Introduction. The final Foucault and Education
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It is very tempting, and many have succumbed, to order Foucault's work into three periods, three sets of preoccupations, and concomitantly three "methods" – archaeology, genealogy and technologies of the self, although Dreyfus and Rabinow suggest four! There is some sense to this periodisation; it is not "outside the true". Foucault's work has both a developmental trajectory in the sense of building, moving and changing overtime, but with distinctive points of transition, although, at the same time, he abandoned some lines of thought and announced dead ends reached. There certainly is a sense in which everything he wrote is a set of preludes to something else that remains to be written, and that is always out of grasp. Foucault once asserted, «My work takes place between abutments and anticipatory strings and dots»[1].

Even if we accept a periodization of early, middle and late Foucault it would be a mistake to see the different phases of his work as demarcated by distinct ruptures. Indeed, as Nealon[2] puts it «rather than seeing his post-1969 shifts of emphasis as a series of failures and dialectical sublimations. We will argue that the shifts in Foucauldian emphasis are more productively understood as a series of "intensifications"». Foucault certainly did not appear to see these intensifications in the focus of his work as breaks, and his own claims about the integrating principles of his work rest on the topics and questions that preoccupied him rather than the ideas he brought to bear, although Prado[3] cautions that «Foucault's efforts to present his work as more homogenous, coherent, and focused than it was should be judiciously assessed». There are a variety of such claims. In 1983 Foucault described his work of the previous 20 years as having been «to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects»[4]. In a series of lectures at Berkeley also in 1983 he said: «What I tried to do from the beginning was to analyse the process of "problematisation" – which means: how and why certain things, behaviour, phenomena, processes become a problem»[5]. He also spoke of his work as being concerned with the history of practices and the history of veridictions or a history of institutions. Each of these descriptions has a useful validity.

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[1] M. Foucault, *Questions of Method*, trans. C. Gordon in G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Harvester/Wheatsheaf, Brighton 1991, p. 90.

[2] J.T. Nealon, *Foucault Beyond Foucault*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2008, p. 5.

[3] C. G. Prado, *Starting with Foucault: An introduction to genealogy*, CO Westview, Boulder 1995, p. 56.

[4] M. Foucault, *Afterword: The subject and power*, trans. L. Sawyer in H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1982-1983, p. 208.

[5] M. Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, Semiotext, New York 2001, p. 171.

The three periods, if they exist at all, can be understood as marked by different points of emphasis across the three vectors of Foucault analytical framework – truth, power and subjectivity. All three vectors are evident in all three periods but in each case one is prominent, but always in a relation to the others. Foucault himself signals these changing emphases in his analyses in various ways, and describes himself as «studying each of these three areas in turn»[6], and as moving from a focus on *forms of knowledge*, to *the matrix of forms of behavior*, to *the constitution of the subject's modes of being*. The focus of this collection of papers is primarily on the third of these, that is, the final or late Foucault as it often referred to[7].

However, overall in educational studies, up until recently, there has been tendency to draw primarily on Foucault's middle period and its focus on the problem of power, and in particular on *Discipline and Punish*[8]. There is an obvious basis for this inasmuch as *Discipline and Punish* has an explicit relevance to and several direct references to the school as an institution. As he writes: «Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?»[9]. However, most of the uses of this middle Foucault tend to rest on an interpretation and representation of him as a philosopher of oppressions. Devices such as the means of correct training, the panopticon, normalisation etc. are deployed to explore, or more often re-describe, the processes of schooling, or the experience of teaching and learning, in terms of surveillance, classification and exclusion. In this vein, some refer to Foucault's «bleak» and one-sided vision of modernity[10] or his analysis as revealing «the grim truth of the education process – namely, that it is a core element in the mechanics of modern disciplinarity»[11]. Those are proper readings of and uses of Foucault, and ones that he acknowledged, but they are also partial. More generally, Baker and Heyning[12] have identified three main uses of Foucault works in educational studies, articulated around three different intellectual projects and endeavours:

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[6] M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–83*, trans. G. Burchell, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2010, p. 4.

[7] J. W. Bernauer and D. M. Rasmussen (eds.), *The Final Foucault*, Mit Press, Cambridge 1988. J. Moss (ed), *The Later Foucault Politics and Philosophy*, Sage, London 1998.

[8] M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison*, trans A. Sheridan, Vintage, Oxford 1979.

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 228.

[10] See L. McNay, *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self*, John Wiley & Sons, 2013; J. Scheurich and K. Bell McKenzie, *Foucault's Methodologies: Archaeology and Genealogy*, in N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks: CA 2005.

[11] I. Leask, *Beyond Subjection: Notes on the later Foucault and education*, in «Educational Philosophy and Theory», vol. 44 (2011), n. 1, p. 59.

[12] B.M. Baker and K.E. Heyning (eds.), *Dangerous coagulations?: The uses of Foucault in the study of education*, Peter Lang, New York 2004, p. 29.

•*Historicization and philosophizing projects*, where archaeology, genealogy and history of the present have been used to offer insights into the conditions of possibility for certain discourses, questions, educational problems[13].

•*Denaturalization projects*, where a more sociological Foucault and concepts like power-knowledge, discipline, surveillance, governmentality are deployed to focus on classroom-based and pedagogical-moment approaches or beyond-school settings as education sites[14].

•*Critical reconstruction projects* that share features of the first two lines of inquiry but develop the ambition to delineating a new vision or practice[15].

The secondary literature tends to see Foucault's late period work as an attempt to redress or unpick the supposedly totalizing theoretical cage constructed by his work on discipline and government by attending instead to freedom, resistance and self-authorship. As McNay sees it, in the later work: «Through the formation of a critical ontology of the self it is possible to formulate an alternative ethical standpoint from which individuals can begin to resist the normalising force of the "government of individualization"»[16]. The essence of the orientation to freedom in the late Foucault is a curiosity towards the arts of being governed and «all of those practices and discourses that seek to homogenise subjectivity, to make it uniform, and narrow the spoke of freedom»[17] – of which schooling would be a case in point. This is a permanent orientation of scepticism or perhaps cynicism as «a mode of relating to contemporary reality»[18]. Such an orientation or attitude requires not just a «gesture of rejection» rather a «move beyond the outside-inside alternative; we have to be at the frontiers». Foucault calls this a «critical ontology of ourselves» that «may be characterized as a *limit-attitude*»[19]; i.e., a process of analysis and reflection upon the frontiers or limits of «what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory»; a process which considers those singular,

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[13] J. Scheurich, *Research method in the postmodern*, Routledge, London 1997; T.S. Popkewitz, *Struggling for the Soul. The Politics of Schooling and the Construction of the Teacher*, Teachers College Press, New York 1998; S.J. Ball, *Foucault, Power and Education*, Routledge, London 2012. E. Grimaldi, *An Archaeology of Educational Evaluation*, Routledge, London 2019.

[14] M.A. Peters, A.C. Besley, M. Olssen, S. Maurer & S. Weber (eds.), *Governmentality Studies in Education*. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, 2009; A. Fejes and K. Nicoll (eds.), *Foucault and a politics of confession in education*, Routledge, London 2014; R. Niesche, *Foucault and educational leadership: Disciplining the principal*, Routledge, London 2011.

[15] M. Olssen, *Toward a Global Thin Community: Nietzsche, Foucault and the Cosmopolitan Commitment*, Routledge, New York 2009; T. Besley and M.A. Peters (eds.), *Subjectivity & truth: Foucault, education, and the culture of self*, Peter Lang, New York 2007; S.J. Ball, *Foucault as Educator*, Springer, Cham 2017.

[16] L. McNay, *Foucault. A Critical Introduction*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1994, p. 133.

[17] A. Milchman and A. Rosenberg, *Michel Foucault: An Ethical Politics of care of the Self and Others*, in C. H. Zuckert (ed.), *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: Authors and Arguments*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2011, p. 12.

[18] M. Foucault, *What Is Enlightenment*, Trans. C. Porter, in P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1987, p. 39.

[19] *Ibidem*, p. 45.

contingent and arbitrary «events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying»[20]. Our present, says Foucault, exemplifying his point with reference to Baudelaire's work, is «confronted with the practice of liberty that simultaneously respects this reality and violates it»[21]. It is these possibilities of freedom that are more directly and clearly explored in *the later* Foucault, more precisely from around 1980 when he began to articulate a *politics of the care of the self*[22]. This special issue addresses some of the ways this later work enables us to think education differently, and the possibility of certain "lines of fragility", in particular in relation to the concept of *self formation*. That is, education as the production of a subject «capable of turning back upon itself: of critically studying the processes of its own constitution, but also subverting them and effecting changes in them»[23]. *Self formation* in this sense is a starting point for experiments with an education or educations that do not simply reconstitute what has failed in the past. The emphasis here is on «both the open-endedness of the present as a project and freedom as a process of struggle»[24] and the possibility of exploring how an alternative ethos to the prevailing neoliberal episteme could be developed though the government of self and of the others. As Pignatelli[25] puts it, this means «taking up the challenge of creatively and courageously authoring one's ethical self». This involves dispensing with our modernist conceptions of ethics and freedom. Here freedom is the capacity and opportunity to participate in one's self-formation, and ethics is the practice of this capacity in relation to oneself and others. Freedom is constantly produced and ethics is an on going set of practices. This is an aestheticism – an imaginative creativity. It is the cultivation of a self that is both a product and a disruption of various discourses that requires one to practice the art of living well, by creating a space within which it is possible to make oneself thinkable in a different way – that is «to become other than how you find yourself»[26].

In several respects the two last lecture series that Foucault gave at the *Collège de France - The Government of Self and Other* (1983) and *The Courage of Truth* (1984) both return to and rework the primary vectors of his analytical framework – that is to say, he begins an analysis of relations between modes of veridiction (truth) (*parrhesia* in particular), techniques of governmentality (power), and forms of practice of self (subjectivity), each

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[20] *Ibidem*, p. 45.

[21] *Ibidem*, p. 41.

[22] M. Foucault, *About the beginning of the hermeneutics of the self: Lectures at Dartmouth College, 1980*, trans. G. Burchell, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2016.

[23] J. Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005, p. 165.

[24] S.J. Ball, *Foucault as Educator*, *op. cit*, p. 68.

[25] F. Pignatelli, *What Can I do? Foucault on Freedom and the Question of Teacher Agency*, in «Educational Theory», vol. 43 (1993), n. 4, p. 430.

[26] M. Foucault, *On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress*, trans. L. Sawyer in H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1982-1983.

as mutually constitutive without reducing each of them to the others. This as Peters and Besley discuss provides the outlines for the problematisation of government in a general sense, that is of democracy.

Foucault certainly did not outline a general theory of freedom, or of political relations rather he identified a set of "problems" and outlined some methods of analysis and developed a set of tools, a toolbox of concepts, which he hoped others would use and develop further. He expressed frustration that so much effort was devoted to writing about what he might mean rather than doing the sort of practical analytical and critical work that he advocated so vigorously. In this collection the emphasis is on using rather than reading Foucault. It presents a set of tracks and signposts that are starting points for thinking differently about a post-neoliberal education. It is an exercise in curiosity – a word and an attitude that intrigued Foucault, and as he explained:

I like the word; it suggests something quite different to me. It evokes "care"; it evokes the care one takes of what exists and what might exist; a sharpened sense of reality, but one that is never immobilized before it; a readiness to find what surrounds us strange and odd; a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way; a passion for seizing what is happening now and what is disappearing; a lack of respect for the traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental[27].

Using Foucault for thinking differently about education

The emphasis of this collection of papers is on using Foucault for thinking differently about education. A distinctive feature of the contributions is to mobilise a foucauldian attitude towards the historicisation and denaturalisation of what it means to be educated, and the privileging of a critical ontology of the self as part of wider projects for the critical reconstruction of both education as a practice of government and our modes of being as educational subjects. In relation to that, it is possible to identify four distinctive issues around which the papers of this collection coalesce: a) the formulation of a distinctive foucauldian ethical standpoint for a post neoliberal education; b) the mobilisation of the foucauldian concept of *self formation* to outline a different ethics of education; c) the sketching of a *politics of the care of the self* as a tool to remake the school as heterotopy; d) the use of the foucauldian analysis of parrhesia to rethink professional practice in education as a practice of self.

The first issue focuses on the foucauldian problematisation of government, the modern state, democracy and civil society, and relatedly, concerns the formulation of a distinctive ethical standpoint from which to rethink the contemporary individualising arts of government and, implicitly, their relation to education. In his article, Mark Olssen rejects recent readings of Foucault's later writings as supporting neoliberalism and

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[27] M. Foucault, *The Masked Philosopher*, trans. C. Porter in P. Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 (Vol. 1)*, The New Press, New York 1997, p. 325.

"supply-side" models of the state, arguing instead that Foucault can be seen to advocate a form of republican social democracy of a distinctly communitarian sort. According to Olssen, the translation of Foucault's anti-statism, anti-Hegelianism and anti-Marxism into a defence or support for neoliberalism fails to link the treatment of neoliberalism as a positive form of state biopower to a positive state or anti-naturalistic thesis and thus does not capture the key arguments of Foucault's critique of neoliberalism. In contrast, he recalls how Foucault's lectures on *The Birth of Biopolitics* clearly offer a reading of neoliberalism as a set of indirect, non-centralised mechanisms or governmental techniques with potentially repressive effects, where the problem of the improvement of human capital through education encounters the potential re-emergence of eugenics and opens up the learner to diverse forms of behavioural manipulation. Olssen suggests that Foucault's distinctive thesis on neoliberalism is that the state actively constitutes neoliberal rationality to the detriment of civil society as a way of reconciling economic efficiency with the needs of population and security. Thus, neoliberalism as the active policy of the state, might generate either forms of totalitarian rule or lead to complete chaos as a result of a lack of governmental regulation. Rooting his critically reconstructive argument in a detailed reading of Foucault's final lecture of T*he Birth of Biopolitics* series, on Adam Ferguson, Olssen asks if Foucault's open question to neoliberalism in the twentieth century could be interpreted as a critique of a doctrine which applies economic models of competitive behaviour to every sphere of society. Moving from that, the hypothesis is put forward the hypothesis that Foucault's interest in the Scottish Enlightenment is at least in part normative, given the reintroduction of the figure of *homo politicus* in a way that allows a sort of resolution of the conundrums of liberalism and neoliberalism, laissez-faire, homo oeconomicus and positive state power. According to the author, for Foucault Ferguson offers an occasion to work on a notion of civil society that will bed down economy and governmentality in a single regulatory pact, mobilising the figure of *homo politicus* as a counter-balance to Smith's *homo oeconomicus*. In relation to that, the article suggests that Foucault's re-theorisation and de-transcendentalisation of the state can be understood as functional to an attempt to outline a distinctive ethico-political standpoint where a republican and communitarian conception of civil society can serve as the basis for the invention of a new form of governmentality. From such a perspective, Olssen argues, the relation between the economic and the political is maintained according to a governmental rather that state-centric theory, in which civil society constitutes a governmental technology, which is an integral and always present counter-balance to the dissociative norms of economy.

In their contribution, Peters and Besley address the present crisis of liberal democracy and liberal internationalism. They use the post-truth orientation of US President Donald Trump as an exemplary case to problematise government and democracy through a foucauldian lens. They explore the complex relation between modes of veridiction and practices of truth-telling, techniques of governmentality and forms of practice of self. In particular, they mobilise Foucault's 1980s lectures on the relationship between subjectivity, power and truth to make sense of what they call the post-truth era and

outline an ethical standpoint in defence of the concept and practice of democracy. The authors analyse the crisis of liberal democracy moving from the exploration of the political and ethical implications of "free speech" and an emphasis on the foucauldian sensibility, towards the ethical self-constitution of the subject and self-mastery, or more generally towards how the human subject enters into scientific or politico-institutional games of truth. Peters and Besley go on to offer a detailed account of Foucault's discussion of *parrhesia* and focus specifically on *parrhesia* as educational practice. That is, they point to the epistemic, political and therapeutic role of the *parrhesiastes* as teacher-philosophers and the centrality of *parrhesia* in an art of living - the establishing of a relationship to oneself with the aim of self-mastery. The authors end their account by emphasising two sides of the Pre-socratic problematisation of truth: that is the problem of determining the true-value of a statement and the emphasis on the societal and individual importance of telling the truth. They point out that Foucault's ultimate concern in this respect was «to construct a genealogy of the critical attitude» in Western culture and to signal the potential of a reworking of *parrhesia* as a political concept that problematises truth telling as an aspect of the government of self and others in democracy. This highlights how Foucault's lectures in the early to mid 1980s, as a continuation of his analysis of liberal and neoliberal governmentality, stand as a return to the moral foundations of democracy and re-examine its relations of power and problematisation. Re-connecting their analysis to the initial discussion of the present crisis of liberalism, liberal internationalism and the threats of the present post-truth authoritarianism, Peters and Besley use Foucault's analysis to disentangle a political double paradox that lies at the heart of democracy: if democracy becomes an impossibility without true discourse (and vice versa), at the same time true discourse has as its conditions and effects the introduction of difference into a democractic egalitarian structure, via conflict, confrontation and rivalry. That is something which is completely different from and irreducible to democracy itself. This provides a basis on which to reframe the problem of freedom of speech in liberal digital societies and enables an ethico-political defence of the concept and practice of democracy that privileges education a primary vector cutting a line through truth, governmentality and the self.

The next two papers of this collection relate directly to the possibilities offered by the late Foucault to think education differently, in particular in relation to the concept of *self formation*. The way Foucault deals with the issue of freedom, in fact, is marked by a gradual shifting of interest from the interlocked combination of power-resistance toward the government of ourselves as a countermove to being governed by others. In other words, an emphasis on *subjectivation* as an autonomous struggle of dis-identification and dis-individualisation. Moreau in his contribution on Foucault and the educational metamorphosis, takes inspiration by Deleuze:

The struggle for a modern subjectivity passes through a resistance to the two present forms of subjection, the one consisting of living ourselves on the basis of constraints of power, the other of attracting each individual to a known and recognized identity, fixed once and for all.[28]

Thus, education as a place for the "violent" determination of identity is a main focus of Moreau's and Allen's contributions. Both write as critics of education rather than as critical educators. Allen puts at the centre of his reflections Cynic thought as discussed by Foucault particularly in *Fearless speech* and in *The Courage of Truth*, while also touching on the work of Sloterdijk (De Conciliis engages with Sloterdijk more directly in her contribution); while Moreau focuses mainly on Stoicism as depicted by Foucault in *The Herméneutics of the Subject*. Allen presents the Cynic attitude as an extreme expression of scepticism that «challenges a set of ideas and attachments central to education», from «the role of the teacher as guide» to the *Benign Violence* that results from the cynical aggression that transforms the educational relation in an engagement, a battle, switching between peaks of great aggressivity and moments of peaceful calm: here the difference with the Socrates's dialogue is flagrant. The Cynic represents, in fact, a style of life that challenges the taken for granted and the conventions, practicing the transgression up to the derision both of the philosophy itself and of education with its aspirations of democratization. Diogenes the Cynic, furthermore, embodies the experimentation of other forms of existence, continuously inciting to the improvisation of the way of life, and looking for a subversive ad-hocery, in order to challenge our basic assumptions of what life and education should be: «humanity [is] understood here as a fabrication, as something that can be reworked». In this direction Allen highlights how the Cynic attitude provokes a crisis of the principles of the liberal, elitist, and masculine education, as well as of the «popular schooling that was based in part on the notion that teachers would act like secular priests, serving as moral exemplars to be emulated by the offspring of the poor»; recalling the failures of neo-liberal education, a theme that will be discussed also by De Conciliis in her contribution.

Moreau, considers Stoic thought and particularly the foucauldian reading of Seneca, and stresses the violence of the radical *conversion* required and undertaken by educational institutions, pretending to determine the true identity of the knowing subject. Over and against this immediacy is set the slowness, the patience, the daily mundane experience of the individual undertaking the path of the formation of the self: in other words, the truth is not that of knowledge but rather «the truth of the subject is his own capacity to transform himself». The educational paradigm of conversion, that finds its peak of expression in Durkheim «for whom education is a conversion of the conscience to the truth of the *Tout social*», hierarchically produces unequal results: the access to the truth of knowledge is abstractly, and formally granted and the subject is required to renounce the value of mundane experience. Again over and against this, the Stoic metamorphosis is linked to a «political educational project», centred on the care of the self and its techniques, and enacting spiritual exercise (meditation, ascesis, and a conscious

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[28] G. Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. of S. Hand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1986, pp. 105-106.

examination of their peculiarity and their difference from those of early Christianity. Here a space is opened up for the movement from *subjectivation* as procured by educational institutions and the autonomous *subjectivation* of the self, cultivating the metamorphosis of ourselves in an other pedagogical space: our world and our present.

The third issue relates to the possibility of mobilising Foucault and a *politics of the care of the self* to rethink the scholastic form through an ethos alternative to the (neo)liberal. That is, an experience of education as experiments of freedom within heterotopic spaces. While Allen and Moreau offer critiques of education that end up leaving the individual "alone" in the search for another educational space, both Simons and Masschelein, and Cappa offer possibilities for re-thinking pedagogy and the school form itself. The first two authors invite to complement Foucault's influential genealogy of the school as a site of disciplinary power that gives rise to an analytical pedagogy with a morphology of the school as a site of gestures that enact a pedagogy of the present. They attempt to think "pedagogically" with Foucault. In particular, to avoid an exclusive focalisation on the ethical and the political, they work with and beyond Foucault to reflect on the relationship between scholastic pedagogy, the limits of government and their transgression. In doing so, Simons and Masschelein hybridise Foucault's genealogy and ethical government of the self with Rancière's morphological approach and propose «an attempt to re-claim the "scholastic"», distinguishing a *scholastic pedagogy of the present* from the «analytical pedagogy of learning», grounded in a «cognitive approach that considers learning as a process of knowledge construction and skill or competency development». Here, scholastic – recalling the meaning derived «from the Greek skholastikos (studious) and skholazein (to be at leisure in study)» – is defined as form of school learning that could articulate a pedagogy of the present. To clarify the traits of such an inviting (and not prescribing) pedagogy of the present, the authors introduce the notions of *de-subjectivation, experience, exercise, curiosity and essay*. These ingredients, they argue, could figure out an educational space where an undefined (and not pre-defined) self-transformation becomes possible. As they state:

> The outcome of this pedagogy is not to increase knowledge and not to consolidate one's subjectivity, but to arrive at a condition where the moment that one's subjectivity dissolves is at once where it becomes possible to establish new relationships to one's actuality.

Continuing their journey beyond those critical education studies that reprise the genealogical Foucault, they argue, there are other «studies that attempt to show how contemporary (neo-liberal) forms of governing education leave an ethical space for teachers or pupils to shape the self in a different way». Specifically, they suggest how a morphological understanding of the school form invites to think of pedagogy as a foucauldian heterotopia and heterocronia, an «other place and time outside the necessities of labour and family life», which is heterogeneous to the neoliberal productive order. In this vein, they hypothesise the possibility of a *pedagogic liberalism*, and a school-form and scholastic pedagogies that leave new generations with an equal time and space

to undertake an undefined (rather than predefined) work of freedom and to find their own proper form.

Relatedly, Cappa proposes to re-think a pedagogic place that could go beyond the «dispositifs of knowledge and power», «a space of subjectivation [of] stubborn exteriority that characterizes […] the specific characteristics of the "pedagogical", thereby differentiating itself from» the pedagogical. This could be considered as «a space and time, perhaps distinct even from heterotopias, in which modes of existence that elude closed systems of power and knowledge are formed and transformed; in which practices such as truth-telling and parrhesia, and the processes of subjectivation of which they are part, impact on bodies and take care of subjects». In this way, the *pedagogical* would us permit to enact the educational experience as a form of pleasure, as a subjectivation that evades the extant dispositifs of knowledge-power. Its value is properly *deictic*, that of an indication, of what is «specifically and particularly true of the "real" in education».

In their proposal for a diverse pedagogical space both of these contributions highlight how the educational apparatuses of neo-liberal society are challenged by the *outside* of education: Simons and Masschelein wonder if the pedagogy of the present «resides and only can flourish outside the walls of schools?»; while Cappa recalls the obsolescence of the educational agencies in relation to «new virtual spaces» within which knowledges are constituted and identities are transformed «by a highly-diversified flow of experience, and by power relations that are increasingly immaterial and insubstantial».

Serpieri, in his article, highlights how educational heterotopies are already evident, and some of these are produced in the processes of exogenous and endogenous privatisation that are reconfiguring educational systems. These processes, in some instances, result in a profound fragmentation and segmentation of institutions, of curricula and of subjectifications. Moreover, increasing the places and the times of the trans-formation of the self are to be found outside of formal education, in the form of a «public pedagogy»[29], made possible by digital platforms and the relentless extension of the *Social Networking Sites*. The author emphasises how ethical government produces via digital social life the sort of shift from disciplinary to control societies that was anticipated by Deleuze[30]. The reciprocal government of ourselves and the others also through the platform society, in fact, could be seen as a further consequence of the integration of the techniques of the self in the educational, medical, and psychological discipline and moreover of their transformation «thanks to the public opinion, the mass-media, the poll techniques [and we could add the social networks] - which play a moulding role for the attitude towards others and towards ourselves -, nowadays in order to impose self-culture, that has lost its independence, to people through others»[31]. It is not by

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[29] B. Williamson, *The Future of the Curriculum: School Knowledge in the Digital Age*, Mit Press, Cambridge 2013.

[30] G. Deleuze, *Postscript on Control Society*, in «L'Autre Journal», 1990 n. 1, trans. M. Joughin, *Negotiations 1972-1990*, Columbia University Press, New York 1995.

[31] M. Foucault, *La culture de soi*, in M. Foucault, *Qu'est ce-que la critique? suivi de La culture de soi*, Vrin, Paris 2015, pp. 81-109, pp. 97-98; transl. R. Serpieri.

coincidence, Serpieri stresses, that neo-liberal education is reconfiguring the *human capital* of the individuals not only in terms of acquired knowledges but above all of the formation of the so-called soft skills - socio-emotional competences and character. In contrast the educational subjectifications formed in heterotopic spaces - what Serpieri call *post-education* - render individuals capable of govern/controlling themselves in interaction with others, and gives value to «immaterial labour»[32], communicational and relational competences, and the life (of the mind) itself[33]. In the light of this, drawing on some of the aporias of the final Foucault, Serpieri finally addresses the issue of the possibility of change of the neoliberal educational policies. In other words, what are the conditions for the formation of teachers' and students' collective subjectivities, and how might they practice resistance, refusal, and mount active opposition to the dispositif of selection, competition, and evaluation.

The last two contributions of this collection address a fourth issue and closely related issue, the rethinking of professional practice in education as a practice of self. From such a perspective the core business of education and educating becomes that of problematising the frontiers or limits of «what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory», through the adoption of what Foucault calls a *limit-attitude* or a critical ontology of ourselves.

In *Il coraggio della verità. Per una critica parresiastica del sistema d'istruzione* [*The courage of Truth. For a parrhesiastic critique of the education system*]*,* Eleonora de Conciliis explores how it is possible to use the late Foucault in pedagogical terms, and specifically the toolbox of concepts from his works on the care of the self and parrhesia, to come to a radical rethinking of the concept of pedagogy itself and the role of teacher as maestro-exemplar. In three moves, the author shows a possible use of the concept of parrhesia within the practice of teaching as a means to formulate a radical critique of contemporary education systems. These systems in de Conciliis view are entrapped within a form of neoliberal algorithmic governmentality and increasingly colonised by the virtual-consumerist economy whose non-place is the web. First, de Conciliis reiterates Foucault's argument that in the West the hermeneutic of the self has acted as the most capillary form of the production and government of subjected/educated subjects, through the obligations of veridiction. Relatedly, she emphasises how the late Foucault might suggest to us that a re-examination of greek/classical modalities of subjectivation and parrhesia, as a practices of self-formation, could offer a promising path of reflection to free ourselves from the hermeneutic of the self. Importantly, in relation to the teaching profession, she argues that, through his own teaching practice as a parrhesiastic 'magister of suspect', Foucault has taught us what cannot be taught: that we can bring to thought the functioning of anthropotechniques or technologies of the

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[32] M. Lazzarato, *Immaterial Labor*, in *Work, Migration, Memes, Personal Geopolitics*, in «ONCURATING.org», (2016) n. 30/June, pp. 68-88.

[33] P. Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude. For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles 2004.

self, and we can understand that the subject, within them, as a bundle of relations that can be deconstructed and re-fabricated differently. Second, de Conciliis argues that if education is the 'production of the human', a form of benign, smooth and rational violence, then a foucauldian critical method consists in the deciphering of the myth of education, its sarcastic unmasking. In this way we can begin to understand its historicity with the objective of making the subject's becoming something different. For both teachers and students, the political challenge, according to the author, is to make the school into a political theatre through the practice of parrhesia, where the aim is not so much to favour the "sapere aude" of the individuals, but rather to help the students to reflect on the unthinking/unthought that inhabits the anthropotechniques that produce them (what she frames in terms of politicising the de-politicised). The author ends her contribution with an attempt to outline an education inspired by the courage of truth as a dangerous and paradoxical enterprise, where educating becomes a paradoxical production of autonomy through heteronomy, whose aim is not only to teach to think in the Kantian-Enlightment terms but also to teach to not obey, to teach that obedience is not a virtue.

In a similar vein, Emiliano Bevilacqua and Davide Borrelli in *Il governo di sé e del sapere fra valutazione e parresia* [*The government of the self between evaluation and parrhesia*] advocate a Foucault effect in education, and relatedly attempt to use, force and ultimately betray Foucault's thought in order to draw from it the outline for a possible paidéia for our present. Their contribution shares with Peters and Besley a problematisation of the current political situation as an aporetic era of post-truth democracy, where the processes of disintermediation of communication opposes in a zero-sum game a post-truth public discourse to an alethurgy of power without freedom. In relation to that, the authors emphasize the possibility offered by the Foucauldian notion of «political analysis of truth» to denounce both the false consciousness which characterises the modern apologetic of the relationship between education, emancipation and equality and the aporetic tension between public truth and subjective freedom at the heart of the modern concept of democracy. According to Bevilacqua and Borrelli, we live in a time where governmental power increasingly functions through the production of freedom (and freedom of speech) and this paves the way towards a post-truth society. Government increasingly occurs through alethurgical devices that affirm a principle of order and objective truth at the expense of the freedom of the subjects and, in doing so, seriously prejudices any deliberative process aimed at producing socially shared truths (the authors discuss as an example the case of evaluation and quality assurance). In relation to that, they argue that the political and pedagogical value of foucauldian thinking lies in its capacity to offer a perspective within which it is possible to reconcile the critical deconstruction of the productive functioning of governmental power with an renewed practice of education, with parrhesia as the care of the self and the ethopoietic exercise of self-formation. Recalling Foucault's reading of the Enlightenment as an ontology of actuality in *What is Enlightenment* and his analyses of parrhesia in the courses *The Government of Self and the Others* and *The Courage of Truth*, Bevilacqua and Borrelli identify

the two poles around which a Foucauldian paideia may be articulated: a genealogical critique as an antidote to the scientific hierachisation of knowledge and as strategy of de-subjection from power as truth; and an ethopoietic practice whose aim is the formation of an autonomous subject, a practice of the art of living that becomes the field of struggle for the production of different rules and rationalities. This is an education that abandons the model of docility in favour of that of study (as a desire for self-formation) that, according to the authors, offers a viable way out of the aporetic opposition at the heart of contemporary democracy. That is, moving from the search for truth to the constitution of the subject of truth as an essential condition for reconstructing the viability of the communication in contemporary democracy.

Epilogue

Undoubtedly, this collection of articles is only a prelude to further work on the possible uses of the final Foucault for thinking and practicing education differently. Despite differences in terms of perspectives, emphasis and interpretative nuances, the contributions trace the intersecting axes of an open space of educational reflection, research and practice wherein to engage with, mobilise, force and perhaps go beyond Foucault (and specifically the final Foucault) in order to outline, explore and experience educational spaces and times alternative to those of the (neo)liberal government of individualisation[34]. The silent or specific interlocutor of most of the contributions and the background against which they stand is the *neoliberalisation* of education. That is, those diverse attempts to generalise the enterprise form in the field of education[35], and its multiple encounters with a politics of numericisation and standardisation, where educational entities are made governable through their distribution within fixed physical spaces and dynamic analytical spaces, and quantification acts as criterion of factuality and reality reflection[36].

As a reaction to these governmental processes in the field of education, this collection of papers outlines a space of reflection, research and practice marked by a distinctive kind of educational attitude - an ethos and form of life which Foucault defines as a critical ontology of ourselves[37]. Engaging with education through such an attitude involves a dangerous alchemy, combining those uses of Foucault's analytic machinery which are devoted to bring to Thought the conditions of possibility for our educational

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[34] N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing political thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999; S.J. Ball, 2017, *Foucault As Educator*, op. cit.

[35] M.A. Peters, *The new prudentialism in education: Actuarial rationality and the entrepreneurial self*, in «Educational Theory», vol. 55 (2005), n. 2, p. 123; M. Olssen, *Toward a Global Thin Community*, op. cit.

[36] A. Desrosieres, A. *The economics of convention and statistics: the paradox of origins*, in «Historical Social Research», 36 (2011), n. 4, pp. 64-81.

[37] M. Foucault, *What Is Enlightenment*, op. cit.

present through historicisation and denaturalisation, and projects of critical reconstruction in which the critique and the historical analysis of the limits imposed on us represents also «an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them»[38], contributing to develop a new practice of education. Furthermore, perhaps one of the most significant legacies of the final Foucault is that thinking, researching and practicing education as a critical ontology of ourselves involves giving impetus to the «undefined work of freedom»[39], where a politics of educational life as self-formation becomes the locus of educational production itself and a means to detach ourselves from and «transgress the horizon of silent objectification within which we are articulated» as education subjects[40]. As such, the uses of Foucault envisaged in this issue represent, first and foremost, an invitation to cultivate the art of not being educated like that and at that cost[41] and to challenge every educational option that is marked by an excess of authority or that presents itself «in the form of a simplistic and authoritarian alternative»[42].

The second axis that defines the contours of this "other space" of educational reflection, research and practice relates to a sober, careful and non-normative definition of the key traits of a foucauldian education. Building on that, and recalling recent works on Foucault as educator[43], it is possible to define a foucauldian education as an emancipatory educational experience that can be judged against its relative capacity to recognise and promote difference and to contribute to the constitution of autonomous subjects. Here autonomy is related to the growth of capabilities disconnected from the intensification of power relations that lead to discipline, normalisation and over-regulation and as an extension of the individuals' participation to their present. Ball[44] has recently attempted to sketch out what a foucauldian education might look like, arguing how Foucault's "philosophical ethos" could be translated into two strands of educational practices that dismantle the imaginary architecture of contemporary schooling, its space-time arrangements and its curricular, pedagogical and evaluative rationalist, linear and developmentalist foundations and, in contrast to that, reconceive the «classroom as a

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[38] *Ibidem*, op. cit., p. 45.

[39] *Ibidem*, op. cit., p. 45.

[40] S.J. Ball, *A horizon of freedom: Using Foucault to think differently about education and learning*, in «Power and Education», 2019. https://doi.org/10.1177/1757743819838289, 2.

[41] M. Foucault, *What is critique?*, trans. L. Hochroth, in *The Politics of Truth*, Semiotext(e), New York 2007, p. 45.

[42] M. Foucault, *What Is Enlightenment*, op. cit., p. 39.

[43] See S.J. Ball, *Foucault as Educator*, op. cit.; J. Infinito, *Ethical self-formation: a look at the later Foucault*, in «Educational Theory», 53 (2003), pp. 155-171; I. Leask, *Beyond Subjection: Notes on the later Foucault and education*, in «Educational Philosophy and Theory», 44 (2011) n. 1, pp. 57-73; J. D. Marshall, *Michel Foucault: liberation, freedom, education*, in «Educational Philosophy and Theory», 34 (2002), n. 4, pp. 413-418; T. Osborne, *Foucault as educator*, in M. Peters, T. Besley, M. Olssen, S. Maurer, and S. Weber (eds.). *Governmentality studies in education,* op. cit., pp. 123-136; M. Peters, *Truth-telling as an educational practice of the self: Foucault, parrhesia and the ethics of subjectivity*, in «Oxford Review of Education», 29 (2003), n. 2, pp. 207-224; M. Olssen, *Liberalism, neoliberalism, social democracy*, op. cit.; M. Tamboukou, *Educational heterotopias and the self Pedagogy*, in «Culture & Society», 12 (2006), n. 3, pp. 399-414.

[44] S.J.Ball, *Foucault as Educator*, op. cit.

space of freedom, the curriculum as curiosity and pedagogy as a parrhesiatic encounter»[45]:

• the fostering of a learning environment that encourages experimentation, as the creation of «opportunities for exploring new forms of existence, of being otherwise»[46]. In such a learning environment, pedagogy would be understood as a theatre of subject creation and the classroom imagined as a heterotopic space/time arrangement, where all actions are intended to be responsive to learners' active and engaged self-formation. In a sharp contrast to contemporary schooling, those other educational spaces would be sites of experience where, starting from the problematisation of the immediate and quotidian, «agonism is valued and failure would be a constructive opportunity to learn and to change – both of which take time - the pace of education would need to slow down»[47]. Within those environments, the core of educating would be learning how to think about, to operate within, reformulate or perhaps even to reconstruct forms of possible knowledge, the normative matrices of comportment for individuals and the modes of virtual existence that make us what we are. As Rabinow puts it, such work of reformulation would entail «examining the previous forms that had been articulated as responses to a specific set of historical problems, thereby making them available for a different use or set of uses: as intellectual instrumentalities to illuminate contemporary problems and possible solutions»[48];

• thus, a foucauldian education would rethink curriculum as a genealogical practice of inquiry[49], that relates to knowledge as a problem rather than a content, and enables the development of an awareness of one's current condition as defined and constructed by the given culture and historical moment. Education as experimentation would constantly seek the de-naturalisation of the concepts, practices, relations and social arrangements that organise and define our experience. Learning through inquiry would be an analysis of «the intensifying venues of experience» and the articulation within experience of the forms of possible knowledge, the normative matrices of comportment for individuals and the modes of virtual existence for possible subjects[50]. As Ball and Olmedo[51] have argued, the teacher/learner subjectivity would become a site of historicisation and political struggle, a site of collective engagement

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[45] S.J. Ball, *A horizon of freedom*, op. cit, p. 6.

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 4.

[47] *Ibidem*, p. 7.

[48] P. Rabinow, *Dewey and Foucault: What's the problem?*, in «Foucault Studies», 11 (2011), pp. 15-16.

[49] J. Infinito, *Ethical self-formation: a look at the later Foucault*, in «Educational Theory», 53 (2003), pp. 155-171.

[50] M. Foucault, *Le Gouvernement de soi et des autres*, op. cit., 5 January 1983, pp. 4-5.

[51] S.J. Ball and A. Olmedo, *Care of the self, resistance and subjectivity under neoliberal governmentalities*, in «Critical Studies in Education», Vol. 54 (2013), n. 1, pp. 85-96.

in the games of truth marked by «a commitment to uncertainty»[52] and the will to challenge collective forgetting. Such a genealogical disposition would be the anchor for a pedagogy of curiosity, as a means of loosening any relation to a fixed identity and challenge any educational politics of the Same. It would be a pedagogy that encourages an attitude or disposition to critique and epistemological suspicion. It would not be articulated as bundles of skills and knowledges but rather would locate at the heart of its practice a form of practical politics, a struggle to become self-governing and would value the pluralisation and agonism of voices and contestation over consensus and resolution.

The remaking of education as space of experimentation and pedagogy of de-subjectivation, experience, exercise and curiosity would mean the rethinking of the professional practice of teaching, where teaching becomes an ethical practice whose main focus is to facilitate the impulse of curiosity and self-fashioning, and to embrace the power of difference. In such an education, the teacher becomes an interpreter of an art of living, rather than a subject entitled to teach a legitimate knowledge to others. Teaching would become an exemplary practice to learn from, rather than an act of legitimate knowledge transmission[53]. In the effort to attend to and facilitate the learners' impulse of curiosity and self-formation, teaching stands as a process of asking questions without providing answers which always finds an unstable equilibrium on the edge of the relationship between the care of the self and the care of others[54].

As such, a foucauldian education would be a collective form of action and intervention to develop ethical enthusiasm and agonism[55]. It is not an individual affair but presupposes a certain political and educational structure which makes freedom and self-formation possible. As Ball argues, «self formation is not a lonely narcissism but is only possible within […] the fundamental encounter with the other»[56]. It develops through the production of interferences between our reality and our past, opening up possible futures and enabling transformations of the relation which we have with ourselves and the world[57].

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[52] D. Youdell, *School Trouble: Identity, Power and Politics in Education*, Routledge, London 2011.

[53] G.J.J. Biesta, *Don't be fooled by ignorant schoolmasters: On the role of the teacher in emancipatory education*, in «Policy Futures in Education», 15 (2017), n. 1, pp. 52-73.

[54] S.J. Ball, *A horizon of freedom*, op. cit, p. 14.

[55] J. Oksala, Foucault, Politics, and Violence, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL 2012.

[56] S.J. Ball, *A horizon of freedom*, op. cit, p. 16.

[57] T. O'Leary, *Foucault and the Art of Ethics*, Continuum, London/New York 2006, p. 102.

Relatedly, the third axis of the space of educational reflection, research and practice involves an enlargement of perspective and the positioning of a foucauldian education within a larger politics that redefines the relationship between society, economy and civil society and how this relates to political rationalities, to *techne* and to the constitution of the subject's modes of being in contemporary governmentality.

Some articles in this issue not only highlight the «conditions of possibility» of education as embedded into a (neo)liberal governmentality, but also offer some hints to think of the conditions that could possibly subvert or at least change such a governmentality and its political reason. Both Olssen and Peters and Besley, argue from an ethico-political standpoint, in defence of democracy and for a new form of governmentality that could be at least other than the neoliberal one, as indicated by Foucault[58]. It is in this direction that the contributions offer diverse perspectives for mobilising the final Foucault toward another governmentality, one in which an ethico-political attitude toward experimentation makes the formation of the self its primary aim, together with the rediscovery of a communitarianism. Olssen, in particular, advances a possible reading of Foucault as a thin communitarian[59] distancing himself from any reading of Foucault as a "crypto-normative", as argued by Habermas. In practice in order to portray a foucauldian education it is possible to think of a change that looks at the deliberation and participation of a *homo politicus* to counterbalance the instrumental rationality of the *homo oeconomicus*. Concomitantly, *homo socialis* would be mobilised, within civil society, rather than in relation to the political rationality of the state, giving rise to forms of communitarian integration. In these terms it should be possible to track the places where the conditions of possibility of an experimental education are already evident. Such possibilities arise when breaches are opened, or unexpected agencies come to the fore over and against neoliberal policies of formal education. It is these other educational spaces, in the web of the platform society, bringing forth *à la* Ilich that public pedagogy[60], that Serpieri explores in his contribution.

Herein, of course, we should remember with Olssen how the State-phobia on which the political reason of neoliberalism is grounded was criticised by Foucault, and how he was also sceptical about the myth of civil society. As Dean and Villadsen observe, Foucault not only problematised the role of the State through the notion of governmentality, but also denaturalised the idea of civil society, which is, he wrote, made "by many fictions" and diverse expertise, "including those of a poststructural persuasion"[61]. We need to abandon the simplistic and homogenous image of civil society and instead investigate how particular "communities" engage with issues like crime

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[58] M. Foucault, *The birth of biopolitics. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*, trans. G. Burchell, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2008, p. 94.

[59] M. Olssen, *Toward A Global "Thin" Community*, op. cit.

[60] B. Williamson, *The Future of the Curriculum*, op. cit.

[61] M. Dean and K. Villadsen, *State Phobia and Civil Society. The Political Legacy of Michel Foucault*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2016, p. 170.

prevention, urban renewal, health promotion, the integration of immigrants [and here we could easily add the provision of educational opportunities][62].

Some of the articles of this issue pointedly remind us of the opportunity to combine the final Foucault with other authors/approaches in order to properly tackle the matter of the conditions to be changed for 'freely' practicing the self-formation escaping the subjectivations of the educational dispositifs. Peters and Besley – and in a similar vein also Borrelli and Bevilacqua – suggest that defending democracy and sustaining parrhesia as a critical attitude, that can ultimately secure the connection between democracy and true discourse, would require an education that can and should encourage free speech, include the analysis of hate speech and offer the tools to determine what is true or fake news in a post-truth world.

Another direction, apart of the communitarian one, that is also suggested in two articles (Allen and Moreau) resides in a sort of "rejection", of "refusal"2 of the same idea of an education necessarily entrapped in (neo)liberal logics and their dispositifs. Dardot and Laval claim that the practices of resistance as forms of counter-conducts are unlikely to end up in a political uprising[63], while as Foucault himself observes «it is doubtless the strategy codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible»[64]. Even in the case of the contributions coming from Simons and Masschelein and Cappa we find a "solution" that somehow goes beyond Foucault's work. In particular Simons and Masschelein advocate another pedagogy, which paradoxically they label as 'liberal'. Thus, recalling Ranciere's problematization of the school 'form' as a morphology, they claim that a genuine experimental education should be detached by any instrumental purpose. In the same vein De Conciliis turns to another critical thinker, Sloterdijck, in order to anchor education to a different anthropotechnique, that is the foucauldian invitation to consider a parrhesiastic mode of being an educational subject.

In the end, we believe that this issue signals and sketches some directions in which to look for another political reason, for another governmentality, that would render us less governed[65]. On the one hand, it further enriches the tool box to critically contests the modes of individualization proper to contemporary education, with criticism being here a productive act of imagination that problematises the educational practices we engage in, asking if they «either reinforce or resist the manner in which our freedom— how we think, act, and speak—has been governed in ways that are limiting and intolerable»[66]. On the other hand, notwithstanding their shifting focalizations on communitarianism, democracy, scepticism, post-education, education as self-formation or parrhesia, all the contributions seem to advocate in the direction of an extension of our participation to

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[62] *Ibidem.*

[63] P. Dardot, C. Laval, *Commun. Essai sur la révolution au XXIe siècle*, La Decouverte, Paris 2014, pp. 511-512.

[64] M. Foucault, *The history of sexuality vol. 1. An introduction*, Penguin, London 1981, p. 96.

[65] M. Foucault, *Qu'est ce-que la critique?*, op. cit.

[66] T.H. Hamann, *Neoliberalism, Governmentality, and Ethics*, in «Foucault Studies», 6 (2009), n. 1, p. 58.

education and the formation of a collective, a "we" that could also become a potential community of action[67]. They solicit an ethical enthusiasm and agonism[68] and produce an interference, inviting for «practical and agonistic engagement, re-engagement, or disengagement with the rationalities and practices»[69] that led us to become certain kinds of [educational] subjects in our present. They also highlights how this often requires that we go beyond if not betray Foucault, even the final one, and direct our gaze toward other moves that Foucault did not want or was unable to make.

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[67] M. Foucault, *Revolutionary action: 'until now'*, trans. D.F. Bouchard and S. Simon, in D.F. Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Countermemory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews*, Cornell University Press, New York 1977, pp. 221-234.

[68] J. Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, op. cit.

[69] T.H. Hamann, *Neoliberalism, Governmentality, and Ethics*, op. cit., p. 57.