# Foucault's Critique of Political Reason: Individualization and Totalization

*La Crítica de Foucault a la Razón Política: Individualización y Totalización*

*A crítica de Foucault à razão política: individualização e totalização*

Paolo Savoia

# Foucault's Critique of Political Reason: Individualization and Totalization*

por **Paolo Savoia\*\***

ABSTRACT:

This paper tries to sketch the continuity between the topics of government and subjectification and that of discipline and bodies in Foucault's work by assessing the pervasiveness and the importance of the two poles of what Foucault himself, in a Kantian fashion, called a *critique of political reason*: individualization and totalization. In the first place, I will sketch the mode of functioning of "government" with reference to the pastorate invented by the Christian Church, showing that the theme of government and of its historical origins appears for the first time when Foucault talks about the disciplinary powers of normalization of 19th-century psychiatry. In the second place, I will approach directly the *logic of strategy* that makes intelligible the relationships between government and discipline. Finally, these two concepts will be included in what Foucault called the double modern political rationality, and the persistence of this topic, in different forms, in many of his historico-philosophical analyses, and above all as the two sides of what he famously called *bio-power*. The main claim is that the relationship between the concepts of governmentality (the effect of which is totalization) and discipline (the effect of which is individualization) is neither one of conceptual incompatibility nor one of chronological succession in the development of Foucault's thought, but rather a relation of interdependence that needs to be pointed out and further articulated in order to understand and pursue a critique of modern political reason.

KEYWORDS

*Governmentality, Discipline, Modern Political Reason, Gramsci, Subjectivity.*

## La Crítica de Foucault a la razón política: individualización y totalización

RESUMEN

Este documento trata de bosquejar la continuidad entre la temáticas de gobierno y subjetivización, y aquellas referentes a la disciplina y los cuerpos en el trabajo de Foucault, mediante la evaluación de la presencia e importancia de los dos polos de lo que el mismo Foucault, en un estilo kantiano, llamó una *crítica a la razón política*: individualización y totalización. En primer lugar, describiré la forma de funcionamiento del "gobierno" con referencia al poder pastoral inventado por la iglesia cristiana, demostrando que el tema del gobierno y sus orígenes históricos aparecen por primera vez en Foucault cuando habla sobre los poderes disciplinarios de la normalización en la psiquiatría del siglo XIX. En segundo lugar, haré una aproximación directa hacia la *lógica de la estrategia* que hace inteligible la relación entre gobierno y disciplina. Finalmente, estos dos conceptos serán incluidos en lo que Foucault llama la doble razón política moderna, y la persistencia de este tema, en diferentes formas, en muchos análisis histórico-filosóficos, y sobre todo como las dos caras de lo que él llamó famosamente *bio-poder*. La principal afirmación es que la relación entre los conceptos de gubernamentalidad (el efecto por el cual se da la totalización) y la disciplina (el efecto por el cual se da la individualización) no es ni una incompatibilidad conceptual ni una sucesión cronológica en el desarrollo del pensamiento de Foucault, sino más bien una relación de interdependencia que necesita ser resaltada para una futura articulación, con el fin de entender y continuar hacia la crítica de la razón política moderna.

## A crítica de Foucault à razão política: individualização e totalização

RESUMO
Este documento tenta esboçar a continuidade entre a temática de governo e subjetivação, e aquelas referentes à disciplina e aos corpos no trabalho de Foucault, mediante a avaliação da presença e importância dos dois polos do que o mesmo Foucault, em um estilo kantiano, chamou uma *crítica à razão política: individualização e totalização*. Em primeiro lugar, descreve-se a forma de funcionamento do "governo" com relação ao pastoreio idealizado pela Igreja Cristã, demonstrando que o tema do governo e suas origens históricas aparecem pela primeira vez em Foucault quando ele fala sobre os poderes disciplinares da normalização na psiquiatria do século XIX. Em segundo lugar, será feita uma aproximação direta à lógica da estratégia que faz inteligível a relação entre governo e disciplina. Finalmente, estes dois conceitos serão incluídos no que Foucault chama de dupla razão política moderna, e a persistência desse tema, em diferentes formas, em muitas análises histórico-filosóficas, e, sobretudo, como as duas caras do que ele chamou famosamente biopoder. Pode-se afirmar que a relação entre os conceitos de governamentalidade (o efeito pelo qual se dá a totalização) e a disciplina (o efeito pelo qual se dá a individualização) não é nem uma incompatibilidade conceitual nem uma sucessão cronológica no desenvolvimento do pensamento de Foucault, mas sim é uma relação de interdependência que precisa ser ressaltada para uma futura articulação, com o objetivo de entender e continuar em direção da crítica da razão política moderna.

In the past few years many scholars, influenced by the publication of Foucault's lectures of the 1980s, have undertaken to show the continuities and compatibilities between the themes of power and governmentality, and the themes of the so-called "late" Foucault, such as the care of the self, *parrhesia*, etc. But on the other hand, it would be interesting to point out the links between the topics of government and subjectification and that of discipline and bodies, as developed in the courses of the early 1970's, especially those on psychiatric power and its extension as power of normalization.

My paper tries to sketch this continuity by assessing the pervasiveness and the importance of the two poles of what Foucault himself, in a Kantian fashion, called a *critique of political reason*: individualization and totalization. I argue that Foucault wanted to find out the historical conditions of possibility for the exercise of power in modern societies, namely governmentality (the regulation of totalities) and discipline (the regulation of individualities).

First, I will present the mode of functioning of "government" with reference to the pastorate invented by the Christian Church, showing that the theme of government and of its historical origins appears for the first time when Foucault talks about the disciplinary powers of normalization of 19th century psychiatry. Second, I will approach directly the *logic of strategy* that makes intelligible the relationships between government and discipline. Finally, these two concepts will be included in what Foucault called the double modern political rationality, and the persistence of this topic, in different forms, in many of his historico-philosophical analyses, and above all as the two sides of what he famously called *bio-power*.

My main claim is that the relationship between the concepts of governmentality (the effect of which is totalization) and discipline (the effect of which is individualization) is neither one of conceptual incompatibility nor one of simple chronological succession in the development of Foucault's thought, but rather a relation of interdependence that needs to be pointed out and further articulated in order to understand and to pursue

a critique of modern political reason.[1] This is not just a matter of philology but rather a matter of pursuing one of many possible interpretations of Foucault's complex thought. Both the publication of the late courses at the Collège de France and the subsequent focus by commentators on the topics developed in these courses, such as ancient practical philosophy, spiritual exercises, and *parrhesia*, could lead us to think that governmentality was for Foucault just one moment of passage, a sort of transitional object, toward the deployment of a new interest in ethics and subjectivity, or that governmentality ended up being absorbed by the ethics of the self.[2]

This paper aims to show that even if an ethics of the self took the main stage in the late courses, we do not have to forget the *politics* of the self, nor how much ethics and politics of the self are intertwined in Foucault's courses of the 1970s, which are the ones that are most interesting for the purposes of this paper and from a political point of view. The reference to Gramsci I will make at the end must be read in this light, in other words as an attempt, even if at an embryonic stage, to firmly maintain Foucault's thought in the field of political philosophy, and to argue that his approach is not incompatible with a Marxist one. On the other hand, some other commentators have argued that the concept of governmentality in the courses of the late 1970s implies something like a conversion of Foucault to liberalism, or at least to some of the principles of the liberal traditions he discusses, either praising this shift or criticizing it.[3] The present paper disagrees with these interpretations, and argues that Foucault's thought remains one of the best critical tools we have to understand the dominance of neo-liberal thought and politics, at least in the West.

---

1   On this point see Gordon, Burchell and Miller (1991); Barry, Osborne and Rose (1996); Donzelot and Gordon 2008; Binkley and Capetillo (2009).

2   The literature is expanding, but see Davidson (1994); Adorno (1996); Gros and Levy (2003); Detel (2005); Cremonesi (2008); Bernini (2011). Also, while I think that, since Foucault has always been interested in subjectivity as a process, we can easily understand his interest and fascination with ancient ethics, on the other hand understanding his deep and prolonged study of ancient philosophy seems to be more difficult, at least with respect to his previous work. Perhaps there has been too much insistence on the continuity between his production of the 1970s and that of the 1980s, and it would be interesting –which would require another paper– to point out the ruptures and discontinuities that exist between the two periods.

3   For example, Ewald (1986) and Pezet (2007) praise Foucault's assumed liberalism, while Pestaña (2010) blames it. A good essay by Grenier and Orléan (2007) presents a nuanced assessment of Foucault's liberal "temptation". For an overview of understandings and misunderstandings on Foucault and neo-liberalism see Lemke (2011).

## Government and Discipline

In his 1977-78 course on *Security Territory Population*, Foucault explores power practices primarily at the level of their political exercise, of the exercise of political sovereignty, thus shifting his attention from previous analyses of powers of normalization. In any event, I will try to show the existence of strong links between two sets of courses –*Security Territory Population/The Birth of Biopolitics* and *Psychiatric Power/Abnormal*– by focusing on the concept of government, leaving aside the historical specificity of Foucault's analyses.

The lecture of February 1st concerns the use itself of the word "government". Foucault's hypothesis is that during the sixteenth century the general problem of an art of government flourished, in all of its various meanings: the government of oneself, the government of souls and conduct, the government of children, and finally the government of the State (Foucault 2007). As we will see, we can find here the genealogical origin of a series of important questions about the ways in which power relations work, and about the birth of the human sciences; questions that will be summarized by the concept of *governmentality*. Foucault, while introducing this new methodological grid, says at the same time that government is neither a substitute for discipline, nor a way of suggesting the disappearance of the question of sovereignty from modern political discourses. Rather, the notion of government opens up a new dimension of analysis; the individuation of a general kind of power relations that goes hand in hand with discipline and sovereignty (Foucault 2007). Foucault clearly indicates the stakes for the introduction of this new concept of governmentality –which is both a methodological tool and the object of a historical inquiry– when he summarizes the three intended meanings. First, is "«the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific […] power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instruments" (Foucault 2007, 108). Second, is "the tendency, the line of force, that […] has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power […] of the type of power that we can call 'government'", which is also the matrix of the principal forms of knowledge in our societies" (Foucault 2007, 108-109). Third, is something that hints at the process of "governamentalization" of the modern State, where the State is understood as the historical correlate of practices of government (Foucault 2007, 109).

The second point is the one I want to analyze here, which concerns what kind of power we understand by the term "government" in its relationships with particular forms of knowledge.

The semantic field covered by the concept of government includes, according to Foucault, the notions of a movement in space, of material subsistence, of medical and spiritual direction towards health and salvation, and finally it always refers to an intercourse, to processes of exchange between individuals. Clearly, the objects of government are not things but people, individuals or groups. The origins of this form of power are to be found –the lecture goes on– in the practices of pastoral power and spiritual direction. Even if these ideas and practices originated in the pre-Christian East, Foucault argues that it is only with the birth of the Christian Church that the pastorate, as an autonomous kind of power, has been crystallized in a series of precise mechanisms and institutions, both modifying its Eastern form and appropriating certain Greek and Roman techniques of direction. Thus, for Foucault, the history of pastoral power as we know it –pastoral power which, "is doubtless something from which we have still not freed ourselves" (Foucault 2007, 148)– begins with the birth of the Christian form of the pastorate. The three main innovations of the Christian pastorate revolve around the relationships between *salvation*, *obedience* and *truth*:

1) At the level of *salvation*, we notice that the pastor is placed in a subtle and complex network of reciprocal moral links and shared responsibilities with the members of the flock he governs. These bounds concern the individuals' capabilities, their merits and faults, and the details of their actions, and the pastor could arrive at the point in which he has to sacrifice himself for the flock's good.
2) *Obedience* of each individual to the pastor becomes an end in itself –the pastor's conduction has no other goal outside of the relationship between the master and the disciple, and it reveals an entire practice of submission of one individual to another individual. This field of generalized and individualized obedience has no other end than the mortification of the conducted individual's own will.
3) As for the problem of *truth*, Foucault tells us that of course the pastor has to teach the revealed truth of the Scriptures, but that the main innovation of the pastorate resides elsewhere. In the first place, the pastor's teaching must be a direction of the daily conduct of the members of the flock: this teaching must pass through constant observation and supervision of every individual's conduct in order to form a corpus of knowledge of their behavior. In the second place, the pastor uses and modifies techniques of direction of conscience that come from ancient philosophy. The function of Christian examination of conscience is not to assure the individual's mastery of himself; rather, the individual has to tell the director what he has done, what he has experienced, what he is, and the hidden thoughts that inhabit his mind. The examination of conscience is a way of better fixing the relationship of subordination to the other and, at the same time, for the conducted individual to be subjected to the truth he or she tells about him or herself. This connection between examination of conscience and direction of conscience implies that the directed individual tells the truth about himself, the formation of a kind of truth, the effect of which is the intensification of a power/knowledge relation, namely the process of individualization that produces a specific kind of subject through a mechanism of subjection. Foucault indicates what is at stake in this genealogy of the pastorate: "What the history of the pastorate involves, therefore, is the entire history of procedures of human individualization in the West. Let's say also that it involves the history of the subject" (Foucault 2007, 184).

Five years before this series of lectures, Foucault gave a detailed description of what he called "psychiatric power". Here his main starting point, which involved a critique of some of the things he had previously said about the history of madness, is that we can understand the history of psychiatry only if we investigate the kind of power that is exercised inside of the asylum, namely "disciplinary power". Foucault offered here, in a lecture on November 21, 1973, speaking about the psychiatric power, the first description of what became the main arguments of *Discipline and Punish*. Four points characterize the famous disciplinary apparatus (they are well known, so I'll be very brief about them): 1) Discipline tends to be a total hold, an exhaustive capture of the individual's body, actions, and behavior; it shapes the individuality itself by managing the space and time the individual inhabits; 2) Discipline functions as a constant, continuous and anonymous control: in a disciplinary apparatus one is perpetually under someone else's gaze, always observed; discipline looks forward to the future, when it will become a habit; 3) Discipline needs to record through a process of permanent writing everything the individual does and says, because this permanent writing allows the disciplinary apparatus to accumulate sets of precise information about individuals, and therefore to intervene pre-

ventively on their acts and thoughts; 4) Discipline follows a principle of constant distribution and classification of individuals, a principle that always produces something like a residue, which is the unclassifiable, namely the abnormal (Foucault 2006).

What I would like to emphasize here is that, when Foucault wants to account for the concrete psychiatric scenes of the relation between doctors and patients, he stops using the disciplinary vocabulary and begins to use the same terms he later employs, as we have seen, to characterize the pastorate as one of the genealogical matrixes of governmentality. Even though Foucault is not here aware of the distinction between two kinds of power, we can easily recognize the dynamics he later calls "government". The relationship between the physician and the patient is in fact described as a relation of *direction* (a religious word whose origin should be studied –claims Foucault), which aims to put the disordered will of the mad man in a state of *obedience* with respect to the physician's actions and discourse (see, for example Foucault 2006). Moreover, one of the most constant features of the psychiatric power is that the patient has to state the truth about him or herself, she has to tell her story, and she has to tell it to the psychiatrist who hears it, judges it and validates it. Truth-telling is one of the main components of the process of individual subjection, understood both as the relation of subjection to someone, and the self-formation of a positive identity.

*Abnormal*, the course Foucault gave in 1974-75, the year after the course on psychiatric power, focuses on the extension of this power outside of the asylum, and on its pervasiveness in the 19th century in the shape of what he calls "power of normalization". It hasn't been pointed out very often that this is the context in which the very word "government" appears for the first time in Foucault's work as a specific technical concept. In his own terms, the Classical Age invented, among other things for which it is much more praised, "an 'art of governing'" in the sense of the government of children, of the mad, of the poor and of the workers. Foucault claims that the term "government" here indicates three things: 1) a juridico-political theory of power centered on the notion of the will and its alienation, representation and transfer; 2) a complex State apparatus; and finally –something closer to what will be his second meaning, employed in his 1977-78 course; 3) a general technique of the exercise of power that does not coincide with an institution or an apparatus, but that has discipline as its main exemplification and that aims to produce a global effect of normalization of men and women (Foucault 2003).

To characterize this kind of power Foucault refers to the work of the great historian of medicine and the life sciences, Georges Canguilhem, and particularly to his description of the norm as something that brings with it both a principle of qualification and of correction –or, in Humean terms, description and prescription– as something that does not exclude and reject but rather that positively intervenes and incites (Foucault 2003).

## A logic of Strategy

Here are two general definitions of government and governmentality that Foucault published a few years later:

> Basically, power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or their mutual engagement than a question of "government". This word must be allowed the very broad meaning it had in the sixteenth century […]; it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed […]. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others (Foucault 2000a, 341).

> This encounter between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self I call 'governmentality (Foucault 1997a, 225).

Government is thus the activity of *conducting the conduct* of other people through a power relation, a production of truth, and the regulated and guided action of the conducted subject on itself. Governing means structuring the field of other people's possible actions, a field which is in its turn organized around the axes of power, knowledge and the self. Foucault's mention of *possibility* is here referred to as the specific dimension of the technologies of the self, the space –always related to power relations and fields of knowledge– of the techniques that an individual operates on itself in order to modify its body, its soul, its psyche, its conduct, its thoughts. I think that *the notion of government can be defined as a methodological tool that allows Foucault to take into account power relations, truth games and the operations that a subject performs on itself in the same process by which it comes into being as a subject*.

This is why I don't think that the introduction of the notion of government should be seen as a sort of paradigm shift in Foucault's analyses of power, but rather as the general analytical tool that allowed him to describe his field of inquiry as that of the intertwining dimensions of power, knowledge and ethics. Despite some ambiguous texts, I think that government is not a mere substitute

for discipline, but a concept introduced to conceive the broad stakes that revolve around a power relation. As we have seen before, Foucault's description of disciplinary power does not fully account for the plurality and richness of psychiatric power; rather, its extension on the abnormal needed to be accounted for *in terms of government*. Discipline and government are not incompatible with each other, because the notion of government is broader, covering a larger sphere of phenomena. I think that in the case of psychiatric power it hints to the overlapping functioning of disciplinary mechanisms, of practices of individual direction, and of procedures for extracting the truth about individuals. The result is the production of a subject who has at its disposal –so to speak– structured fields of possible actions and possible ways of experiencing him or herself. By government, therefore, we have to understand something more than a force relation: *it is a way of defining the space of power relations within a historico-philosophical analysis of the relationships between power, knowledge and forms of subjectivity*.

The relationships between discipline and government can be thought of in terms of what Foucault once called a strategic logic, a *logic of strategy*, as opposed to a dialectic logic. This kind of logic does not put to work contradictory terms within the field of the homogeneous and does not promise a final unity, but establishes possible connections between heterogeneous elements that remain heterogeneous even if they are historically connected (Foucault 2008). I think this is a very important point by Foucault, a sort of key to understanding both his philosophical and his historical approaches. But let's focus on our topic.

In this way, to take up my example, the distribution of acts and gestures in the space and time of the asylum, typical of disciplinary techniques, can be structurally linked, from a historical point of view, to different relationships of highly individualized obedience and direction.

Let's take an example. In his lectures on psychiatric power Foucault insists on the case of the formation of a regular and permanent army in the 18th century, an example he also uses in his course on governmentality in 1977-78. In the first case, he wants to exemplify the disciplinary mechanism, while in the second he wants to point out an art of government understood as a conduction of conducts. From the point of view of discipline, the army deploys a set of techniques for identification, surveillance, and recognition of individuals, in order to fight against the phenomenon of desertion, which in its turn emerged only against the background of the disci-

plinary apparatus and of the obligation to serve in the army (Foucault 2006). From the point of view of governmentality, the phenomenon of desertion can be read in terms a moral and political resistance: the analysis of the army in terms of government and conduct allows Foucault to pinpoint the specific ethical dimension of the army as a disciplinary apparatus. Since joining the army and waging war became mandatory, it also became a moral and political conduct, the behavior of every good citizen of the State. This means that a particular set of acts, orchestrated within the framework of discipline, is invested by new power practices, a new regime of truth, and a new kind of relationship to oneself (Foucault 2007). Desertion, understood in terms of discipline as an abnormal conduct, as that which diverges from the military apparatus, thus becomes an ethical and political counter-conduct when seen from the point of view of governmentality. Therefore, we are not confronted here with a choice between two competing and mutually exclusive concepts, but rather with a way of enriching the analysis of a particular historical phenomenon by making intelligible the relationships between heterogeneous elements. Moreover, the historical roots of both sides of the emergence of the army are to be individuated, according to Foucault, in the Christian pastorate.

In a note in the manuscript of *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault writes that "liberal governmentality was both legalistic and normalizing, disciplinary regulation being the switch-point between the two aspects" (Foucault 2008, 260). Once again, there is no incompatibility between government and discipline, but rather an explicit connection. Moreover, in the same note Foucault defines discipline as "an 'individualizing' governmentality" (Foucault 2008, 260), the individual dimension of government, where the government itself, as a general type of power, seems to be the switch point between disciplinary techniques that function through psychological sciences, and the liberal style of government that acts through political economy.

I don't want to oversimplify and hide the problems that arise in the historical interpretation of the overlap between governmental security apparatuses and disciplinary powers, but my goal here is a general and philosophical one. I present here one last passage to support my claim. In an important interview from 1984, Foucault distinguishes between power relations (or games of power), techniques of government, and states of domination. Governmental techniques are precisely in the middle, and I want to emphasize here that they work as a kind of bridge, the tool that allows us to articulate the connections

between power relations, games of truth and technologies of the self.

I am saying that "governmentality" implies the relationship of the self to itself, and I intend this concept of "governmentality" to cover the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other (Foucault 1997b).

## Individualization and totalization

It is possible to connect the introduction of governmentality to another aspect of Foucault's work. Foucault, in fact, came to describe in a general way the political rationality of our present precisely through the genealogy of pastoral power as a kind of government of individuals by means of their own truth. The logic of modern political rationality is summarized as a permanent integration of individuals in a totality and, *vice versa*, as a way of governing a totality in order to regulate individual conducts, namely *a constant correlation between an increasing individualization and the reinforcement of a totality* (Foucault 2000b; Foucault 2000c). The concept of government provides the tool that allows us to articulate these forms of correlation. We are able to clarify the formula *omnes et singulatim* if we take a look at two series of elements that keep interacting with each other in all of the analyses Foucault made in the 1970s, starting from the courses on psychiatry and the abnormal. Psychiatric power worked both through particular institutions, both public and private, and the State apparatus. What Foucault was interested in was, however, the mechanics of the kind of power which is the correlate and the condition of possibility of these two series of apparatuses.

We can identify two closely intertwined logics of psychiatric power: on the one hand, a logic of the government of singular individuals in hospitals, asylums etc.; and on the other hand, a logic of public hygiene that works by monitoring the whole society and its population (and that goes as far as interfering with the penal apparatus and the definition of crimes). Since psychiatric power crossed its borders and became a general technology of normalization, we can see a thorough example of this double logic, or double rationality. There are two processes which are logically distinct but chronologically coincident: elements outside of the curve of normality are individuated in the social body; these elements are then treated by practices of individual government aimed at restoring them back to the totality, or at separating them from it. This process

is clearly circular, because the same norm that allows one to individuate abnormal elements in the totality is constituted through techniques of government of individuals that, in their turn, can be strengthen and modified by the practices of government of a totality. In other words, *psychiatric power is both individualizing and totalizing; it allows a perpetual exchange between the government of a totality and the government of individuals*.

For example, the specific object we call "sexuality" emerged in the same way from a process of medicalization and psychiatrization of certain behaviors. It thus became, Foucault argues in *La volonté de savoir*, the center of a double logic of power: anatomo-politics and bio-politics. On the one hand, we have the disciplinary power that invests the individual body; on the other, the forms of power that concern population as the totality of human beings considered from a biological point of view. And again, we can see government as the tool by which we can articulate the description of the interactions between disciplinary powers, whose target are the individuals, and security apparatuses, whose target is population.

Foucault also describes a double functioning of the power of normalization in our societies, according to the two poles of discipline and security. "Normation" is the action of discipline, where the norm is prior to the normal and the abnormal, and normalization is the adaptation of individuals to this optimal goal fixated in advance. "Normalization", in the strict sense, is exemplified by Foucault through a discussion of medical apparatuses of security against epidemics. Here the normal and the abnormal are prior to the norm: we have different curves of normality individuated in a collectivity, and then the norm will result as an interplay between these curves of normality (Foucault 2007). Finally, thanks to this double rationality we can individuate –I only say this in passing– the two main sciences that function as apparatuses of power/knowledge in our present, namely the psy sciences and the economic sciences, the *homo psychologicus* and the *homo œconomicus* as objects of scientific knowledge, of political government and of ethical self-elaboration. Again, this indicates both individualization and totalization.

## Foucault and Gramsci

The concept of governmentality allows us to connect two series of heterogeneous elements: on the one hand, psychiatry as the government of individuals, and sexuality as anatomo-politics, discipline, normation, and the

psy sciences; on the other hand, psychiatry as public hygiene, and sexuality as bio-politics of the population, security apparatuses, normalization, and the economic sciences. As we have seen, I think that the idea of a double political rationality emerges from the courses on psychiatry, together with the beginning of the problematization of *government*, understood as the tool that opens up for inquiry the field of the multiple relations between power, knowledge and forms of subjectivity.

I want to conclude by suggesting a possible connection between Foucault and Antonio Gramsci, which needs to be deepened and better explored, on the question of the dynamics of resistance against this political rationality, parallel to that of the intertwining techniques of individualization and totalization.[4] I am referring to the brief *Notebook 25*, on the history of subaltern social groups and the problem of their disunity. Gramsci draws here a sketch of the dynamics through which a subaltern group emerges, or could emerge, as an autonomous political subject starting from the very fact of its subjugation. Here we have visible what we could describe in Foucauldean terms as a process of subjectification that does not presuppose the previous existence of the political subject. We can see a political subject that emerges from within a power relation. So here are the six stages Gramsci individuates:

1) formation and diffusion of the subaltern group from previously existing but not organized social entities; 2) active or passive commitment of the subaltern group to the dominant political subjects (for Gramsci, these are the ones that own the means of production); 3) renovation of the strategy of the dominant political classes in order to confront the new subaltern groups; 4) formulation of partial and specific claims by the subaltern groups; 5) the subaltern groups start to make global claims, but still with the language of the dominant group; and 6) the subaltern formulate new claims for a new form of autonomy with their own language and with their own specific practices (Gramsci 1975).

For Foucault and Gramsci subaltern groups or subjugated subjects are both the product of power relations and the active subjects of resistance. More specifically, Foucault tells us that in order to resist we have to escape the trap of the alternative between individuals and collectivities. Modern power functions precisely by integrating these two dimensions, so what Foucault suggests we have to do is to question the alternative between the individual and the collective. As always, the question that concludes every discussion of Foucault's work is the same: *what can we do with it?* ✷

## References

1.  Adorno, Francesco Paolo. 1996. *Le style du philosophe: Foucault et le dire-vrai*. Paris: Kimé.

2.  Barry, Andrew, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose (Eds.). 1996. *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism, and Rationalities of Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

3.  Bernini, Lorenzo (Ed.). 2011. *Michel Foucault: gli antichi e i moderni. Parrhesia, Aufklärung, ontologia dell'attualità*. Pisa: ETS.

4.  Binkley, Sam and Jorge Capetillo (Eds.). 2009. *A Foucault for the 21st Century: Governmentality, Biopolitics and Discipline in the New Millennium*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

5.  Cremonesi, Laura. 2008. *Michel Foucault e il mondo antico: spunti per una critica dell'attualità*. Pisa: ETS.

6.  Davidson, Arnold I. 1994. Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought. In *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting, 123-148. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

7.  Demirovic, Alex. 2009. *Foucault, Gramsci, and Critical Theory*. www.lancs.ac.uk (accessed on 23 March 2012)

8.  Detel, Wolfgang. 2005. *Foucault and Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

9.  Donzelot, Jacques and Colin Gordon. 2008. Governing Liberal Societies – The Foucault Effect in the English-Speaking World. *Foucault Studies* 5: 48-62.

10. Ewald, François. 1986. *L'état providence*. Paris: Grasset.

11. Foucault, Michel. 1997a. Technologies of the Self. In *Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, ed. James D. Faubion, 223-252. New York: The New Press.

12. Foucault, Michel. 1997b. The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom. In *Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, ed. James D. Faubion, 281-301. New York: The New Press.

---

4   The literature on Gramsci, critical theory and post-structuralism is vast and scattered. More punctual comparisons between Foucault and Gramsci can be read in Ives (2004), and Demirovic (2009).

13. Foucault, Michel. 2000a. The Subject and Power. In *Power. Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, ed. James D. Faubion, 449-453. New York: The New Press.

14. Foucault, Michel. 2000b. Omnes et singulatim. Towards a Critique of Political Reason. In *Power. Essential Works of Foucault: 1954-1984*, ed. James D. Faubion, 298-325. New York: New Press.

15. Foucault, Michel. 2000c. *The political technology of individuals*. In *Power. Essential Works of Foucault: 1954-1984*, ed.James D. Faubion, 403-417. New York: New Press.

16. Foucault, Michel. 2003. *Abnormal. Lectures at the Collège de France 1974-1975*. [Translated by Graham Burchell]. New York: Picador.

17. Foucault, Michel. 2006. *Psychiatric Power. Lectures at the Collège de France 1973-1974*. [Translated by Graham Burchell]. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

18. Foucault. Michel. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*. [Translated by Graham Burchell].New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

19. Foucault, Michel. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-79*. [Translated by Graham Burchell]. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

20. Gordon, Colin, Graham Burchell and Peter Miller (Eds.). 1991. *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality*. [With two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault]. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

21. Gramsci, Antonio 1975. *Quaderni del carcere*. Vol. III.Torino: Einaudi.

22. Grenier, Jean-Yves and André Orléan. 2007. Michel Foucault, l'économie politique et le libéralisme. *Annales. Histoire, sciences sociales* 5: 1155-1182

23. Gros, Frédéric and Carlos Lévy (Eds.). 2003. *Foucault et la philosophie antique*. Paris: Kimé.

24. Ives, Peter. 2004. *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*.London: Pluto Press.

25. Lemke, Thomas. 2011. *Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

26. Pestaña, José Luis Moreno. 2011. *Foucault, la gauche et la politique*. Pariss: Textuel.

27. Pezet, Eric (Eds.). 2007. *Management et conduite de soi: enquête sur les ascèses de la performance*. Paris: Vuibert.