

‘To make live and to let die’ –Foucault on Racism

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Foucault scholars should celebrate the fact that Michel Foucault’s lectures during the last 14 years of his life at the Collège de France are finally being published. These lectures will allow scholars to explore the scholarly laboratory of one of the most original minds of the 20th century. They will allow us to make sense of the many gaps in Foucault’s corpus, particularly those in the work of the last decade. These lectures are also particularly important because we are able to get extended exposure to Foucault’s acts of harsh and merciless self-criticism, his unceasing excavation of the ruins of knowledge, and his exemplary political and intellectual engagement with the issues of the day. As far as I have been able to check, three of these lecture courses have appeared in French: the ones from 1975, 1976, and 1982. My paper will discuss the 1976 course entitled “To Defend Society” [*Il Faut Défendre la Société*].

I will refrain from summarizing the course. There is now a very good review by John Marks in *Theory, Culture and Society*, Volume 17, No. 5, 2000 that gives an excellent account of the contents, and relates the trajectory pursued in these lectures to Foucault’s preoccupations throughout his intellectual career with War, Genealogy, and biopolitics. There is also a brief, but insightful discussion of these lectures in James Miller’s intellectual biography of Foucault, pages 288-291. The work of Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* is also a very good point of departure for understanding these lectures, although I would caution against Stoler’s descriptions of the actual contents of the lectures, as well as some overall conclusions she draws from her skewed reading of the tapes she heard.¹ Furthermore, students of Foucault can find Foucault’s own descriptions of his lectures in his resumes, now translated in volume one of the *Essential Works of Michel Foucault*.

¹ Briefly, in Stoler’s work I discern two main criticisms. On the one hand that Foucault failed to give enough attention to the colonial dimensions of the emergence of biopolitics. On the hand, Stoler affirms that Foucault abandoned the line of investigation pursued in the 1976 lectures. The first criticism is only acceptable if we weaken its claims. In other words, Foucault did fail to pay attention to the details of the way in which the normalization of the political body of a population was related to projects of foreign colonization. Yet, Foucault is not conceptually and theoretically unaware of their complicity and interdependence. At one point in the lectures he explicitly talks about the way in which the emergence of the biopower state is a form of internal colonization, in which the tactics of the domestication and normalization of the colonized body are applied on the colonizing body. The second criticism would not stand if we read the 1976 lectures, along with those in 1977, as well as his Tanner lectures, and the lectures gathered in the volume edited by Martin, Gutman, and Hutton (1988). I think that the two last volumes of the *history of sexuality* to be printed during Foucault’s life time eclipsed his work on governmentality and political rationality (Burchell, Gordon, and Miller 1991)

Nonetheless, let me just offer the following synoptic overview of the lectures. The lectures dealt with: First and foremost a retrospective look at what Foucault had been doing over the last five years, since he had been elected to the Collège de France. This retrospective look sought to cull the conceptual elements of the approach that have been used in works like the *Archeology of Knowledge*, and *Discipline und Punish*. In the first two lectures, published in the 1980 volume edited by Colin Gordon, *Knowledge/Power*, Foucault lays out his understanding of the relationship between archeology, genealogy, and subjugated knowledges, on the one hand, and legitimate, official, and erudite forms of knowledge on the other. Foucault also distinguished between two paradigms or forms of understanding power. On one side we have what he calls the economicist form of power that attributes to the sovereign a legitimate right that this then can exert upon subjects as a form of contract. The key words of this representation of power are: right, law, and jurisprudence. This is the juridical idea of power. On the other side we have what Foucault calls a disciplinary form of power, which is above all anti-sovereign, and anti-judicial. It is a form of control that exerts force by normalizing, and creating the conditions of surveillance that lead to subjects' docility. It is a form of power that is diffused and does not act on individuals, but determines a horizon of action. It does not discipline, but normalizes. It does not operate on juridical rules, or rights, but on norms and standards that refer to a social technology. It is a power that emerges with the development of the human sciences, and in particular the sciences of normalization. In this way, this power is not centralized, but diffused, not owned, but anonymous, not exerted, but relayed and lived.

What is extremely noteworthy is that at the end of the second lecture Foucault links up the question of genealogy as a critical and rebellious or insurrected form of analysis -- or to put it more explicitly, the dialect of the relationship between the effects of truth on power, and the power of truth-- to the question of war. The lectures then concern role of the war in society, and more precisely how war roars behind the peace of society. If genealogy is a form of theoretical war against established and normalized knowledge, the question is implied, then is there a way in which genealogy is the continuation of social war by theoretical means, and if this is the case, what kind of war was this that gave rise to this critical form of knowledge, and on whose side were the belligerent forces that forged this new type of weapon? On a second place, therefore, but just as important as the first one, these lectures are a mediation on war: wars of conquest, war of resistance, civil wars, racial wars, class war, and the total war against putative foes, and against the social body itself. This second topic of analysis could be put in still more poignant terms: if politics is war pursued by other means, and critique is politics pursued by other means, is not critique a continuation of war, and if this link can be made, what kind of critique do we want that would not be a perpetuation of war, in which the inauguration of a new political order would go beyond the insidious rationality of having to submit life to the management of the state, and the granting of rights presupposes having been allowed to live, or to be recognized as living by the political order.²

² Foucault came to understand his work on biopolitics as a critique of the failures of the revolutionary movements of the sixties, but also as a constructive project that attempted to discern the lineaments of a new political ethos beyond the demonic logic of modern biopolitics states. Here the works of Lemke (1997), Agamben (1998) and Dean

On a third place, these lectures are about political reason, or rather about the sources of political authority. These lectures render further evidence to those among us who have been arguing for a political reading of Foucault's work. It is very clear that Foucault was obsessed with the question of the sources of political authority, and in these lectures, he sets out to relate the development of forms of knowledge, what he calls the political history, with the project of establishing legitimate sources of power –I will return to this in greater detail. Finally, I think the other most important focus of these lectures has to do with totalitarianism, and more specifically, with the total state. The total state becomes in these lectures the acme of biopolitics, or what he called in his Tanner lectures, pastoral political power, which must attend to each and every individual in such a way that their care must entail being ready to sacrifice them if they are to be saved. This total state is understood as the culmination of the logic of political authority unleashed by the French revolution and the bourgeois political revolution that gave rise to the modern liberal democratic state, both of which bring together the Greco-Roman and Christian ideas of juridical and political power. In fact, I would hope that once these lectures are made available in English one of the first things that would be done is to read them in tandem with Hannah Arendt's work on totalitarianism.

In the following, I would like to discuss briefly the question of power, its relationship to political rationality, and finally, the production of forms of knowledge that at one point may have been contestational and insurrectional, but that in time became legitimate and normalized, and thus part of a system of normalization and control. I would like to close by discussing in greater detail what I take to be one of Foucault's central discoveries in these lectures, one that is fundamental to the whole project of understanding biopower.

Power is to the social system as computation is to the computing system. In both cases, neither exists apart from what performs them. They are not entities. They are names for what a certain system does. Foucault is a historical nominalist. He did not have a theory of power, but different narratives and hypotheses about how forms of social control were enacted. Power is at best the name for certain effects, but never the name for something that some one either has or suffers without them at some level having participated in its transmittal. Here, I would like to quote Foucault on power from an interview, which merits quoting since it was conducted by way of a written exchange, and because it comes from the same period of the lectures I am discussing. I will quote at length:

“That one can never be “outside of power” does not mean that one is in every way trapped. I would suggest rather (but these are hypotheses to be explored): that power is coextensive with the social body; there are not, between the links of its networks, any golden sands of basic freedoms; that power relations are intermingled with other types of relations (of production, kinship, family, sexuality) where they play both a conditioning and a conditioned role, that these relations don't obey the unique form of interdiction and punishment, but that that they take multiple forms; that their interweaving sketches out the general facts of domination, that this domination is organized in a more or less coherent and

(2001) would be indispensable points of departure. I hope to return to their constructive criticisms of Foucault's work in a future work.

unitary strategy; that the dispersed, heteromorphous and local procedures of power are readjusted, reinforced and transformed by these global strategies, and all this with numerous phenomena of inertia, dislocation and resistance; that one must not therefore accept a primary and massive fact of domination (a binary structure with on one side the “dominating” and on the other, the “dominated”) but rather a multiform production of relations of domination which are partially integratable into the strategies of the whole; that relations of power do in fact “serve,” but not at all because they are “in the service” of an economic interest taken as primitive, but because they can be used in strategies; that there are no relations of power without resistances; that the latter are all the more real and effective to the extent that they are formed there where the relations of power are exercised; resistance to power doesn’t have to come from elsewhere in order to be real, nor is it trapped because it is the compatriot of power. It exists all the more insofar as it is there where power is; it is therefore, like power, multiple and integratable into global strategies.” (Morris and Patton 1979 [1977], 55)

In the 1976 lectures Foucault is at pains to render discernable the relationships between knowledge production, truth, the effects of power, and political authority that are entailed by the kind of analysis of power suggested by these methodological pointers. If there is no “exercise of power without the economy of discourses on truth,” then we can only exercise power by producing truth. In this case, the production of truth has to do with historical discourse, that is, with the production of historical knowledge. What is distinctive in these lectures is the span that Foucault sets out to cover in order to exemplify the ways in which the use of historical narratives, historical knowledge, contributed to the production of a certain power. From the sixteenth century to twentieth century, Foucault covers the ways in which historical narratives were used to legitimate the power of invaders, a power that was juxtaposed to the power of roman emperors, and the claims of the Church on local lords. In the sixteenth century a form of historical narrative developed that sought to reconcile invaded peoples to their invaders vis-à-vis an imperial invader, whose yoke and rule was grounded on theological and juridical forms of right. Against the divine right of kings, and the power of lords based on a legalistic notion of the rights of nature, the power of rebelled, lifted, insurrected warrior castes, the noble savages (which Foucault tellingly thinks runs through the works that focus on the power of war and struggle, from Boulainvilliers to Nietzsche), who reclaim their lands, or who are returning to their place of origins, or who by descent are rightfully lords of a land, is juxtaposed. In the sixteenth century, the unearthing of sometimes mythical, sometimes folkloric, sometimes historical narratives of the origins of the Franks, the German and the Saxons, is deployed contestationally against the claims of lords and popes. Law and power, right and lordship emerged from the bloody muds, carnage, and fires of wars. So, against the pax romana, and the pax catholica of the Holy Roman Empire, is deployed the war of peoples. These wars of peoples, which in the seventeenth century slowly turned into the war of races, established the conditions for all analyses that operate on the basic assumption that politics is war pursued by other means. In other words, behind the quiet of social peace, rumbles the roar of battle. It is precisely against the war of people, and the war of races that we can begin to make sense of Thomas Hobbes, Niccolò Machiavelli, and eventually, Klaus von Clausewitz. The transition is summarized in the following formulation: whereas historical narrative up through the sixteenth century had only concerned itself with singing the praises of power, celebrating

and chronicling the royal deeds on divinely invested Lords and Kings, a type of historical knowledge is discovered that seeks to unmask the violence that simmers under all law. If one form of history was the memory of kings, priests and popes, the other is the memory of peoples, of warriors, of races.

The theory of the *raison d'état*, which is so central in the emergence of modern political thought, must also be read against the background of the permanent state of war that suffuses all of society. For the attempts to formalize the power of the state in the legitimate reaches of what the state can do, according to its own interests, is one way in which the Medieval notion of divine and theologically grounded authority were established. But, this power of the state, referred to the aims and health of the state itself, begins to give rise to ideas of what it is that the state must legitimately attend to. And as the state begins to emerge as a sphere of power, the horizon of its power also begins to be configured. To the state is juxtaposed society, over what it rules and oversees. A legitimate state, grounded on its authority, oversees not the power of a sovereign, but its people. The state must attend to its subjects, and thus begins the synthesis of the medieval notion of legislative and divinely sanctioned power with the Judaic-Christian notion of pastoral power. It is this fusing that eventually gives rise to biopower, a power that individualizes through discipline but also massifies, generalizes, and normalizes by making of a people a population. This new form of political power is accompanied with the deployment of new institutions, like the police, madhouses, hospitals, sanatoriums, and new sciences, such as *Polizeiwissenschaft*, social health, psychiatry, and so on.

From the eighteenth through the nineteenth century, from the French revolution to the rise of the modern biopolitical state, there is a transformation in the discourse of the war of people, which had become a war of races. The bourgeoisie now disavows a discourse that had been used to contest the legitimacy of Roman and Church power, and later the power of kings. The normalization of the sciences, their scientificization, turns above all into a project of rejecting historicism. Historicism was a necessary and logical by-product of the discovery of the political role of historical knowledge. From the 16th through the 19th century, functionaries of the state used history to wage a war against alleged usurpers of national power, and to challenge any power that had overstepped its juridical boundaries. Historicism is just another name for this endless war: the war of historical narratives. It is this historicism that Hegel, as well as Marx, sought to reject with his rationalism. It is this historicism that the emergence of the social sciences, with their claims to rationality, impartiality, objectivity, non-partisanship, sought to put down, to squelch, and to pacify. Bourgeois power is legitimate power because it is grounded in the use of power in accordance with the rational reaches of state power, and because it delegates to the normalized sciences the care of the population. Bourgeois power is legitimate because it is rational, scientific, and self-constrained. And perhaps therein lies its greatest ruse. For in the name of its self-limitation, it disguises how thoroughly it penetrates every dimension of social life.

The narrative developed by Foucault in these lectures is more fractious and detailed than I am portraying. The canvas that Foucault is painting in these lectures concerns not just the wars that gave birth to our society, and its novel forms of knowledge, it also concerns something which I find fascinating, and provocative: the invention of a people. To counter and challenge the power of the invaders, as well as the power of popes and kings,

and using the narratives to unmask their acts of usurpation and tyranny, elements within a social body begin to appeal to the ideas of a people, which then refers to a race, which then refers to a populations, and then is enshrined in the anodyne notion of “society.” From a Foucauldian perspective, the objects of scientific study are partly constituted by the disciplines that seek to study them. So, just as psychiatry produces the madman, and sexology the sexual deviant, and so on, political theory in conjunction with historical discourse, produces a people. But the discourse of political rationality that emerged since the sixteenth century does not secrete a univocal idea of a people. As the political rationality of the modern state develops and grows in intensity, as it augments its claims to power, a people becomes a nation, becomes a population, becomes a biological phenomenon to be tended by all the sciences at the service of the state. Analogously to how sexuality became the locus of the production of control, insofar as it was the pivot of interaction between individuals and their surrounding social environment, race also became the pivot around which the biopower state came to exert its claims, so as to be able to produce certain power effects. What is provocative here is the link that Foucault establishes between the emergence of biopower and the constitution of something that we have now become accustomed to calling society, by which we in fact mean a population, a people, a particular nation. For Foucault the emergence of political rationality is directly linked to the constitution of the object over which it must act. And here I am able to foreground one of the central lessons of these lectures, namely that political theory has to attend to the emergence of political rationality in terms not of its rationality, or claims to reason, but in terms of its modalities of operation. Behind political rationality does not stand reason, or rather, reason is not the alibi of political rationality; instead, political rationality has to do with the horizon of its enactment. If we accept that Foucault is a historical nominalist, and he is a nominalist through and through, in the way that Rorty reads him, and correctly I would argue, then there is no reason behind political power. Political power itself cannot be mystified. There is no power without the horizon of its enactment and the vehicles of its transmission. This is still a misleading way of putting. The effects produced by a certain way of organizing the social body, of studying it, of policing it, of taking care of it, of making sure that its health and protection are attended to in the most detailed and careful ways possible, produce a confrontation of forces, whose momentary stalemates, clashes, subjugations and dispersal, are summarized in the name of power. And that power is the power over life. The political rationality of the modern state is above all a rationality grounded in the way it tends to the life of the population. The power of the biopolitical state is a regulation of life, a tending, a nurturing and management of the living. The political rationality of the modern total state is management of the living body of the people. This logic was epitomized in the paroxysm of the Nazi state, but also in the communist states, with their Gulags.

I have thus far discussed Foucault’s triangulation between the discourses of the production of truth, the power that these discourse enact and make available to social agents, and the constitution of a political rationality that is linked to the invention and creation of its horizon of activity and surveillance. I want now to focus on the main theme of this courses’ last lecture. This theme discloses in a unique way the power and perspicacity of Foucault’s method. The theme concerns the kind of power that biopower renders available, or rather, how biopolitics produces certain power effects by thinking of the living in a novel way. We will approach the theme by way of a contrast: whereas the power of the sovereign under Medieval and early Modern times was the power to make

die and to let live, the power of the total state, which is the biopower state, is the power to make live and to let die. Foucault discerned here a telling asymmetry. If the sovereign exercised his power with the executioner's axe, with the perpetual threat of death, then life was abandoned to its devices. Power was exhibited only on the scaffold, or the guillotine –its terror was the shimmer of the unsheathed sword. Power was ritualistic, ceremonial, theatrical, and to that extent partial, molecular, and calendrical. It was also a power that by its own juridical logic had to submit to the jostling of rights and claims. In the very performance of its might, the power of the sovereign revealed its limitation. It is a power that is localized and circumscribed to the theater of its cruelty, and the staging of its pomp. In contrast, however, the power of the biopower state is over life [expand]. And here Foucault asks “how can biopolitics then reclaim the power over death?” or rather, how can it make die in light of the fact that its claim to legitimacy is that it is guarding, nurturing, tending to life? In so far as biopolitics is the management of life, how does it make die, how does it kill? This is a similar question to the one that theologians asked about the Christian God. If God is a god of life, the giver of life, how can he put to death, how can he allow death to descend upon his gift of life –why is death a possibility if god is the giver of life? Foucault's answer is that in order to re-claim death, to be able to inflict death on its subjects, its living beings, biopower must make use of racism; more precisely, racism intervenes here to grant access to death to the biopower state. We must recall that the political rationality of biopower is deployed over a population, which is understood as a continuum of life. It is this continuum of life that eugenics, social hygiene, civil engineering, civil medicine, military engineers, doctors and nurses, policeman, and so on, tended to by a careful management of roads, factories, living quarters, brothels, red-districts, planning and planting of gardens and recreation centers, and the gerrymandering of populations by means of roads, access to public transformations, placement of schools, and so on. Biopolitics is the result of the development and maintenance of the hothouse of the political body, of the body-politic. Society has become the vivarium of the political rationality, and biopolitics acts on the teeming biomass contained within the parameters of that structure built up by the institutions of health, education, and production.

This is where racism intervenes, not from without, exogenously, but from within, constitutively. For the emergence of biopower as the form of a new form of political rationality, entails the inscription within the very logic of the modern state the logic of racism. For racism grants, and here I am quoting: “the conditions for the acceptability of putting to death in a society of normalization. Where there is a society of normalization, where there is a power that is, in all of its surface and in first instance, and first line, a bio-power, racism is indispensable as a condition to be able to put to death someone, in order to be able to put to death others. The homicidal [*meurtrière*] function of the state, to the degree that the state functions on the modality of bio-power, can only be assured by racism” (Foucault 1997, 227) To use the formulations from his 1982 lecture “The Political Technology of Individuals” –which incidentally, echo his 1979 Tanner Lectures –the power of the state after the 18th century, a power which is enacted through the police, and is enacted over the population, is a power over living beings, and as such it is a biopolitics. And, to quote more directly, “since the population is nothing more than what the state takes care of for its own sake, of course, the state is entitled to slaughter it, if necessary. So the reverse of biopolitics is thanatopolitics.” (Foucault 2000, 416). Racism, is the thanatopolitics of the biopolitics of the total state. They are two sides of one same

political technology, one same political rationality: the management of life, the life of a population, the tending to the continuum of life of a people.

And with the inscription of racism within the state of biopower, the long history of war that Foucault has been telling in these dazzling lectures has made a new turn: the war of peoples, a war against invaders, imperial colonizers, which turned into a war of races, to then turn into a war of classes, has now turned into the war of a race, a biological unit, against its polluters and threats. Racism is the means by which bourgeois political power, biopower, re-kindles the fires of war within civil society. Racism normalizes and medicalizes war. Racism makes war the permanent condition of society, while at the same time masking its weapons of death and torture. As I wrote somewhere else, racism banalizes genocide by making quotidian the lynching of suspect threats to the health of the social body. Racism makes the killing of the other, of others, an everyday occurrence by internalizing and normalizing the war of society against its enemies. To protect society entails we be ready to kill its threats, its foes, and if we understand society as a unity of life, as a continuum of the living, then these threat and foes are biological in nature.

II

In a recent essay Tom McCarthy notes that “the development of conceptual tools for analyzing the racialized dimensions of modern and contemporary politics has lagged, and the shift from legally institutionalized patterns of social domination to domination anchored in the lifeworld cultures and traditions, norms and values, socialization patterns and identity formations have remained largely untheorized in liberal political theory.” (2) In response to this diagnosis, McCarthy proceeds in this essay to articulate a critique of the ideal-nonideal theory dichotomy, which he develops in confrontation with John Rawls’s political philosophy. After some serious and devastating critiques of Rawls’ theoretical blindness to race, notwithstanding Rawls’s perfunctory references to the endurance and recrudescence of racism in contemporary American society, McCarthy closes by offering the points of departure for a critical theory of race. This theory would seek to combine the normative, the empirical, and the critical. Such a critical theory of race seeks to combine these elements because from the standpoint of ideal normative political theory “there are no theoretical means at hand for bridging the gap between a color-blind ideal theory and a color-coded political reality, for the approach of ideal theory provides theoretical mediation *between* the ideal and the real –or rather, what mediation it does provide is usually only tacit and always drastically restricted.” (9). Instead, a critical theory of race would begin as a “critique of the present,” by means of which we seek to alter our self-understanding by offering genealogies of “accepted idea and principles of practical reason.” (8)

I bring McCarthy’s essay up, and the laudable goals therein discussed, because I want to argue that Foucault’s work is relevant not only for scholarly and academic reasons, but also because Foucault’s work on race, biopolitics, and the emergence of political rationality, are particularly relevant in our contemporary context precisely because they can help us develop the kind of approach McCarthy delineates. Foucault’s work allows us to combine, just as McCarthy urges us to do, the empirical, the normative, and the critical, in terms of genealogies about our “accepted ideas and principles of practical reason.” Furthermore, Foucault’s work is the more relevant because, and this is going to

be main argument, we are at a historical juncture in which the institutions, or *dispositifs*, knowledges, truths, and docile bodies produced by their interactions have reached the acme of their pervasiveness and sophistication. In 1976, when Foucault was lecturing on race, biopolitics, and the discourses of truth in terms of the production of historical knowledges, he did so as an European looking back on Auschwitz, the Gulags, and the racial valances of totalitarianism, on the one hand, and revolutionary moments, on the other. Our contemporary perspective, as well as our locus of reflection, is different. And it is in light of this changed context that I think that today when we seek to develop a critical theory race we have to pay particular attention to three areas of research, or fields of genealogical exploration, which would allow us to understand how our political ideas and norms came to be what they are. These three areas concern: racial violence performed by a population upon its own body-politic, racial violence by the state, and the production of the body-politic by the state and its attendant disciples, technologies, and projects of population control. The first two areas are covered by the history of racist institutions in the United States. More specifically, if we understand racism to be about the management of life by creating a caesura in the living body of the population, which requires an urgent and exceptional vigilance, one that might call for an emergency and extreme measure, namely that of putting to death the now internalized threat; if, in other words, we understand racism as the normalization of the state of emergency against a biological threat, then we must seek to understand those institutions that normalize the mechanisms for dealing with racial threats. I will suggest that two institutions that have performed this role in the United States were, and continue to be, lynching and the death penalty.

Lynching, we like to assume, was a non-normative, non-legal, non-state violence. A certain population, racially self-identified, performed this violence on racialized citizens; lynching, in other words, is racial violence enacted by the body-polity upon itself. Yet, as the recently published work by Philip Dray *At the Hands of Persons Unknown the Lynching of Black America* demonstrates exhaustively and vividly how lynching was a normalized and normalizing institution that took decades of pressure from outsider to cease, even if not entirely stop. Lynchings proceeded with the explicit knowledge of the “respected members” of the community, and with the tacit approval of the “legal and police” authorities of the communities. Lynching was the routinization of racial violence, and what is clear is that it was neither unpredictable nor an atavistic paroxysm, which explains its long life in the US. A “genealogical and archeological” analysis of lynching will reveal how it operated on the basis of the assumption that blacks were a threat to the health of the social body, and how this threat had to be expunged by the “healthy” members of community, and the punishment of the violator of the health of the community had to be performed by a justice and power made routine, anonymous and quotidian.

The death penalty, on the other hand, is the refinement of the lynching system, and we used Rev. Jesse Jackson’s phrase, the death penalty is but a legalized lynching, a lynching barely concealed behind the veneer of medicalization, legalization, and professionalization. It is in fact uncanny, although not entirely incidental, that Robert Jay Lifton’s and Greg Mitchell’s book *Who Owns Weath? Capital Punishment, the American Conscience, and the End of Executions*, have three chapters, under the second part entitled *Executioners*, dealing with: 4. Wardens and Guards, Chaplains, and Doctors; 5.

Prosecutors and Governors; 6. Jurors and Judges. Chapter four is particularly important because there we are given illustrations of how a biopolitics state uses the technologies of normalization, and the discourses of normalization, to make the killing of citizens not only legal, but also necessary and even indispensable. On the one hand, there are the technologies of the normalization of the process of killing, which is enacted upon guards and wardens. On the other hand, there are the medical discourses, as well as sciences, that intervene in the normalization of the putting to death of citizens. What is noteworthy in Lifton and Mitchell's book is that they foreground how the putting to death of another human being is made acceptable by rendering the act of killing anonymous, that is, perfunctory and mechanized. Responsibility for killing is diluted; in fact, this responsibility is dissolved as the machines that aid in the executions introduce uncertainty. The other element that is foregrounded by Lifton and Mitchell that is interesting for an analysis of the racists *dispositifs* of the biostate, is the way in which both medicine and psychiatry are constitutive of the whole process of putting to death of citizens. In fact, it is indeed arguable that putting to death by means of some sort of "machine" that seeks to minimize the pain of the victims (the guillotine, gas chamber, lethal injections) are ways in which medicine intervenes on behalf of the state to make more efficient and legitimate the suicidal function of the biostate. The final area of investigation, the one in which the state actually participates in the production of the living body of a population, has to do with the genomics, which one may argue intervenes in the living body of a populations in ways never before anticipated. Contemporary genomics, I would argue, are a continuation of 19th and early 20th century eugenics. For like the earlier eugenics, contemporary genomics seeks to produce the best body-politic that is possible. On one hand, we have to study the role of the state in developing the whole area of genomics, by means of the Human Genome Project. On the other, we have to study the way in which the technologies related to the human genome are given rise to a series of challenges that touch on the legal, political, and scientific issues. On one hand, we have the production of these knowledges and sciences by the state. On the other hand, we have the attempts by the state to regulate legally and fiscally the ways in which people may have access to some of these technologies. At the same time, we have the movements to resist the state's monopolization of these technologies. As we face the challenges of genomics and biotechnology, a political philosophy that approaches questions of justice and enduring inequality merely in terms of ideal and normative models, may actually become a hindrance to our grappling with the ways in which the power of the biostate is being exponentially augmented by its institutions of biopower, and how that biopower is racialized, racializing, and always auguring and inciting to racial violence.

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