of a new and non-legitimate sovereignty, the equivalent characteristic problem of police, in the German states newly demarcated by the Treaty of Westphalia, is, as Pasquino shows, to create a polity, as it were *ex nihilo*, out of a war-devastated no man's land. What the social market economy was for the Germany of 1945, the police state was for the Germany of 1648.

Police science, or 'Cameralism', is also, in conjunction with the allied knowledge of mercantilism and political arthimetic, the first modern system of *economic sovereignty*, of government understood as an economy. The economy emerges here, as Pasquino has put it, as a *specific*, but not yet (as for liberalism) an *autonomous* form of rationality. The economy of a functioning whole is a machine which has to be continuously made, and not merely operated, by government. This governmental theme of economy retains here from the ancient context of the *oikos* all its implications of possession, domestication and controlling action. In German, *Wirtschaft* (economy) has as its cognates the terms *Wirt* (householder/smallholder) and *Wirtschaften* (economic activity, the conduct of the *Wirtschaft*). Max Weber signalled an equivalent feature of a concept which has a key relevance for the antecedents of Cameralism, the *Stadtwirtschaft* (city economy): this was a term which, as Weber critically observed, signifies indiscriminately both a mode of *economic organization* and an *organism regulating the economy*. If it is possible for Cameralists to speak of the state as being identical with the 'whole body of society', this

is so largely by virtue of the state's corresponding oeconomic properties: the identity of state and society here is, in some senses, equivalent to the unity of the *Wirt* and the *Wirtschaft* – or possibly, in a later vocabularly, to that of the entrepreneur and the enterprise (Otto Hintze argues that the 'spirit of state' in early modern Prussia is one and the same thing as Weber's Protestant spirit of capitalism).

Police government, finally, is in Foucault's terms a form of pastoral power, a government which defines itself as being 'of all and of each': a universal assignation of subjects to an economically useful life. Police government is also an oeconomy, through its way of equating the happiness of its individual subjects with the state's strength. Police is therefore a kind of *economic pastorate* (cf. Foucault's gloss in his lecture reprinted in Chapter 4, on the idea of a government 'of men and of things'), or a secular hierocracy, albeit somewhat different in its regime from the Catholic pastorate which had placed its obstacles in the path of the early capitalists. The state does not sacrifice itself for the individual: the individual (as Richelieu declares) must sometimes be sacrificed for the state. The ruler is a shepherd (German *Hirt*), but also a husbandman (German *Wirt*). The population of the governed is likened to a herd as well as to a flock: welfare is conjoined to exploitation, as the police thinkers are coolly capable of recognizing. Mercantilism, Weber remarks, means 'running the state like a set of enterprises'.[15]

Alongside the moral ambivalences of the police state, however, it is necessary to recognize also the emergence of changing forms of ethical culture. Beside the startlingly ambitious promises current in this period on behalf of the new science of state, the second remarkable feature of early modern political culture is the sense of a profound connectedness between the principles of political action and those of personal conduct. As Foucault observes, it is possible that never before or since has the activity of government been perceived as so essentially interdependent with the government of self, on the part of ruler and ruled alike. The problem of government, it has been said, was posed in terms of a 'language of persons'. Foucault was aware of his precursors in this domain of study, especially in German political sociology since Weber. There is also, as Pasquale Pasquino has rightly noted, a striking complementarity here between Foucault's work and the concurrent research of Gerhard Oestreich on the role of neo-stoicism in the early modern state.[16]

Why was 'conduct' such an important theme at this time? The answer has to do with the same broad antecedents as those of reason of state: the erosion of a feudal order in which personal identity was anchored in a hereditary status and an associated network of loyalties and dependences; the impact of the Reformation, in terms of the religious problematization of the individual, and the demand for a renovated and invigorated

structure of pastoral guidance; and the pervasive dislocation of public and private life by religious wars. In France, *raison d'état* had its origin in the choice made, notably by the *politiques*, for a 'detheologization' (Oestreich) of politics, in preference to a religious path of mutual annihilation. The development of a secularized manner of reflection on personal ethics is a close corollary of this shift. The trend should not be mistaken for a move towards irreligion. It provided, as well, an instrument of active mobilization on each side of the confessional battle lines: Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran – a kind of competition in moral armaments.

The rediscovery and renewal of Stoic ethics studied by Oestreich owes its influence in early modern political thought to an elective affinity with these conditions. The Roman Stoics were read with especial attention because of a perceived similarity between the public disturbances of ancient Rome and those of modern Europe. Philosophy was studied here in a search for resources for the recovery of moral and ethical orientation out of outward chaos and inner confusion, as a weapon and a medicine. This neo-Stoic culture regarded its philosophy above all as a pragmatic, practical form of knowledge, a methodology of order. The Stoic style postulates a world-order, the 'police of this world', yet is at the same time hospitable to, and consonant with, artifice and technique: hence its affinity, certain appearances notwithstanding, to the thought of *raison d'état*. One of its main moral and technical virtues was the promise, developed notably in the extremely influential writings of Justus Lipsius, of a common prudential ethic of 'constancy' (*constantia*) for ruler and ruled: both were required to cultivate in their separate stations the same basic virtues of life-conduct. Neo-stoicism provided perhaps the first distinct secular ethic of command and obedience: to obey meant not a mere abnegation or servitude of the will, but an active form of life-conduct: Oestreich cites here testimonies to the spirit of almost religious zeal among the executant personnel of French *raison d'état*.

By relating these developments to the 'regulation-mania' of the police state, Oestreich helps to convey better the moral tenor of the latter's global regulatory endeavours, particularly relative to newly urbanized populations:

> Greater social complexity brought a greater deployment of authority. People had to be 'coached', as it were, for the tasks created by the more populous society and the claims which it made on its citizens . . . a start was made on educating people to a discipline of work and frugality and on changing the spiritual, moral and psychological make-up of political, military and economic man.[17]

At the same time, Oestreich usefully remarks, of the disciplines of Court life, that 'All social intercourse was governed by strict order: this,

however severe, was not seen as slavery, but as a moral stiffening which prevented one from falling.' Or, as Hobbes writes at the beginning of his *De Cive*, 'Man is not fitted for society by nature, but by discipline.' [18]

REAL LIBERALISM

Economic Government

As we have seen, Foucault sees the early modern conjunction of *raison d'état* and science of police as momentously original in both an epistemological and an ethical sense. It constitutes the activity of government as an art with its own distinctive and irreducible form of rationality; and it gives to the exercise of sovereignty the practical form of a political pastorate, a government of all and each for the purposes of secular security and prosperity.

Some of the attributes of the contemporary welfare state can, or so this seems to suggest, be seen as originating with the *Polizeistaat*. But only some. Foucault's lectures on modern governmental rationality attach equally close attention to the other great intervening mutation in the history of his topic, namely the advent of liberalism.

In some respects (as Graham Burchell shows in Chapter 6), Foucault's approach to this subject converges with some recent moves in the study of early liberal thought by English-speaking historians: the rejection of a narrowly anachronistic reading of the origins of political economy solely within the co-ordinates of a historical autobiography of present-day economic science; an emphasis on the unity of economic, social and governmental reflection in the work of Adam Smith and his contemporaries; and a scepticism about the Marxist interpretation of eighteenth-century liberals as conveniently prescient apologists of nineteenth-century industrial capital. What is distinctive, albeit not unique, about Foucault's perspective here is his concern to understand liberalism not simply as a doctrine, or set of doctrines, of political and economic theory, but as a style of thinking quintessentially concerned with the art of governing.

Foucault sees Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* as effecting not only a transformation in political and economic thinking but also a transformation in the relationship between knowledge and government. For Cameralist thinkers, police science and state action are isomorphous and inseparable; the notion of 'science' carries here an immediately pragmatic connotation, akin, as Foucault puts it, to the calculating know-how of diplomacy. For political economy, on the other hand, scientific objectivity depends on the maintenance of relative distance and autonomy

from the standpoint and preoccupations of state, while the content of economic science affirms the necessary finitude and frailty of the state considered as a knowing subject. Liberalism can thus be accurately characterized in Kantian terms as a *critique of state reason*, a doctrine of limitation and wise restraint, designed to mature and educate state reason by displaying to it the intrinsic bounds of its power to know. Liberalism undertakes to determine how government is possible, what it can do, and what ambitions it must needs renounce to be able to accomplish what lies within its powers.

Foucault distinguishes two stages in this politico-epistemological revolution. In France, the Physiocratic sect of *économistes* inverts the once scandalous heresy propagated by the earlier sect of *politiques*, the initial proponents of *raison d'état*. The artificial, invented reason of Leviathan is rebutted by the proclaimed discovery that the affairs of human society constitute a quasi-nature. Society and its economy can and must only be governed in accordance with, and in respect for, the laws of that nature, the autonomous capability of civil society to generate its own order and its own prosperity. In Physiocratic doctrine, this version of a *laissez-faire* policy is associated with a specific technical proposal, Quesnay's economic 'Table', a device intended to permit a sovereign to monitor the totality of economic processes within the state. Here the ruler is in a position to permit economic subjects freedom of action just because, through the Table, the sovereign can still know what is happening in the economy, and how. There is here, in Foucault's terms, a relation of adequation between the sovereign's knowledge and his subjects' liberty, a kind of transparent superposition of the political and the economic.

Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' represents, for Foucault, an oblique but radical criticism of the technique of the Table: it means that the Physiocratic model of economic sovereignty is an impossibility; the knowledge intended to be compiled in the Table is, even in principle, impossible for a sovereign reliably to obtain.

Of the choices and calculations of the individual economic agent, Smith writes that 'he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention':[19] an end which serves the public good. Smith also makes it clear that the workings of the invisible hand are possible only *because* it is invisible; little good would follow if an individual were so perverse as to attempt to trade for the public good.[20] Foucault notes that this thesis of the benign opacity of economic processes holds good not only for the individual citizen but also for government; it is not as though the workings of the 'invisible hand', while remaining inaccessible to the common citizen, could yet become transparently intelligible when seen within a totalizing scientific perspective, comparable to God's knowledge

of the operations of Providence. To endeavour to constrain individual economic actions towards the public good is an undertaking no more feasible for the sovereign than for the subject: it is 'a duty, in the attempting to perform which he must always be exposed to innumerable delusions, and for the proper performance of which no human wisdom or knowledge could ever be sufficient'.[21] The finitude of the state's power to act is an immediate consequence of the limitation of its power to know. Kant, soon after Smith, was to declare the unknowability for man of the cosmos as totality: political economy announces the unknowability for the sovereign of the totality of the economic process and, as a consequence, the *impossibility of an economic sovereignty*. Political economy is a form of scientific knowledge of which government must needs, in its own interest, take cognizance: what political economy cannot do for government is to generate a detailed, deductive programme for state action. Political economy assumes the role of a knowledge which is, as Foucault puts it, 'lateral to', or 'in *tête-à-tête* with' the art of governing: it cannot, however, in itself constitute that art.[22]

Thus the immediate unity of knowledge and government which typifies *raison d'état* and police science now falls apart. The regularities of economic or commercial society display a rationality which is fundamentally different in kind from that of calculative state regulation. The new objectivity of political economy does not consist solely in its occupation of a politically detached scientific standpoint: more profoundly, it inaugurates a new mode of objectification of governed reality, whose effect is to resituate governmental reason within a newly complicated, open and unstable politico-epistemic configuration. The whole subsequent governmental history of our societies can be read in terms of the successive topological displacements and complications of this liberal problem-space.

This complex event cannot, however, properly be understood if it is thought of as a moment of total discontinuity in governmental thought: this would also, one might add, be quite foreign to Foucault's usual methodological practice.[23] As many commentators have emphasized, *The Wealth of Nations* is not an ivory-tower edifice of theory, any more than it is a propaganda tract on behalf of the rising bourgeois class. *The Wealth of Nations* is, among other things, a collection of arguments for a series of quite specific policy recommendations addressed to the state. Smith, for all his scorn of the insidious and crafty race of politicians, does not disdain to enter into pragmatic calculations of particular questions of state security, such as those of military policy. Smith's Edinburgh lectures introduce the topic of political economy as falling within a branch of the art of legislation, namely *police*: 'The objects of police are the cheapness of commodities, public security, and cleanliness, if the two last were not too

minute for a lecture of this kind. Under this head we will consider the opulence of a state.'[24] In contrast to the Cameralists (some at least of whose writings Smith appears to have been acquainted with), but in common with many of the Cameralists' own jurisprudential colleagues and rivals, Smith swiftly dispatches the extra-economic concerns of police science: 'the proper method of carrying dirt from the streets' and 'the method of keeping a city guard' are 'though useful . . . too mean to be considered in a general discourse of this kind'.[25] This is not, as we shall see, the whole story so far as liberalism is concerned. But in any case, and even though Smith represents modern levels of 'public opulence' as having been attained largely despite, rather than because of, the endeavours of rulers, this does not mean that he does not still place this opulence, or 'cheapness', 'plenty' and 'prosperity', in precisely the same spirit as did the Cameralists, at the heart of the objectives of state policy. Only the method espoused is different.

A further complexity emerges when one examines that method itself, or its most celebrated slogan-formula, *laissez-faire*. *Laissez-faire* is a way of acting, as well as a way of not acting. It implies, in Foucault's words, an injunction 'not to impede the course of things, but to ensure the play of natural and necessary modes of regulation, to make regulations which permit natural regulation to operate': 'manipuler, susciter, faciliter, laissez-faire'.[26] The permissive meaning of *laissez-faire* needs to be understood in an activist, enabling sense no less than in its character of passive abstentionism. Albert Hirschman has drawn a contrast between the liberalisms of Adam Smith and James Steuart which perhaps bears on this point. Steuart likens the 'modern economy' to a watch mechanism, in two respects. 'On the one hand, the watch is so delicate that it is immediately destroyed if . . . touched by any but the gentlest hand'; this means that the penalty for old-fashioned arbitrary *coups d'autorité* is so stiff that they will simply have to cease. On the other hand, these same watches 'are continually going wrong; sometimes the spring is found too weak, at other times too strong for the machine . . . and the workman's hand becomes necessary to set it right'.[27] Steuart thus argues 'both the impossibility of arbitrary and careless handling and the need for frequent corrective moves by the solicitous and expert "statesman" '.[28] In Adam Smith's thinking, on the other hand, the accent appears to fall on the need not so much to augment governmental expertise as to set a limit on its ineptitude: Smith seeks 'less a state with minimal functions than one whose capacity for folly would have some ceiling'.[29]

Steuart appears to present liberal government as entailing an order of skill more exacting than that of government by police; Smith's somewhat lower expectation of the talents of rulers backhandedly emerges in his commendation of the ease and convenience of *laissez-faire*. Can liberalism

be both more and less difficult than its alternative? Perhaps: one may opt to read the difference between Steuart and Smith as largely one of tactic and temper, and their underlying objective as effectively the same; but one also senses here one of the elements of an enduring puzzle of liberalism, the conundrum of how to establish a viable boundary between the objects of necessary state action and those of necessary state inaction, or between what Smith's disciple Jeremy Bentham designates as the *agenda* and the *non-agenda* of government.

Liberal theory problematizes the methods of government no less than it does the nature of the reality which government has to address. It is by their examination of these methods, together with their attendant problems, that Foucault and his co-researchers help to show how liberalism has functioned historically not so much as a web of inveterate contradiction (reverie of a minimal state, as background music to a real state that ceaselessly grows), but as a prodigiously fertile problematic, a continuing vector of political invention. Here lies the force of Foucault's stress on the theoretical originality of liberalism: 'Liberalism is not a dream which clashes with reality and fails to insert itself there. It constitutes – and this is the reason both for its polymorphic character and for its recurrences – an instrument for the criticism of reality.'[30] The theoretical closure of the world, the conception of reality as the scene of a potentially total effectuation of political doctrine, is the very essence of what liberalism, in contradistinction both to the science of police and to scientific socialism, denounces and abjures. This is not, of course, to say that liberal ideas have no real effects. If there nowhere exists a truly liberal society, this is not because liberalism is a utopian doctrine. We now accept that there is (or has been) not only socialist thought, but also an 'actually existing socialism' which can be something rather different. What some of our authors are undertaking could be described as collating and analyzing the phenomena of what might be termed 'real liberalism' – undeterred by their complex, diagonal and often disconcerting relationship with what conventional wisdom recognizes as 'true' liberal precepts.

Foucault – in common with other recent authors – takes issue with the neo-Marxist thesis of a kind of pre-established liberal harmony between Lockean political jurisprudence (civil society, the social contract and the sanctity of individual property rights) and the political economists' conception of a commercial society, as a kind of casuistic synthesis whereby eighteenth-century liberalism prepares the philosophical legitimation for the capitalist appropriation of surplus value. The formation and development of liberalism as a governmental method can only be properly grasped when one recognizes that its constituent elements are far less mutually cohesive than ideology-critics have been apt to suppose.

Foucault sees the neo-Marxist interpretation as a misconception of the place of law in liberal thinking. Liberalism, Foucault argues, 'was not born out of the idea of a political society founded on a contractual relationship': if it proposes to recast and constrain regulatory acts of state into a predominantly legislative format, this is:

> not at all because of liberalism's affinity for the juridical as such, but because law provides general forms of intervention which preclude particular, individual exceptional measures, and because the participation of the governed in the elaboration of such law through a parliament constitutes the most effective system for a governed economy.[31]

It is a concern with the adequate technical form of governmental action (the form of expertise of Steuart's watchmender), rather than with the legitimation of political sovereignty (and, by extension, of economic exploitation), which determines the specific importance of the rule of law for economic liberalism.

Foucault suggests that this mode of technical reflection and elaboration needs to be envisaged in terms of a further category, distinct alike from the purely legal and the purely economic: that of security. And it is here that a certain dialectical interleaving of the universe of police with that of political economy becomes crucial to Foucault's account.

The preoccupation with security, with a 'holding out' of the state over an indefinite span of time, is both a founding and a universally mediating principle of the Cameralist 'state of prosperity'. Prosperity is the necessary condition of the state's own security, and prosperity in itself is nothing if not the capacity to preserve and hold on to, and where possible even to enhance, a certain global level of existence. Bentham's legislative science is as categorical on this matter as is the science of police:

> Among the objects of the law, security is the only one which embraces the future; subsistence, abundance, equality, may be regarded for a moment only; but security implies extension in point of time with respect to all the benefits to which it is applied. Security is therefore the principal object.[32]

Bentham says as well that 'if we are to have clear notions, we must mean by liberty a branch of security'.[33] Foucault adds that, for liberal government, the converse is also true: liberty is a condition of security. The active meaning of *laissez-faire*, the devising of forms of regulation which permit and facilitate natural regulation, comprises what Foucault terms:

> the setting in place of mechanisms of security . . . mechanisms or modes of state intervention whose function is to assure the security of those natural phenomena, economic processes and the intrinsic processes of population: this is what becomes the basic objective of governmental rationality. Hence liberty is registered not only as the right of individuals legitimately to oppose

the power, the abuses and usurptions of the sovereign, but also now as an indispensable element of governmental rationality itself.[34]

Liberty is the circumambient medium of governmental action: disrespect of liberty is not simply an illegitimate violation of rights, but an ignorance of how to govern.

The contrast between this new figure of liberty–security and the security of police is not an absolute one. Police disciplines, compartmentalizes, fixes: but this gridwork of order watched over by the agents of a geometer-king is also a network of movements and flows. Urbanization and police are, Foucault notes, almost synonymous ideas in eighteenth-century France. One formulation of the objective of police was that of organizing the whole royal territory like one great city. Public spaces, bridges, roads and rivers are prominent among the objects of police attention: this physical infrastructure of connection and mobility is seen by the police-theorist Jean Domat as the means whereby the policed city can function as a place of assembly and *communication*, a term whose meaning embraces all the processes of human intercourse, exchange, circulation and cohabitation within a governed population.[35] Liberalism discards the police conception of order as a visible grid of communication; it affirms instead the necessarily opaque, dense autonomous character of the processes of population. It remains, at the same time, preoccupied with the vulnerability of these same processes, with the need to enframe them in 'mechanisms of security'.

Foucault's discussion of security is one of his most important subsequent extensions to the framework of analysis he uses in *Discipline and Punish*.[36] He treats security here not just as a broad, self-evident requisite of political power, but as a specific principle of political method and practice, distinct alike from those of law, sovereignty and discipline, and capable of various modes of combination with these other principles and practices within diverse governmental configurations.

Foucault characterizes the method of security through three general traits. It deals in series of possible and probable events; it evaluates through calculations of comparative cost; it prescribes not by absolute binary demarcation between the permitted and the forbidden, but by the specification of an optimal mean within a tolerable bandwidth of variation. Whereas sovereignty has as its object the extended space of a territory, and discipline focuses on the body of the individual (albeit treated as a member of a determinate collectivity), security addresses itself distinctively to 'the ensemble of a population'. Foucault suggests that, from the eighteenth century onwards, security tends increasingly to become the dominant component of modern governmental rationality: we live today not so much in a *Rechtsstaat* or in a disciplinary society as in a society of security.

Foucault locates a major source of what is specific and original in the liberal treatment of population – and hence of security – in a discovery of British empirical philosophy, that of economic man as a *subject of interest*, a subject of individual preferences and choices which are both irreducible (personal sentiment cannot finally be explained from any other, more fundamental causal principle) and non-transferable (no external agency can supplant or constrain the individual determination of preferences). As Hume puts it: 'It is not contrary to reason for me to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger.'[37] This conception of interest founds, in Foucault's view, the arguments of Hume and Bentham which demolish both the Lockean social contract theory and Blackstone's attempt to reconcile the social contract with the principle of interest. The postulate in social contract theory of an inaugural act of delegation and renunciation whereby the individual is constituted as a political and juridical subject is one which interest can never countenance as definitive: nothing can, in principle, exclude the possibility that interest will dictate the repudiation of such a contract. The subject of interest perpetually outflanks the scope of the act of self-imposed limitation which constitutes the subject of law.

This postulate of a radical discord between the economic and the juridical register is not, of course, a wholly novel notion in the discussion of liberalism. Halevy identified the problem in Bentham's philosophy of an apparent contradiction between the 'natural harmonisation of interests' which it attributes to the economy, and the 'artificial harmonisation of interests' which is the objective of Benthamite legislation.[38] Halevy points to a discrepancy of logic: Foucault identifies something more like a dissonance of rationalities, one which affects not only the principles of subjective individuation and the foundations of sovereignty, but also the processes of collective totalization and the determinability of governmental action.

Political economy and Smith's conception of an 'invisible hand' characterize the private determination of individual interests and their effective harmonization within society as proceeding in a modality entirely different from the universality and transcendence ascribed to the principles of law and juridical sovereignty, working instead, Foucault suggests, through a 'dialectic of spontaneous multiplication' which unfolds in a condition of radical immanence, of inextricable circumstance and accident, incapable in principle of becoming accessible to the totalizing scrutiny of subject or sovereign. This conception of a domain of political sovereignty populated by economic subjects of interest is, accordingly, very far from providing a complement or a completion of Lockean political jurisprudence: it amounts, rather, to a disqualification of economic sovereignty.

Liberalism's real moment of beginning is, for Foucault, the moment of formulation of 'this incompatibility between the non-totalizable multiplicity which characterizes subjects of interest, and the totalizing unity of the juridical sovereign'. This means that liberalism's main task must be that of devising a new definition of the governmental domain which can avert the hazardous alternatives (equally prejudicial to the integrity of governmental reason) of either excising the market from the field of sovereignty, or downgrading the economic sovereign into a mere functionary of political economy. To identify the economic subject with the subject of law is, according to Foucault, a rigorous impossibility not only for early liberalism but for all its posterity: there has never been and cannot be such a thing as a juridico-economic science. What liberalism undertakes is something different: the construction of a complex domain of governmentality, within which economic and juridical subjectivity can alike be situated as relative moments, partial aspects of a more englobing element. The key role which it comes to play in this effort of construction and invention is, for Foucault, the characteristic trait of the liberal theory of *civil society*.[39]

For Locke, as for his predecessors, 'civil society' is in effect a straightforward synonym of political or juridical society. In the later eighteenth century this term takes on a quite new dimension of meaning, one which Foucault sees as most fully and suggestively expounded in Adam Ferguson's *History of Civil Society*, a work close in spirit and complementary in argument to *The Wealth of Nations*. Here, the quality of radical immanence which Smith's thinking attributes to private economic interest as the motor of public prosperity is extended to cover the general constitution of society. For Ferguson, society makes itself. There is no historical act which founds it: groups of men possess and exercise a capacity to organize themselves and divide their labour (which includes political labour, specialized tasks of command being allocated to those best endowed for them), no less naturally and spontaneously than in their exercise of their sense organs and the power of speech. Society makes its own history out of its 'self-rending unity' (*unité déchirante*): that is to say, the intrinsic tension between the centrifugal forces of economic egoisms and a centripetal force of non-economic interest, that feeling of sympathy or 'disinterested interest' whereby individuals naturally espouse the well-being of their proximate family, clan or nations (and take comfort in the adversities of others). The existence of society is an inherently historic process, in which society is continually tearing itself apart and thereby at the same time endlessly remaking its own fabric. The activity of government, as an organic component of the evolving social bond, participates in this historic passage through a range of distinct, consecutive social forms.

The early liberals' conception of civil society needs, Foucault suggests, to be understood first of all as an instrument or correlate of a technology of government. What it makes possible is, so to speak, a social government which is an economy of the transeconomic, a methodology which straddles the formal bounds of the market:

> *Homo economicus* is, so to speak, the abstract, ideal, purely economic point which populates the real density, fullness and complexity of civil society; or alternatively, civil society is the concrete ensemble within which these abstract points, economic men, need to be positioned in order to be made adequately manageable.[40]

Civil society is therefore not to be taken, primarily or fundamentally, as an aboriginal nature which repels and contests the will of government: it is (like police, or sexuality) a 'réalité de transaction', a vector of agonistic contention over the governmental relation, of 'the common interplay of relations of power and everything which never ceases to escape their grasp'.[41] This perspective on liberalism illuminates its history. The nineteenth century is haunted by the quest for a *social government*, a government which can elicit for itself, amid the contending forces of modernity, a vocation and functionality anchored in the troubled element of the social.

How do these notions about civil society shape the development of liberalism as political practice, as the elaboration of 'mechanisms of security' for an economic government? A strikingly pertinent treatment of this question can be found, nearly two decades prior to the lectures summarized here, in Foucault's *Histoire de la Folie*, which includes an analysis of late eighteenth-century mutations in policies for social assistance and public medicine. One can recognize here the different traits of what Foucault later identifies as the methodology of security.

The principles of security, Foucault suggests, address themselves to a series of possible and probable events. This frame of reference is evident in Turgot's criticisms of the immobilization of public capital in charitable foundations. The needs of society are subject to innumerable circumstantial and conjunctural modifications: 'the definitive character of the foundations contradicts the variable and floating quality of the accidental needs they are supposed to answer'.[42]

The French economists strive to re-inscribe the institutions of assistance within the element of civil society (in Ferguson's understanding of the term). Public assistance is the manifestation of a feeling of compassion intrinsic to human nature and hence coeval with, if not anterior to, society and government. This purely human dimension retains its primacy even in political societies: the *social duty* of assistance is understood by the economists as *a duty of man in society*, rather than as *a duty of society*:[43]

> To establish which forms of assistance are possible, it will be necessary to define for social man the nature and limits of the feelings of pity, compassion and solidarity which can unite him to his fellows. The theory of assistance must be founded on this semi-moral, semi-psychological analysis, rather than on a definition of contractual group obligations.[44]

Such sentiments, it is argued (following Hume and Ferguson), are real, but finite and local in range. The organization of assistance needs to be integrated into a kind of discontinuous geography of social sympathies: 'active zones of psychological vivacity; inactive and neutral zones of distance and the heart's inertia'.[45] This prompts an argument for the replacement of a hospitalizing medicine by a method of domiciliary assistance which combines the security principles of minimized cost and protection of an optimal norm: the directing of assistance to the sick person's family will reinforce existing natural ties and affections, while requiring less than half the cost of a system of general hospitalization.

The perspective of civil society induces a new governmental analysis of the collective human substance of population. The idea of an 'economic government' has, as Foucault points out, a double meaning for liberalism: that of a government informed by the precepts of political economy, but also that of a government which economizes on its own costs: a greater effort of technique aimed at accomplishing more through a lesser exertion of force and authority.

Over this same period, in absolutist and constitutional European regimes alike, a closely similar rationale can be seen at work in the renewal, from Beccaria to Bentham and Anselm Feuerbach, of the principles of criminal and penal law. As is shown in *Discipline and Punish*, these programmes of reform centre on an effort to improve the intrinsic effectiveness of penal law and to ensure the greater adequacy of legal institutions to the conditions of a commercial society (to which concerns there may be added the further topic, discussed in *The Wealth of Nations*, of the 'expense of justice' and its funding).[46] The penal reformers' criticisms of traditional, violent and spectacular forms of punishment and their emphasis on the application to the law itself of new standards of operational regularity and reliability is entirely consonant with Steuart's strictures on 'old fashioned *coups d'autorité*' in the domain of economic policy proper. Bentham's deployment of a utilitarian calculus of pleasures and pains is the example *par excellence* of an applied rationality of security, in Foucault's sense of the term; *homo economicus*, the man of interest, of pleasures and pains, functions here not just as the abstract, elusive atom of market economics, but as a theme for political inventiveness.

It is again necessary here to give close attention to the precise similarities and differences between liberal government and the older practices of police. Foucault's discussion in *Discipline and Punish* on

Bentham's invention, the Inspection House or Panopticon, encapsulates this issue. There is no doubt that, as Foucault's book shows at length, Bentham's idea has affiliations to the disciplinary techniques characteristic of the police state. One of the Panopticon's immediate inspirations came from the Crimean naval labour colony administered by Bentham's brother Samuel on behalf of the Russian government; Bentham himself for a time entertained hopes that the Empress Catherine might be a sympathetic promoter of his own legislative ambitions. Foucault calls the Cameralist political technique an *étatisation*, a taking into state control, of discipline: a continuous network of power connecting the vigilance of the sovereign to the minute regulation and supervision of individual conduct: 'Police power must bear "upon everything" . . . the dust of events, actions, behaviour, opinions – "everything that happens"; police's object is "the things of each moment", the "little things" of which Catherine II spoke in her Great Instruction.'[47] In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault places this style of thinking within what he calls 'a History of Detail in the Eighteenth century, presided over by Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, touching on Leibniz and Buffon, via Frederick II, covering pedagogy, medicine, military tactics and economics', and climaxing in the regime of Napoleon, who 'wished to arrange around him a mechanism of power that would enable him to see the smallest event that occurred in the state he governed'.[48]

That history also culminates, one might readily think, in the idea of the Panopticon. And yet on closer study, both Bentham's idea and some parallel trends of post-Revolutionary government in France can be seen to mark a profound mutation in this political history of detail. Jacques Donzelot cites, in illustration of this change, a draft law on factory regulations, commissioned by the Interior Ministry of the Consulate:

> since it would be a vain ambition to attempt to provide for all the details of production through regulations issuing from the public power . . . in view of the varied nature of industrial occupations, the best expedient is to authorize those in charge of the conduct of labour to regulate everything that relates to it.[49]

As Donzelot shows, this system of delegated, legally mandated private authority which this unpublished document envisages for the sphere of economic production does in fact accurately foreshadow both reality and the rationale of the French industrial system for most of the nineteenth century:

> The contractual economic relation between worker and employer is coupled with a sort of contractual tutelage of employer over worker, by virtue of the employer's total freedom in determining the code of factory regulations, among which he may include – as is most often the case – a whole series of disciplinary and moral exigencies reaching well outside the sphere of

> production proper, to exercise control over the habits and attitudes, the social and moral behaviour of the working class outside of the enterprise . . . The reason given for this exclusive responsibility on the part of the employer, the pretext for this particular reinforcement of his powers, is the *singular* character of each enterprise.[50]

Just as, for political economy, the intricate workings of the market ineluctably exceed the omniscient aspirations of the police state, so the detailed exigencies of order in the sphere of production are recognized by a liberal government as capable of being grasped and determined, not just (as in the words of the police-scientist Delamare) 'only by a sufficiently detailed examination', but furthermore only by a delegation of regulatory oversight (and power) to the proximate, distributed micro-level of the individual enterprise and employer. Rather than seek to enforce order by encyclopaedic decree, the French government confers the *de facto* force of public law on the private jurisdiction of the entrepreneur. Liberal security means here not so much a bonfire of controls as a recoding of the politics of order.

In its different, elaborately artificial and unrealized manner, the Panopticon follows a similar logic: the function of control by inspection and surveillance passes from the political sovereign to the individual, entrepreneurial manager of the Inspection House, constrained only by the incentive of private profit and the republican sanction of exposure to public scrutiny. In its initial, penal target area of application, Bentham's offer personally to build and operate a Panopticon met, after lengthy deliberation and delay, with refusal by the British government. Michael Ignatieff has called this decision 'a major event in the history of imprisonment'.[51] This may be so: modern penal history does indeed attest (although not exclusively or unequivocally) to the force of political resistance to the liberal privatization and commercialization of certain state functions, including notably that of punishment. But perhaps this point indicates a need to distinguish between two different, albeit overlapping tendencies within liberalism as 'economic government': on the one hand, an effort to reduce governmental functions to a set of economically regulated structures and institutions (making economy, to invert Steuart's image, into the regulator of the governmental clockwork), and on the other, an effort to endow existing economic structures and institutions (those of the enterprise, as well as those of the market) with certain of the functions of a governmental infrastructure. Bentham's personal reverse (itself compensated by the immense subsequent influence of his idea) indicates the limits of the former tendency; Donzelot's evidence shows the importance of the second. François Ewald cites another example. A Napoleonic edict of 1810 made the concession of national mineral rights to private enterprise conditional on the obligation

of the entrepreneur to ensure 'good order and security' (*sûreté et sécurité*) among the 'mass of men, women and children' needed for their exploitation. Ewald writes:

> A mining company was as much an enterprise of pacification, even of regional colonization, as a commercial undertaking . . . These spaces of private enterprise are, from the standpoint of common law, strictly speaking illegal. The law, nevertheless, allows them, so long as they properly fulfil their task of order and security; they do not lie outside the sphere of public order just because, on the contrary, they maintain that order by producing docile individuals.

'This strategy of power', Ewald concludes, 'might be called *liberalism*, provided that one regards liberalism not just as an economic form but as the functioning principle of power in capitalist societies.'[52]

This Imperial precedent can, no doubt, be read partly as indicative of the enduring admixture in French liberalism of certain structures of police administration. Yet Engels and Marx document, within the more informal and decentralized politico-legal environment of early nineteenth-century England, a *de facto* situation not very dissimilar to the French one, where local magistrates' courts regularly confer legal enforceability on the sanctions exacted by factory owners' private penal codes. Such phenomena perhaps evidence the extent and intensity of concern with the interdependence of economic order and public order which liberalism inherits from the police state.

This suggests one answer to those who sense in *Discipline and Punish* an elision of the question of the state. It is in fact vain to look for the hand of the state everywhere pulling the strings of micro-disciplinary power in nineteenth-century societies. But, on the other hand, these largely privatized micro-power structures none the less participate, from the viewpoint of government, in a coherent general policy of order. Furthermore, if liberalism halts the Cameralist tendency towards the *étatisation* of discipline, liberal government also pursues, in parallel to the elaboration elsewhere within 'civil society' of systems of privatized order, a policy which Foucault terms the 'disciplinarization of the state',[53] that is to say, a focusing of the state's immediate interest in disciplinary technique largely on the organization of its own staffs and apparatuses. As Karl Polanyi observes, Bentham's Panoptic principle of 'inspectability' had its applications not only to prisons and convicts, but also to ministries and civil servants.[54]

Government of the social

This dual-tier structure of public order and private order may serve, if only in extremely schematic terms, to characterize a first form of 'real

liberalism', liberalism as an effective practice of security.

The most obvious limitation of this system was that the governmental virtues it invested in the economy were, at best, constrained in their effectiveness by the performance of the economy itself; but that economy, by accelerating the formation of a precarious mass population of the urban poor, could be seen to provide neither for the political security of the state, nor for the material security of the population. This situation tended to expose an underlying duality in the liberal idea of civil society, which C. B. Macpherson has traced to the political philosophy of Locke:[55] in one sense property makes everyone a citizen, since everyone is at least owner of his or her own body and labour; but in another sense it makes the labourer a member of society only through the mediation of his or her master, the owner of the means of production.[56]

In his book *L'Invention du social*, Jacques Donzelot suggests how this tension in liberal political jurisprudence, unresolved by the intervening innovations of 'economic government', emerged in the events of 1848 as a radical fracturing in the republican idea of right, an explosive clash between two incompatible notions of economic citizenship: citizenship as the right to work, or the obligation of the state to ensure for its citizens the minimum conditions of their economic existence, and citizenship as the right of property, affirmed against the feared violation of economic citizenship by confiscatory nationalizations.[57] What made this situation an utterly untenable one for government was that both parties to this argument moreover viewed the legitimacy of the republican regime as absolutely conditional on its satisfaction of one or other version of the criterion of social right.

The meaning of the idea of civil society became, in the course of this same conflict, subject to new and conflicting interpretations. The post-1815 French constitutions of qualified franchise, mirrored in the unilateral powers conferred within industry on the industrial entrepreneur, have been described as implementing a nakedly dualistic version of Lockean civil society, designed to maintain the labouring population politically in a 'virtual state of nature'.[58] 1848 and the Commune of 1871 can, for their part, no doubt justly be interpreted as countervailing attempts by that excluded population to construct a new civil society on their own terms.

But this same set of themes was, as Giovanna Procacci shows (Chapter 7), also being mobilized at the same period by other, bourgeois forces which can by no means be relegated from political history as mere vulgar moralizers: the liberal 'social economists' and philanthropists who, from a different direction, denounced the condition of the pauperized masses as that of a virtual anti-society, a 'state of nature' in a menacing and regressive understanding of that term, a radical deficiency in the moral and human fabric of civil society. Their plans for the reclamation and

recolonization of this terrain were to be no less momentous in their sequel than the popular memory of insurrections.

Conflict over the meaning of social rights and civil society also meant conflict over the role of the state. The central issue of the civil warfare of 1848 was, precisely, one of the *agenda* and *non-agenda* of the state. As Donzelot points out, the mid-nineteenth century, the supposed heyday of liberalism, witnesses not a withering away of the question of the state, but an unprecedented intensification in debate and struggle over the state, its duties and its dangers. The paradox here, if there is one, is easily explained: the generalized anxiety and contention over the *question of the state* coincides with a common recognition of the demise of *reason of state*, of a rationality intrinsic to the state's actions. This is, decidedly, not a domain whose analysis can be grounded in a theory of the state, or in a view of the 'bourgeois state' as the subject of modern history.

Donzelot remarks on a certain noticeable parallelism, cutting across the battle over social rights, between liberal–conservative and revolutionary Marxian attacks on a French state perceived at this time as a crushing, alien burden on the social body, one which, either through the revolutionary suppression of 'intermediary bodies' (craft corporations, religious congregations) mediating between the individual citizen and the state, or through the parcellization of peasant property by bourgeois inheritance laws, pulverizes the structures of social community into a mass of anonymous and impotent individuals.[59] Both in 1848 and 1871, Marx interprets popular revolts in France as (among other things) revolts of civil society against the state, an idea which has been enthusiastically revived in recent years by sections of the French and British left. From the *18th Brumaire* to the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, the language of Marx's treatment of the state is consistent in its violence (a violence which is, perhaps, the major distinctive feature of Marx's views in this matter): a 'supernaturalist abortion', a 'parasitic body', an 'incubus', an 'excrescence of civil society' which illicitly strives to detach itself from its social basis. Marx not only abstains from, but expressly prohibits, any generalized theory of existing states: unlike capitalist society, which can be analyzed as a universal form variously actualized in all civilized societies, 'the "present state" changes with each country's border . . . "*The* present state" is thus a fiction.'[60] States are a major concern for Marx only in those countries (Imperial Germany and France, but not Britain, Holland or the USA) where the proletariat is called upon to win political battles which a national bourgeoisie has previously lost. The significance of states correlates with cases of the obstruction of normal historical progress; Marx's language so powerfully expresses the sense of the perversity, the intrinsic irrationality, of the state's existence, that the method of historical materialism seems, in

confronting it, already close to its own breaking point.

Conversely, if Marx shares with Paine or Godwin a certain idea of the virtuous nature of civil society, this is not of course out of any esteem for its present character, but because of its potential as the terrain of development of the contradictory logic of the economy, ultimately to be resolved in the advent of communist society. The Paris Commune, having effected the 'reabsorption of state power by society' and dissipated the spurious mystiques of state administration, restores the integrity of society as 'the rational medium in which the class struggle can run through its different phases in the most rational and humane way'.[61] If there is a strand of liberal–utopian rationalism to be found in Marx's thought, this may be located less, or less crucially, in his vision of communist society than in his prospectus for the class struggle within the open public space of bourgeois society.

The factor which, as Foucault and his co-workers help to show, tends to elude the Marxian critique, is the quite overt and conscious degree to which, for liberal thinkers (however oblivious they may be of the deeper strata of contradiction uncovered by Marx), the propositions of political economy and their implications immediately problematize the determination of governmental. At *this* level, liberalism is, to a very large degree, well apprized of its own perplexity. The very idea of a capitalist rationale of government may well, from a scientifically Marxian viewpoint, be judged a fundamentally incoherent one: modern Marxist theories of the capitalist state tend to confirm rather than refute this reading. Foucault does not offer an opinion as to whether the judgement itself is true or false: what he does signal is the danger of allowing its supporting logic to preclude a sufficient analysis of the historically formidable, elaborately innovatory and still persisting attempts which have been made to construct such a rationale.

Each of the major contested terms of the mid-nineteenth-century governmental crisis – society, state, property, right – is affected by a profound strategic realignment during the course of subsequent decades. As Pasquale Pasquino has suggested, following Reinhart Koselleck, one needs to look to other, less titanically influential thinkers of the period than Marx for the most prescient anticipations of the direction this process takes.[62] Marx's contemporary, the German historian and liberal reformist Lorenz von Stein, envisages a historical trend towards what he terms a 'social state'; he views the governmental problem in Prussia as the existence of an 'economic society' which has yet to become a civil society or 'society of state-citizenship'.[63] For Stein, this discrepancy springs from a lack of social homogeneity, by which he means not the class struggle, but the survival of an archaic and fragmented polity of estates (*Stände*): he calls upon the state to accelerate the retarded national evolution from a

society of estates to a society of classes. (Something of this scenario for the state as an unavoidable participant in social evolution later emerges as the object of Marx's appalled revulsion in his attack on the German Social Democrats' Gotha Programme.) Several of these points have a relevance extending beyond their distinctively German context: the vision of a liberal state as active historic partner in the making of civil society; an exacting appraisal of the inner consistency of the social fabric; and, perhaps most strikingly, a tabling of the question of class formation as part of the state's agenda – a condition, one might add, of the state's security.

Reinhart Koselleck links Stein's notable preoccupation with long-term political prognoses to a broader mutation in the historical sensibilities of his time. We noted earlier how the problem of security extended out for the police state over the span of a secular perpetuity. But the thinkers of the Cameralist era still had recourse to the notion of *historia magistrae vitae*, history as the teacher of life: the record of past events seen as a repertory of instructive example and precedent for rulers. With the Enlightenment, the Revolution and the advent of the idea of progress, there emerges a new perception of present events as following a trajectory which is both radically unprecedented and constantly accelerating. Koselleck quotes Tocqueville on this penalty of progress, the loss to political reflection of the didactic resources of history: 'As the past ceases to illuminate the future, the mind moves forward in darkness'.[64] At the same date, the *Communist Manifesto* speaks of the 'everlasting uncertainty and agitation' characteristic of the bourgeois epoch.[65] And yet, in general, Marxism credits liberal thought with little share of this spirit of unease and uncertainty.

The process of class formation is in fact very far from being foreign to the preoccupations of liberal government. On the contrary, the question of class, as the problem of making an industrial market economy *socially* possible, becomes, from the bourgeois point of view, an essential part of the politics of security. Others besides Marx address themselves to the articulation of the open spaces of industrial sociability with the closed spaces of industrial discipline. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the relegation of propertyless labour to a political 'state of nature' has become a demonstrably untenable expedient. 1848 and 1871 make spectacularly evident to an anxious bourgeoisie the danger represented by the indiscipline, the asocial autonomy, of the pauperized urban masses. Urgent efforts are addressed to the reconstruction of the population of the poor according to a model of collective economic citizenship: the social incorporation of the working class as an element of the body politic. The process of proletarian class formation becomes a major vector of bourgeois class struggle.[66] The encounter on this terrain

between liberalism and socialism is, in its way, no less subtle and redoubtably ambiguous than liberalism's preceding relationship with the world of *Polizei*.

In France, the Third Republic was the setting for the deciding stages of this process.[67] The Republic began its life confronting the same questions of political sovereignty on which its predecessor had been wrecked in 1848, in the dual context of a sovereign legislature elected by universal (male) franchise, and a mounting popular intolerance of the older industrial order of private entrepreneurial despotism. A contemporary writes of 'the shocking contrast between man as voter and man as worker. In the polling-booth he is a sovereign; in the factory, he is under the yoke.'[68] The Third Republic departs, however, from the example of the Second by eschewing from the outset the political language of rights: its constitution refrains from endorsing the Declaration of Human Rights. Instead there is an effort to eliminate the fateful republican confrontation between individual and state, in which the former demands benefactions from the latter in the name of right, under threat of the exercise of his sovereign right to rebel. The end of the nineteenth century witnesses a radical recasting of liberalism's politico-juridical heritage, a quiet legal revolution whose discretion and apparent technical neutrality is, arguably, a measure of its strategic strength and influence.

The new republican jurists, influenced here by their German colleagues, incriminate the 'Rousseauist' framework of natural right as an engine of civil war. The transcendence of the law, of which the state is cast as the revocable custodian, is dissolved; law now becomes the historically relative emanation and expression of society. At the same time, both legal theory (administrative, civil and criminal) and the human sciences (psychology, criminology, sociology) question the founding legal status of the autonomous individual will, emphasizing instead its evanescent, intermittent and generally problematic character. Thirdly, mediating between the poles of state and individual, law and sociology together strive to construct a governable legal status for the 'intermediary bodies' suppressed by the Revolution: this is the purpose of Maurice Hauriou's theory of the institution.[69] Institutions – familial, commercial, professional, political, religious – make up the empirical texture of civil society. In each institution there is a partial source of social right; the seat of a *de facto* founding authority; a certain task or enterprise; and a postulated, *a priori* consensus. The durability of the institution contrasts with the ephemeral life of its individual members; the individual only becomes a citizen and subject of right through and thanks to the institution; the citizen's obligations to it are logically anterior to his or her rights. But the state, too, figures here only in a relativized role, as one institution among others, the special institution which acts for the *general*

interest, and according to the principles of *public service*.

The Third Republic transforms the strictly juridical relationship between individual and state by constructing an administrative law which explicitly dispenses with natural right. The citizen is accorded the entitlement under this law to compensation for the accidental infringement by the state of his or her private interest: what the citizen is disqualified from doing is to inculpate the state at the level of its sovereignty. The juridical self-limitation and 'self-control' of the executive power is balanced by the designation of a range of 'governmental acts' which are immune to legal challenge.[70] This juridical reserve area of executive power is, Donzelot suggests, the qualification which – in the French situation – calculations of security impose as a condition of the political feasibility of a liberal democracy.

This simultaneous relativization of state and individual is accompanied by a new attenuation of the opposition between the public and the private. Sociological thought and social law regard the private domain as a 'virtual' public sphere. Authority in the sphere of private enterprise and private institutions is assimilated to, and (partially and indirectly) juridically integrated with, the 'public-service' preoccupation of the state. The disciplinary 'private law' of the factories is in part subordinated to the public norms prescribed in health and safety legislation, in part opened up to collective negotiation with organized labour, and, for the rest, underwritten in the interest of public order as a necessary branch of public law.[71] At the same time, the state's new role in industrial security as the provider of workers' accident insurance permits it to emulate the standing of its private commercial forerunners as a new kind of 'public institution'.

This new political jurisprudence reorganizes some of the basic terms of classical political theory. The (Lockean) principle of property, with its perturbing connotations of irreducible prerogative, is now made subordinate to the (Fergusonian) category of interest, which in turn is now considered itself in a primarily collectivist perspective, mediated through institutions and associations. Social right now becomes, in the terms of the German jurist Jhering, the stake and resultant of a continuous process of collective struggle.[72] While the right of civil resistance is suppressed, the right of social struggle and *revendication* is endorsed as necessary and even obligatory. In the France of 1900, this conjunction expresses the political rationale of a regime which accepts the role of organized labour, while mobilizing armed force to suppress workers' meetings: a political incorporation of the class struggle.

It is also the beginning of the end of a certain idea of civil society: the historical point from which it becomes decreasingly plausible to think of civil society as an autonomous order which confronts and experiences the

state as an alien, incursive force. This is not because society is swallowed up by some new avatar of the police state. Rather, the activities of government themselves begin to acquire something of the density and complexity formerly attributed by liberal thinkers to the object of government, namely commercial society or the market. What entitles us to think of this as a transmutation, rather than a liquidation or betrayal, of liberal government is that it proceeds not by the institution of a new reason of state but by the invention, out of a range of extraneous sources, of a set of new roles *for* the state. The state of the mid-nineteenth-century crisis, variously perceived as at once minimal and monstrous, gives way to a state which is at once activist and disengaged, interventionist and neutral.

The new discipline of sociology, Donzelot argues, plays a catalytic part in this new settlement, by providing the basis for a principled resolution of the liberal riddle of the state's *agenda* and *non-agenda*. The concept of *solidarity*, developed by Durkheim and elaborated into a political doctrine by Duguit and Léon Bourgeois, prescribes, in competition and complementarity with Hauriou's doctrine of the institution, a framework and mode of state intervention which is to address itself to 'the forms of the social bond, rather than the structure of society itself'.[73] *Solidarisme*, which in the France of the 1900s becomes something approaching a dominant ideology (not unlike the British liberal collectivism of the same era) provides a political rationale for a series of radical innovations in social administration.[74] Solidarity is often cited today as the basic, enduring value of socialist ethics. But, as with civil society, it is advisable also to keep in mind the history of this term's *instrumental* value.

Foucault's comment on the concept of civil society as a 'transactional' one, an encoding of the mobile interface of the game between government and governed, has its amplest verification in the new universe of what Donzelot has called 'the social'. 'The social' designates a field of governmental action operating always within and upon the discrepancies between economy and society, principles each of which comes to be envisaged in terms of its incipient prejudice to the other, so that the politics of prosperity (Keynes, Beveridge) centres on the effort to establish positive feedbacks for their reciprocal correction.

This is a situation where 'the state itself is no longer at stake in social relations, but stands outside them and becomes their guarantor of progress':[75] the focal question of politics is now not so much the justification of state action as the governability of the social. Here is one kind of relevance of a study of the police state to the characterization of the modern situation. The police state posited an immediate identity between the state and 'the whole body of civil society'; twentieth-century government postulates not an identity but an isomorphism, an

intimate symbiosis between the cares of government and the travails of a society exposed to the conflicts and crises of the liberal economy. The self-perception of society takes the form of a catalogue of problems of government.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, the modified legal-governmental armature of capitalist production is caught up in a mutation of economic class relations, namely the 'Taylorist' transaction by which the working class concedes increased productivity and the abandonment of the syndicalist demands for self-management in return for improved wages and working conditions and a dismantling of the old, carceral methods of factory discipline.[76] This historic transaction has been interpreted by some as marking a reformist stalemate of the class struggle within the labour process, compensated, however, by a shifting of the terrain of struggle to the sphere of the state and the issues of social rights and the social wage, vehicles (at least implicitly) for more radically insurrectionist objectives. In different ways, this appreciation of events seems both incontestable and profoundly misleading. The new governmental system which culminates in Keynesianism and the welfare state is indeed characterized by permanent contention among all political forces over the manner in which the state should most beneficially fulfil its socioeconomic vocation: a debate punctuated by warnings from both left and right, nourished by the cautionary totalitarian lessons of the century, against the perversion of that vocation. And yet, as Donzelot points out, the dramatically conflicting terms in which this argument is pursued stand in inverse proportion to the relatively narrow bandwidth of effective dissent over the adjustment and management of this socio-economic system.

In suggesting that the society we now live in has become, pre-eminently, a 'society of security', part of what Foucault no doubt has in mind is that our government involves a distinctive circuit of interdependence between *political security* and *social security*. It is misleading to envisage the dimension of the social as the state's antagonist or its prey. In modern liberal societies the social is, *characteristically*, the field of governmental security considered in its widest sense; the register of government forms, in return, the surface of inscription of the security problems of society. A certain vital dimension of this situation is masked by the model of a total sociopolitical system (benign or otherwise) within which state action performs as a determined servo-mechanism. The rationality of security is, in Foucault's rendering, as inherently open-ended one: it deals not just in closed circuits of control, but in calculations of the possible and the probable. The relation of government with which it corresponds is not solely a functional, but also a 'transactional' one: it structures government as a practice of problematization, a zone of

(partially) open interplay between the exercise of power and everything that escapes its grip.

Foucault contrasts to the somewhat monolithic object postulated by theories of the state the perspective of a 'multiple regime of governmentality': this phrase might serve as the rubric for an analysis of a range of distinct *modes of pluralization* of modern government which contribute towards the relativization of the notional boundary line between state and society. Among these processes might be numbered the initiating roles of private individuals and organizations in the exploring and defining of new governmental tasks (many aspects of social hygiene and medicine, social work, the collection of statistics, etc.); the cross-fertilizing interplay between different agencies and expertises, public and private alike (criminal anthropology and accident insurance; industrial sociology and psychotherapy); the propensity of the public institutions of government to secrete within themselves their own multiple spaces of partly autonomous authority; the different forms of delegation represented by the 'quango', municipal privatization and the renewed mobilization of the voluntary sector in social services; the function accorded to representative organizations of capital and labour as 'social partners' engaged in tripartite dialogue with the state, bodies whose function as (to use Keith Middlemas's apt term)[77] governing institutions rests on their positioning exterior to the state apparatus.

In what sense can this state of affairs still be called a form of 'real liberalism'? One rough and tentative answer might be the following. The fulfilment of the liberal idea in government consists – over and above the economic market in commodities and services, whose existence founds the classic liberal attribution of an autonomous rationality to the processes of civil society – in a recasting of the interface between state and society in the form of something like a second-order market of governmental goods and services. It becomes the ambition of neo-liberalism to implicate the individual citizen, as player and partner, into this market game.

PASSAGES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY TO THE SOCIAL MARKET

Modern governmental rationality, Foucault has said, is simultaneously about individualizing and totalizing: that is, about finding answers to the question of what it is for an individual, and for a society or population of individuals, to be governed or governable. Different ways of posing and answering these questions compete and coexist with one another. Here I will look at some of our contributors' reconstructions of these different modern governmental problems and techniques. Taken together, they can

perhaps be read as chapters in a genealogy of the welfare state – and of neo-liberalism.

In his *Histoire de la Folie*, nearly two decades prior to his lectures on liberalism, Foucault had dealt with the effect on thinking about the treatment of the insane of the eighteenth century's concern with devising a form of social citizenship appropriate to a bourgeois political and economic culture. Adam Ferguson's notion of civil society can be read, as we have seen, as being concerned with the task of inventing a wider political framework than that of the juridical society of contract, capable of encompassing individual economic agency within a governable order. The new mental medicine of the same era addresses the problem of grounding a para-legal jurisdiction over persons who could no longer acceptably be disposed of through the police-internment institutions of the *ancien régime*. 'It was one of the eighteenth century's constant endeavours', Foucault writes here, 'to adjust with the old juridical notion of the "subject of law" the contemporary experience of social man . . . Nineteenth-century positivist medicine is the heir to this effort of the Enlightenment.'[78] Our modern conception of 'normal man' is a construct dating from this era; 'its conceptual space lies not within the space of nature, but in a system which identifies the *socius* with the subject of law. The abnormal person of mental illness, 'a slowly constituted product representing the mythical union of the juridically incompetent subject with the man who is perceived as perturber of a group', emerges in conjunction with a new style of public sensibility towards the socially irregular. Foucault notes how in the civil society of the first French republic, where the transparent realm of public opinion is instituted as the seat of sovereignty, the political citizen is called upon to assume, in the place of the bureaucracy and police of despotism, the combined role of 'man of law' and 'man of government'. The postulation of an interior domain of mental norms parallels and presupposes this promotion of an alert public sensorium of civil vigilance.

Among the most active subsequent proponents of this style of civic conscience might be numbered the 'social economists' of the first half of the nineteenth century, whose neglected contribution to the political thought of early industrial society is examined in Chapter 7 by Giovanna Procacci. Social economy is a critique of political economy. To enable the wealth-creating mechanisms of the economy to work, it is not enough to remove the obstacles of obsolete privileges and the restrictive policies of mercantilism. It is (in one sense) society itself, or the *social* problem, which represents the main obstacle to economic progress: the very existence of (in another sense) an economic society, of that form or order which is a necessary condition for freedom, is something which has yet to be realized and made secure, and which, as the social economists argue,

cannot be realized merely through the institution of a proletarianized production process. The amoral, pre-industrial solidarities of the poor come to be perceived as the purest form of *social danger*, not only as the obvious political threat of riot and sedition, but also, and more profoundly, as the danger of an anti-society, a zone of unchecked instinct incompatible with truly social being, blocking the free circulation of labour and capital which is the *sine qua non* of liberal welfare. The unaided logic of the economy cannot suffice to make a *homo economicus* out of the Malthusian pauper's chronic deficit of interest, his 'refusal to make the passage from penury to well-being'.[79] Indeed, the personality and mentality of economic man cannot be implanted among the populations of the poor except as part of a broader strategy, a political technology designed to form, out of the recalcitrant material of the 'dangerous classes', something more than economic man: a social citizen.

'There is a strange paradox here: if it is claimed that crime is a phenomenon with a social aetiology, how is it possible to say that the criminal has an asocial nature?'[80] By the mid-nineteenth century, the Enlightenment configuration of society, nature and history has been turned inside out. In psychiatry, the insane are regarded less and less as casualties of progress and modern living, and more and more as the detritus of social evolution. Madness, Foucault wrote in *Histoire de la Folie*:

> becomes the stigmata of a class which has abandoned the forms of social ethics; and just at the moment when the philosophical concept of alienation acquires a historical significance through the economic analysis of labour, the medical and psychological concept of alienation totally detaches itself from history, becoming a moral critique conducted in the name of the compromised salvation of the species.[81]

Pasquale Pasquino (Chapter 12) places the beginnings of criminology within the same conjuncture of thought:

> In the midst of social evolution and by virtue of its progress, archaic residues can be identified comprising those individuals and groups who, outpaced and left behind by the proper rate of evolution, endanger by their existence the orderly functioning of the whole.[82]

While the social economists discover that the utilitarian calculus of interests is an instilled rather than a natural habit, jurists begin to question the utilitarian theory of deterrence as the basis of criminal law. The failure of deterrent punishment is attributed to the fact that the criminal, being an *ipso facto* abnormal being, is inaccessible to normal measures of rational dissuasion. The social contract theory of the juridical foundation of society is inverted: law is now simply one of the manifestations of a historically mutable society; criminal jurisprudence must contribute to

the service and defence of society's vital interests by adapting the law to the dictates of evolutionary progress. The criminal is not an erring individual but a specimen of a dangerous biological milieu, a separate race. The task of justice, as social defence, accordingly consists on this view not so much in deterrence as in neutralization and prophylaxis. In this respect, social defence joins hands with social economy and social hygiene.

Social defence has another modern corollary: social security. One of the conditions which François Ewald suggests has made possible the modern world of 'sociopolitics' within which these strategies cohabit is the entry into social thought of the *philosophy of risk* (see Chapter 10). Risk, enterprise, progress and modernity are genealogically interdependent social ideas. The constellations they have formed are often, to a retrospective gaze, paradoxical ones. One of Ewald's most striking *aperçus* is that risk is a capital, not a spirit of capitalism. The very terms 'risk' and 'risk taking' are products of insurance techniques. The insurer 'takes' the risk of the client entrepreneur: capitalism's Faustian daring depends on this capability of taking the risk out of risk. Risk becomes in the nineteenth century, as Ewald shows, a kind of omnivorous, encyclopaedizing principle for the objectification of possible experience – not only of the hazards of personal life and private venture, but also of the common venture of society. The rhetoric of daring modernity and its risk-pledged soul seems, on this account, to have been mobilized in the nineteenth century largely for the purpose of exhorting the working class to adopt the bourgeois ethic of individual life, conceived as an enterprise which providently reckons with its chances of death and disablement as 'professional risks' of human existence. But these ideas of prudence and enterprise themselves undergo a considerable mutation at the hands of later nineteenth-century jurisprudence.

Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Chapters 10 and 11) study the nodal role played in this story by the problem of industrial accidents (a topic, alongside the struggles in the prisons, of intense concern in French left-wing politics in the early 1970s). Read alongside Ian Hacking's parallel epistemological survey of statistical thinking over the same period (Chapter 9), their chapters present a picture of an epoch-making mutation of metaphysical ideas catalyzed around the middle of the nineteenth century by the techniques of insurance: a statistically grounded conception of social causality, a philosophy of civil law as the redistribution of *social risk*, rather than the retribution of private culpability, and a novel notion of faultless civil responsibility. Michel Foucault, in an important essay on the notion of the dangerous individual, has suggested that this latter idea may also have helped to make the criminologists' new preventative doctrines juridically feasible:

> In a rather strange way, this depenalization of civil liability offered a model for a penal law based on the idea of the criminal anthropologists. After all, what is a born criminal or degenerate or a criminal personality, if not a person who, by reason of a causal chain which is difficult to reconstruct, carries a particularly high index of criminal probability, and is, himself, a criminal risk?[83]

The concept of social risk makes it possible for insurance technologies to be applied to social problems in a way which can be presented as creative simultaneously of social justice and social solidarity. One of the important strengths of the insurance technique is its use of *expertise* as the technical basis of a form of security which can dispense with recourse to continuous surveillance:

> Insurance contributes in a large degree to the solidarization of interests . . . Insurance is one of the main ties of what we call – to use a favourite phrase of the jurists – *real solidarity*, *or solidarity through things*, as contrasted with personal or moral solidarity.[84]

The idea which Foucault notes as characteristic of the science of police, the distinctive concern with governing 'men and things', acquires a new dimension here. 'Solidarity through things' corresponds to a double process of social capitalization. As Daniel Defert points out, it is the worker's own life, rather than his labour power, which first enters into commercial calculation as an economic form of *human capital*. The forms of welfare with which the new institutions of social security concern themselves are precisely those human assets which are capable of capitalization as *risks*; while the premiums which serve to insure those capitals provide an efficient channel for storing proletarian savings in capitalist institutions.

The apprehension of social laws, of a specifically sociological order of causality, is one of the preconditions for social legislation and labour law. If society is in some sense the general subject of human enterprises, then the form of the industrial enterprise and labour relations within the enterprise can no longer plausibly be consigned in law to regulation solely by the private provisions of the contract of employment. The progressive conquest through industrial legislation of protective rights for workers and unions signifies, in Jacques Donzelot's formulation, 'enlarging the sphere of the *statutory* at the expense of the *contractual* in the definition of the employment contract'. 'We move from a situation in which man defines himself as a worker confronting capital to a situation in which he is an employee of society (whether in work or not).'[85]

While this measure of economic socialization is still designed to leave society 'free' of direct responsibility for running the economy and guaranteeing work, the vocation assumed by society as the taker of risk *par excellence* confers a new guarantee of security on the state. For if the

state is the only institution within society possessed of that degree of solidity requisite in a provider of certain kinds of insurance, it then follows that the continued survival of the state will itself become a peculiarly social imperative. The existence of insurance is, as Ewald puts it, an insurance against revolution. The corresponding political principle of solidarity, shaped by insurance practice and refined as sociological theory by Durkheim and others,[86] forms the core of the historic governmental compromise implemented in France under the Third Republic around the turn of the century. Other scholars have documented the shaping presence of similar and analogous ideas in British politics and society of the same period.[87]

VERSIONS OF NEO-LIBERALISM

In his Collège de France lectures of 1979, Foucault followed his discussion of the liberal art of government as initially propounded in the eighteenth century with a review of the post-war currents of thought which present the most radical challenges to the system of the welfare state, some of whose derivations have been outlined above. Foucault discussed neo-liberalism in three post-war Western countries: West Germany, the United States and France.

A group of jurists and economists who came collectively to be known (from their participation in the journal *Ordo*) as the *Ordoliberalen* played a significant role as architects of the post-war West German state and attributed a novel governmental meaning to the idea of a market. For them, the market is no longer to be thought of as being a spontaneous (albeit historically conditioned) quasi-natural reality, recognition of whose existence constrains government to the practice of *laissez-faire*. The market is not a natural social reality at all; and what is incumbent on government is to conduct a policy towards society such that it is possible for a market to exist and function. For the *Ordoliberalen*, the political and economic disasters of recent memory are not to be attributed to a flaw or contradiction in a market economy, for, while the market is not a natural phenomenon, neither is it subject to an essential logical incoherence: it is not that liberalism has been tried and found wanting in modern Germany; it has been found inexpedient and not been tried.

In Adenauer's embryonic republic, these thinkers' conception of the open space of the market and the artificial game of its competitive freedom functions as the principle of a possible new political legitimacy. Prosperity, Foucault suggests, has a meaning in the West German state which is comparable to the meaning for Weber's Protestant capitalists of

worldly wealth as a mark of divine election: prosperity is the engine for creation, out of national political annihilation, of a new basis of civil adhesion and prospective sovereignty.

For the *Ordoliberalen*, the major problem of social politics within this framework is not the anti-social effects of the economic market, but the anti-competitive effects of society. To enable competition to function in the real world, a certain framework of positive institutional and juridical forms is required: a capitalist *system*. West German neo-liberalism, Foucault remarks, stands within the sociological heritage of Max Weber in accepting, albeit only tacitly, the justice of the Marxian critique of classical political economy in regard to the latter's failure to take account of the legal and institutional dimensions of the market. Capitalism's prospects of survival depend on a broadening of economic thinking so as to make proper provision for these systemic historic contingencies. Not only is the juridical domain not to be regarded as a mere superstructure of the economic, but an economic government conducted in the name of the market must accord a central role to a new kind of legal activism, a 'conscious notion of economic right'.

There is an important transmutation here in the received liberal notion of the 'rule of law' as the form of government most consonant with the workings of a market economy. Whereas for the eighteenth century the formalism of law was a recipe for minimal intervention (*laissez-faire*, in its more passive sense), the *Ordoliberalen* envisage an extensive juridical interventionism with a vocation to further the game of enterprise as a pervasive style of conduct, diffusing the enterprise-form throughout the social fabric as its generalized principle of functioning. One of their number, Alexander von Rüstow, significantly terms this policy a *Vitalpolitik*, or 'vital policy'. He proposes that the whole ensemble of individual life be structured as the pursuit of a range of different enterprises: a person's relation to his or her self, his or her professional activity, family, personal property, environment, etc., are all to be given the ethos and structure of the enterprise-form. This 'vital policy' will foster a process of 'creation of ethical and cultural values' within society.[88]

As Foucault points out, Rüstow's thinking here seems almost to make an admission that the principle of enterprise bears its own seeds of contradiction, since the idea of *Vitalpolitik* (so evocative of the strain of statist edification which distinguishes the West German polity) seems in large part designed to palliate the disaggregating effects of market competition on the social body. An altogether more radical consistency is manifested, Foucault suggests, in the work of the post-war American school of neo-liberal economists centred at Chicago. Whereas the West Germans propound a government of the social conducted in the name of

the economic, the more adventurous among the Americans (Foucault looks in particular at the ideas of Gary C. Becker) propose a global redescription of the social as a form of the economic.

This operation works by a progressive enlargement of the territory of economic theory by a series of redefinitions of its object, starting out from the neo-classical formula that economics concerns the study of all behaviours involving the allocation of scarce resources to alternative ends. Now it is proposed that economics concerns all purposive conduct entailing strategic choices between alternative paths, means and instruments; or, yet more broadly, *all rational conduct* (including rational thought, as a variety of rational conduct); or again, finally, all conduct, rational or irrational, which responds to its environment in a non-random fashion, or 'recognizes reality'.

Economics thus becomes an 'approach' capable in principle of addressing the totality of human behaviour, and, consequently, of envisaging a coherent, purely economic method of programming the totality of governmental action. The neo-liberal *homo economicus* is both a reactivation and a radical inversion of the economic agent as conceived by the liberalism of Smith, Hume or Ferguson. The reactivation consists in positing a fundamental human faculty of *choice*, a principle which empowers economic calculation effectively to sweep aside the anthropological categories and frameworks of the human and social sciences. Foucault shows this consequence emerging very strikingly in Becker's economic analysis of crime and crime prevention, which manages to dispense entirely with the psychological or biological presuppositions common in this domain; here *homo economicus* drives out the nineteenth-century *homo criminalis*. Likewise, the category of order is dethroned from its usual ruling role in legal thought, by being reinterpreted as meaning a *supply of law-abiding behaviour*: that is to say, of a commodity whose price is determined by a level of effective social demand. Becker thinks that it is reasonable to calculate the quantity of crimes which it is worth a society's while to tolerate.

But the great departure here from eighteenth-century precedent is that, whereas *homo economicus* originally meant that subject the springs of whose activity must remain forever untouchable by government, the American neo-liberal *homo economicus* is *manipulable man*, man who is perpetually responsive to modifications in his environment. Economic government here joins hands with behaviourism.

This is only part of the story. American neo-liberalism also claims to effect a decisive enrichment of the economic understanding of human work, here again inspired by its overall view of economic activity as a discriminating use of available resources. The abstract appearance of labour in industrial society is not, as Marxism supposes, a real effect of

the logic of capital, but rather a misperception caused by political economy's failure to produce a concrete qualitative analysis of labour, an account of 'what work is for the worker'. Work for the worker means, according to the neo-liberals, the use of resources of skill, aptitude and competence which comprise the worker's human capital, to obtain earnings which constitute the revenue on that capital. Human capital is composed of two components, an innate component of bodily and genetic equipment, and an acquired component of aptitudes produced as a result of investment in the provision of appropriate environmental stimuli: nurture, education, etc. Economically, an aptitude is defined as a quasi-machine for the production of a value; this applies not only to the production of commodities, but also to the production of satisfactions. As one neo-liberal thinker puts it, an education which, for example, confers on its possessor the capacity for such satisfactions as logical discourse or the appreciation of works of art can be considered economically akin to a consumer durable which has the peculiarity of being inseparable from its owner. From this point of view, then, the individual producer-consumer is in a novel sense not just an enterprise, but the entrepreneur of himself or herself.

However one assesses these schools of neo-liberal thought and the extent of their influence, there are a number of signs that a neo-liberal rationality of government is beginning to play a part in the life of several Western societies. To begin with a simple indicator, it would seem that a part of the unexpected political acceptability of renewed mass unemployment can be plausibly attributed to the wide diffusion of the notion of the individual as enterprise. The idea of one's life as the enterprise of oneself implies that there is a sense in which one remains always continuously employed in (at least) that one enterprise, and that it is a part of the continuous business of living to make adequate provision for the preservation, reproduction and reconstruction of one's own human capital. This is the 'care of the self' which government commends as the corrective to collective greed. It is noticeable that where, as in the tentatively neo-liberal France of the 1970s, the 'right to permanent retraining' has been translated into a kind of institutional reality, its technical content has relied heavily on the contributions of the 'new psychological culture', that cornucopia of techniques of the self which symbiotize aptitude with self-awareness and performance with self-realization (not to mention self-presentation). What some cultural critics diagnose as the triumph of auto-consuming narcissism can perhaps be more adequately understood as a part of the managerialization of personal identity and personal relations which accompanies the capitalization of the meaning of life.

Closely allied to these developments is the move which Jacques

Donzelot describes in Chapter 13 towards a modified conception of social risk, which shifts the emphasis from the principle of collective indemnification of ills and injuries attendant on life in society, towards a greater stress on the individual's civic obligation to moderate the burden of risk which he or she imposes on society, by participating, for example, in preventive health-care programmes. In Donzelot's terms, the shift from contract to status in social welfare relations begins to go into reverse. It is not that social guarantees are annulled or their mechanisms dismantled, but that these henceforth become, as it were, a part of each player's stakes in the game of socioeconomic negotiations. There is a kind of generalized floating of currencies. Even the idea of progress, that guarantee of guarantees, loses its overarching virtue. The notion of the social body as a collective subject committed to the reparation of the injuries suffered by its individual members gives place to a role for the state as a custodian of a collective reality-principle, distributing the disciplines of the competitive world market throughout the interstices of the social body. The state presents itself as the referee in an ongoing transaction in which one partner strives to enhance the value of his or her life, while another endeavours to economize on the cost of that life.

Robert Castel in Chapter 14 shows how this new regime of concerted action in risk prevention is capable of extension into a prospective new sector of socio-environmental interventionism. Computerization and administrative rationalization begin to make possible for the first time a 'real' government of population which, by co-ordinating appropriate forms of expertise and assessment, is capable of identifying all those individual members of society who can be deemed, by manifesting some combination of a specified range of 'factors', to present a significant, albeit involuntary, risk to themselves or to the community. The classic techniques of carceral and tutelary management of the deviant or asocial, developed over the past 150 years by psychiatry and social work, begin to be displaced by a form of management based instead on non-custodial guidance. *Handicap* (defined in a newly extended sense) serves as a focal category for the rationalization of individual destinies. Following the precedent of British wartime achievements in mobilizing previously neglected sources of manpower, a method of risk management is devised which consists in contriving not special spaces of neutralizing containment for the abnormal, but special circuits of protected mobility for handicapped individuals, within the greater game of the social market. Daniel Defert notes in Chapter 11 how, in the development of the techniques of insurance, differential methods of actuarial analysis make possible the subdivision, out of an insurable population, of various specific strata of 'marginal risk'. Castel suggests that 'marginality itself, instead of remaining an unexplored or dangerous territory, can become an

organized zone within the social, towards which those persons will be directed who are incapable of following more competitive pathways'.

Even a marginal or 'handicapped' majority is in this sense by no means an impossible prospect, especially given the way that the ethos of continued retraining is capable of sanctioning a regime of downward mobility. The priority for a neo-liberal government here is not indeed to annul, but rather to dissipate and disperse the mass of handicaps present in a given society. Where this objective cannot be achieved, the alternative may be what is called in English a 'community' solution: that is to say, a specialized regime of environmental intervention designed to contain high local concentrations of risk.

FOUCAULT'S POLITICS

The kinds of political analysis presented in this volume are not liable or designed to inspire and guide new political movements, transform the current agendas of political debate, or generate new plans for the organization of societies. Their claim would be, at most, to help political thought to grasp certain present realities, thus perhaps providing a more informed basis for practical choice and imagination. But this would already be more than a modest service. It would be fair to add that, notwithstanding the scandalously subversive image which has often been presented of Foucault's philosophy, the ideas put forward by this current of work – above all, and most simply, the idea that a fresh effort of thought has to be made in order to understand our times – are not wildly at odds with some parts of received contemporary political wisdom, albeit ones which they may in places claim to have slightly anticipated, and to which they may still be able to contribute a distinctive critical and analytical edge.

The formulae of politics have changed. The phobic representation of a potentially totalitarian state, which is at the same time made the addressee of unlimited social demands, loses it credibility. Government itself assumes the discourse of critique, challenging the rigidities and privileges of a blocked society. Promises of expanded individual autonomy and responsibility become electoral necessities. Our authors do not share a common assessment of the value and consequences of these changes. I shall limit myself here, by way of a conclusion, to drawing out some connections between aspects of Foucault's own later philosophy and his comments on political matters.

Foucault said in an interview that nothing is an evil in itself, but everything is dangerous, with the consequence that things are always liable to go wrong, but also that there is always the possibility of doing

something to prevent this, since disaster is never ineluctable. The position is avowedly a somewhat pessimistic, but also an activist one.[89] This statement fits in well with Foucault's comments in his discussions of modern Western forms of government. Foucault denied that the welfare state is either a variant or an incipient version of the modern totalitarian (or Party) state, Stalinist, national socialist or fascist; on this point Foucault seems to find the critiques of neo-liberal thinkers like Hayek less than convincing. On the other hand, Foucault also found some of the law and order policy tendencies of French government in the 1970s (under the regime which was at the same time experimenting with neo-liberal ideas) to present a dangerous new elaboration of doctrines of social defence dating from the nineteenth-century antecedents of the welfare state.[90]

These views went with a distinctive political attitude to reality. Foucault advocated in political culture a lowered threshold of acceptance of governmental abuses, but also an accompanying reduction in the level of political paranoia (particularly paranoia in the service of revolutionary militancy): the fear (and hope) that the existing state will finally show its true colours as a police state blunts, he argued, our ability to perceive and refuse the unacceptable in what actually exists.

Foucault was, one might say, sufficiently respectful of the historical effectiveness of liberalism as an art of government to doubt the liberal (and Marxist) nightmare of an ever-expansionist and despotic tendency within the state. Although not enamoured of minimalist anarcho-liberal individualism in the manner of Robert Nozick, Foucault does seem to have been (at least) intrigued by the properties of liberalism as a form of knowledge calculated to limit power by persuading government of its own incapacity; by the notion of the rule of law as the architecture of a pluralist social space;[91] and by the German neo-liberals' way of conceiving the social market as a game of freedom sustained by governmental artifice and invention.

His basic objection is to the project (neo-liberal or socialist) of a guaranteed freedom or a definitive Enlightenment:

> Liberty is a *practice* . . . The liberty of men is never assured by the institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them. This is why almost all of these laws and institutions are quite capable of being turned around. Not because they are ambiguous, but simply because 'liberty' is what must be exercised . . . I think it can never be inherent in the structure of things to guarantee the exercise of freedom. The guarantee of freedom is freedom.[92]

Uncertainty, however, does not imply absence of rigour:

> I do not say that power, by its nature, is an ill; I say that power, by its mechanisms, is infinite (which is not to say that it is all-powerful; on the contrary). The rules that limit it can never be sufficiently rigorous; to

deprive it of the occasions it seizes on, universal principles can never be made sufficiently strict. Against power there must always be opposed unbreakable laws and unrestrictable rights.[93]

There is a kind of Sisyphean optimism in the later Foucault, or perhaps one can say there are two different strands of optimism, which promise to converge in his thinking about government. One is contained in the very idea of governmental rationality, in the sense that Foucault seems to think that the very possibility of an activity or way of governing can be conditional on the availability of a certain notion of its rationality, which may in turn need, in order to be operable, to be credible to the governed as well as the governing: here, the notion of rationality seems clearly to exceed the merely utilitarian bounds of a technique or know-how, as in Foucault's earlier thinking about the relations between power and knowledge. The second is the thought that ideas which go without saying, which make possible existing practices and our existing conceptions of ourselves, may be more contingent, recent and modifiable than we think. The two themes connect because government is a 'conduct of conduct': because the relation between government and the governed passes, to a perhaps ever-increasing extent, through the manner in which governed individuals are willing to exist as subjects. One might see the consequent meaning of the relation of government for Foucault as a kind of moral judo (or 'agonism'): to the extent that the governed are engaged, in their individuality, by the propositions and provisions of government, government makes its own rationality intimately their affair: politics becomes, in a new sense, answerable to ethics.

In 1981 Foucault thought that a governmental 'logic of the left' could be developed on this kind of basis, involving a way for the governed to work with government, without any assumption of compliance or complicity, on actual and common problems. 'To work with a government implies neither subjection nor global acceptance. One can simultaneously work and be restive. I even think that the two go together.'[94] In the event, these hopes seem to have been disappointed. But we have no reason to think that they were abandoned.

NOTES

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29. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
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88. Cf. my 'The Soul of the Citizen', p. 314f, and A. von Rüstow, *Rede und Antwort*, Ludwigsburg, 1963, pp. 36, 82.
89. 'On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress', interview with Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, Harmondsworth, 1986, (reprinted from 2nd edition of Dreyfus and Rabinow, op. cit.) p. 343.
90. 'La stratégie du pourtoir', *Nouvel observateur*, 759, 28 May 1979, p. 57. 'Le citron et le lait', *Le Monde*, 21 October 1979, p. 14. The title of Foucault's Collège de France lectures for 1976 was 'Il faut défendre la société', in Michel Foucault, *Résumé des cours 1970–82*, Paris, 1989.
91. Robert Badinter, 'Au nom des mots', in *Michel Foucault. Une histoire de la vérité*, Syros, Paris, 1985, p. 73–5.
92. 'Space, Knowledge and Power', in *The Foucault Reader*, op. cit., p. 245.
93. 'Inutile de se soulever?', *Le Monde*, 11 May 1979, pp. 1–2, trans. James Bernauer as 'Is it useless to revolt?', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Spring 1981, pp. 1–9.
94. 'Est-il donc nécessaire de penser?', *Libération*, 30–31 May 1981, p. 21. trans., with an afterword, by Thomas Keenan as 'Is it really important to think?', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 9, no. 1, Spring 1982, pp. 29–40.