

Affect and biopower: towards a politics of life

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In this paper I stage an encounter between two concepts that have become popular placeholders for a broad concern with a politics of life: affect and biopower. Through engagement with Antonio Negri's writings on the 'real subsumption of life' in contemporary capitalism and Michel Foucault's lectures on neoliberalism, I show that understanding how forms of biopower work through affect requires attending to three relations: affective relations and capacities are *object-targets* for discipline, biopolitics, security and environmentality; affective life is the *outside* through which new ways of living may emerge; and specific collective affects (including 'state-phobia') are part of the *conditions* for the birth of forms of biopower. In what is simultaneously a departure from, and an affirmation of, recent work on affect, I argue that attending to the dynamics of *affective life* may become political as a counter to forms of biopower that work through processes of normalisation. The consequence is that understanding how biopower works on and through affect becomes a precondition for developing affirmative relations with affective life.

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Introduction

In this paper I stage an encounter between two partially connected concerns that are currently animating human geography and linked disciplines: 'affect' and 'biopower'. Both terms have become increasingly popular placeholders for a broad concern with life, albeit in ways that might initially appear to be quite different. The first term – affect – has come to name the aleatory dynamics of lived experience, what Thrift (2004) terms the 'push' of life (see recently Bissell 2008; McCormack 2008; Simpson 2008). From this work we learn that new ways of living are constantly appearing and being created amidst the 'to and fro' of everyday life, whether through the affects of homoerotic cruising (Brown 2008), the intensities of pain (Bissell 2009), or the distances of death and love (Wylie 2009). The second term – biopower – names, in contrast, how life has become the 'object-target' for specific techniques and technologies of power. In an extension of Foucault's diagnosis of a mode of power

based on the attempt to take control of life in general 'with the body as one pole and the population as the other' (Foucault 2003, 253), a range of work has shown how 'man-as-living-being' and 'life itself' are now known, invested, controlled and harnessed (Dillon 2007; Elden 2007; Legg 2008). What we learn from this literature is that to protect, care for and sustain valued lives is to abandon, damage and destroy other lives.

Given these apparent differences, to stage an encounter between 'affect' and 'biopower' is to bring together two ways of thinking about the relation between power and life, where 'life' is used, for the moment, to refer to what runs through individual bodies, collective populations and more-than-humans worlds. On the one hand, life is that which exceeds attempts to order and control it. On the other hand, life is that which is made productive through techniques of intervention. It is in the tension between these two versions of how power and life relate that a politics of affect resides, or so I will claim. My argument is that the affective life

of individuals and collectives is an 'object-target of' and 'condition for' contemporary forms of biopower. In this context attending to affective life offers a promise. It opens up a way of relating to the surpluses of life that Foucault invoked when first introducing the concept of biopower: 'It is not that life has been totally integrated into techniques that govern and administer it; it constantly escapes them' (1978, 143).

The relation between affect and biopower cannot, however, be understood in the abstract. Power has not just discovered affectivity. On the contrary, as James (1997) has shown, passion, mood, emotion and feeling have long been central to debates about what sort of animal the human is and what constitutes life and living (Kahn *et al.* 2006). Indeed, Foucault's initial diagnosis of the emergence of forms of power that are 'bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them' (1978, 136) was tied to a unique set of political-economic transformations, specifically the need for an expansion of productive forces in capitalism (1978, 141). Consequently, I pose the question of the relation between affect and biopower from a particular context – advanced liberal democracies – in relation to the connections between a specific economic ordering – the 'real subsumption of life' (Hardt and Negri 2009) – and a specific logic of governing – neoliberalism (Foucault 2008). What links this ordering of capital/life relations with a logic of governing is a problematisation of life as contingent, as tensed between chaos and determination (as expressed through terms such as uncertainty, indeterminacy, discontinuity and turbulence). Summarising rather crudely, we could say that through neoliberal logics of governing the contingency of life has become a source of threat and opportunity, danger and profit (see Cooper 2008; Dillon 2007; Marazzi 2010; Massumi 2009, 40–63). If productive forces are to be 'generated', made to 'grow' and be 'ordered', then the contingencies of life must be known, assayed, sorted and intervened on. But contingency must never be fully eliminated, even if it could be. To do so would be to also eliminate the circulations and interdependencies that supposedly constitute the 'freedom' of individuals and commerce in liberal-democracies (Foucault 2008, 65).

The relation with the contingencies of life is very different in research on spaces of pain, love, hope and other affects. And it is this difference that allows us to consider how work on the dynamics of affective life might open up alternatives to forms

of biopower. A nascent spatial politics of affect has developed in two partially connected directions. First, work has attended to how experiences, events and encounters may be cultivated through ethical-aesthetic techniques (Dewsbury 2003; McCormack 2003 2008). Second, work has focused on the 'generative immediacy' (Williams 1977) of emerging social formations, specifically affects tightly linked to social and political differences (Hayes-Conroy 2008; Lim 2010; Saldanha 2007; Swanton 2010). While there are differences between these two trajectories, they share a starting point: that attending to affective life orientates inquiry to how new ways of living may emerge. The relation with life is in the main an affirmative one that refuses the biopolitical imperative to divide between a valued life and a threat to that valued life. Instead, techniques and sensibilities are experimented with in order to cultivate 'turning points' through which new potentialities for life and living may be witnessed, invented and acted on (Anderson and Harrison 2010).

Obviously this link between affect, politics and contingency has engaged, interested and inspired me. I feel its political and ethical promise, even as I acknowledge that not everyone has or will. My argument in this paper is that attending to the dynamics of affective life may become political when brought into contact with forms of biopower that, in different ways, normalise life. This is to offer a contribution to the somewhat contentious recent debates about the politics of affect, even if those debates have been separate from questions of biopower (at least in geography). Instead, they have turned on three points of concern and critique: the apparent distinction between emphasising an impersonal life and the embodied experience of differentiated subjects (Thien 2005); the relation between affect and signification (Pile 2010); and the normative blind spots of work that attempts to critique the manipulation of affect (Barnett 2008). This paper comes after those critiques, in the sense that it responds to their calls to (re)consider the politics of affect. Nevertheless, I do not comment on the criticisms directly in this paper. The risk is that positions are caricatured and the debate becomes circular, defensive and of interest only to the initiated. Instead my aim is to elaborate a specific thesis about the *relations* between affect and biopower with the hope of opening up some new connections to other work going on in critical human geography. Specifically,

understanding affect *and* biopower requires that we attend to three problematics: how affective capacities and relations are the 'object-target' of techniques; how affective life may be an 'outside' that exceeds biopolitical mechanisms; and how collective affects become part of the 'conditions' for the birth of forms of biopower.

My argument unfolds in three sections before a conclusion in which I return to reconsider the promise of non-representational work on affective life. The first section offers an overview of how affective bodies and populations are one among a number of 'object-targets' for the two forms of biopower that Foucault (1978 2003) first distinguished between: discipline and biopolitics. In the second substantive section I argue that Antonio Negri's account of the 'real subsumption of life' helps us to update Foucault's account by linking changes in contemporary capitalism to redeployments of biopolitics/discipline and an intensification of forms of security. At the same time, I show how Negri offers an account of affective life as an 'outside' through which new ways of life might be created and composed. The third section encounters Foucault's (2008) recently translated *The birth of biopolitics* lectures series in order to unpack the relation between biopower and the logic of governing – neoliberalism – that has accompanied the 'real subsumption of life'. Here I describe how collective affects are part of the 'conditions' for the birth of biopowers.

A note on terminology before proceeding: as is now well known, there is no single, agreed upon definition for either 'affect' or 'biopower'. Both terms morph and mutate as they are drawn into connection with different theorists, issues, sites, concerns and problems. In what follows I aim to retain this sense of mutability as I stage a series of encounters between the two terms and outline a politics of affect specific to the conjuncture of an economic ordering and a logic of governing.

The 'two forms' of biopower

Foucault's (1978, 135–8; 2003, 239–42) unfinished story about the emergence of forms of biopower in the context of the growth of a capitalist economy is now well known (Cadman 2009; Elden 2007; Legg 2008). To summarise, forms of biopower involve a strategic coordination of the multiplicity of forces that make up 'life' or 'living beings' (Foucault 2008, 15–16; 1970, 250–303). Thus:

Power would no longer be dealing simply with legal subjects over whom the ultimate domination was death, but with *living beings*, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of *life itself*. (Foucault 1978, 142–3, emphasis added)

Expanding on this definition, biopower involves two distinguishing characteristics in comparison to other modes of power, in particular juridical state sovereignty. First, it involves a referent object – either living beings or life itself – that requires knowledge of the processes of circulation, exchange and transformation that make up life. Second, it is based around forms of intervention that aim to optimise some form of valued life against some form of threat: a productive relation of 'making life live'. 'Making life live' must, however, involve making a distinction within life between a valued life that is productive and a devalued life that threatens. To care, protect and nurture a valued life may mean to abandon, damage or destroy that which threatens (Foucault 1978, 144). As we shall see, forms of biopower differ in how they introduce a 'break' (Foucault 2003, 254) into the domain of life. Contra Agamben (1998), I do not take biopower to always be inscribed within the sovereign exception or always involve the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of bare life from political life. Biopower should not be collapsed into 'ways of taking life and making die'.

This is only a starting point, one that enables us to distinguish biopower from other forms of power with different means and ends (such as ideology or hegemony). The emergence of 'affect' in the lexicon of contemporary cultural theory has been accompanied by a specific claim about how contemporary forms of biopower now attempt to know affective bodily capacities. In debates taking place for the most part outside of human geography, affect and biopower have been drawn together in a diagnosis of contemporary 'control societies' (see Clough 2007 2008; Thoburn 2007). The claim is that biopower now targets and works through affect understood as molecular bodily changes that are pre- or non-conscious and extend beyond the body's 'organic-physiological constraints' (Clough 2007, 2). More specifically, contemporary forms of biopower involve technologies that, as Clough puts it, 'are making it possible to grasp and to manipulate the imperceptible dynamism of affect' (2008, 2), specifically digital and molecular technologies allied to a resurgent neuroscience and forms of

behaviouralism (see Hansen 2004). One example is the increased deployment of neuroscience in consumer research and branding. Through the promise of imagining what is termed the 'reptile brain', neuro-marketing companies sell the holy grail of consumer research: access to the pre-conscious emotional reactions that escape the reflexive subject and yet, supposedly, determine decisionmaking. Once these 'emotional reactions' have been imaged then 'subliminal primes' can be manipulated by changing product design or branding strategy. The consumer is addressed affectively (Anderson forthcoming).

This is an important claim, one that places attempts to know molecular affects in the context of arguments that 'life itself' is now understood in terms of self-organisation, morphogenesis and recombination (see Dillon and Reid 2009). It suggests that the 'affective turn' is simultaneously harbinging, symptom and diagnosis of the emergence of what Clough (2008) terms a 'biomediated body': a neurological body that may be produced, managed and experimented with through techniques ranging from new media and information technologies to affective psychopharmacologies (Cooper *et al.* 2005). While suggestive, these claims are generally vague about the novelty of these changes. Clough, for example, describes the targeting of affect as an 'extension' of biopolitics and then as 'a biopolitics that works at the molecular level of bodies, at the informational substrate of matter' (2007, 19). Nevertheless, no in-depth attempt is made to specify how discipline, biopolitics or other modes of biopower act on affect, mood, passion, emotion, feeling or sentiment. Consequently, there is no sense of the partial connections between forms of biopower or their intensifications and redeployments.

To be more precise about the relation between affect and biopower it is useful to return to the distinction Foucault (1978, 139; 2003, 242) originally drew between the two 'political technologies' that make up biopower: discipline and biopolitics. To link Foucault to affect may appear to be a little against the grain, given the general disavowal of Foucault by affect theorists and the recent charge that Foucault had a 'seeming aversion to discussing affect explicitly' (Thrift 2007, 54). While perhaps not explicit, Foucault nevertheless shows how individual and collective affective capacities are targeted in a form of power that has 'taken control of life in general – with the body as one pole and the population as the other' (2003, 253). We reach,

then, the first of the three generic relations between affect and biopower. Affect is an 'object-target' rendered actionable at the intersection of relations of knowledge and relations of power and emergent from specific apparatuses. An 'apparatus' is the system of relations between heterogeneous discursive and non-discursive elements that has as its strategic function to respond to an urgent need (Foucault 1980). It consists of

a certain manipulation of relations of forces, either developing them in a particular direction, blocking them, stabilising them, utilising them, etc. (1980, 196)

The first of the two poles is an 'anatomopolitics' focused on the body and deployed in institutions (Foucault 1978, 139). An 'anatomopolitics' of discipline has as its primary target *actions* (rather than souls or signs). Concerned with the integration of actions into systems of efficient control, techniques must work on what a body can do, will do or may do: on 'the natural body, the bearer of forces and the seat of duration' (Foucault 1977, 166). The privileged points of application for discipline are capacities or acts, the desired outcome is for the discipline to keep going by itself, to become normed conduct, and the means a training of what a body can do (Foucault 1977; Foucault 2006, 46–57). Discipline works through an embodied version of emotions and feelings in two ways. First, disciplines individualise affect, acting on the individual as an affective being who can 'control' unruly passions through physical action. Second, the attention to detail that marks discipline extends to emotions as the physiological and biological basis of what a body can do; the body's reactions and actions are automated through a continuous entraining of sequences of action. Consider the development of Fordist factory labour, where the body's capacities to affect and be affected are entrained through a series of repeated, cyclical, steps: repeating the same motions, sitting in the same position, and so on (see Woodward and Lea 2010). A close cousin of the training and drilling of military bodies, the aim is to make productive the capacities of the body in a way that simultaneously 'increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (on political terms of obedience)' (Foucault 1977, 138).

The second 'pole' of biopower – a 'state biopolitics' applied to 'man-as-living-being' – treats life itself and affective life quite differently (Foucault 2003, 242). Biopolitics operates at the level of

the 'population', understood as a set of aleatory processes and events that form a complex 'many headed' whole at the level of the collective (Foucault 2007). The practices and techniques that make up the 'regulatory mechanisms' that attempt to establish a 'homeostasis' within an aleatory field (Foucault 2003, 246) are also different – interventions in the entirety of 'life' through some form of normalisation that *includes* all of life by testing, examining, classifying and then producing averages. In short, it is in the process of establishing norms from the aleatory that force is brought to bear directly on all of life, rather than by disciplining on the basis of a distinction between permitted/obligatory and forbidden actions. Hence the importance in a biopolitics of regulating overall conditions of life and naming threats to the balance or equilibrium of that life.

In a biopolitics, collective affective life may become an 'object-target' in two ways. First, populations are understood in terms of collective affects. Regularities and irregularities in the affective life of populations can be compensated for and regulated by, for example, tracking the rate of affective disorders such as depression within a population (Orr 2006). Consider, to give a different example, the now longstanding attempts to measure 'consumer confidence'. Changes in the 'degree of optimism' of a population are tracked by a variety of economic actors through household surveys focused on past and anticipated patterns of spending and saving (Anderson, forthcoming). Second, the population is segmented into a set of differentiated affective publics. Although it has received far less discussion than his focus on population-biological processes, Foucault argues that the 'public' is the population seen from one direction; '[u]nder the aspect of its opinions, ways of doing things, forms of behaviour, customs, fears, prejudices, and requirements' (2007, 75). Techniques such as opinion polling, for example, are used to track how publics think and feel. Political campaigns deploy neuroscience and other knowledges of affect to anticipate how messages will resonate with 'public mood' (Terranova 2004).

What we find by briefly returning to Foucault's distinction between two ways of dealing with multiplicities is that it is at the level of the capabilities of the body, or collective processes pertaining to the population, that affects are intervened on. Apparatuses of discipline and biopolitics both aim for a homeostasis by acting over multiplicities

(respectively the body and population) via the force of norms. Norms that function through 'efficient and continuous calculations of alterity' (Nealon 2008, 51) and aim to take into account all of life without limit or remainder. Through this process, the abnormal is fabricated as a threat that must be corrected or regulated. The presumption being that some form of equilibrium is possible.

In light of this brief return to Foucault's original distinction, I do not think that the present conjuncture is best framed in terms of an epochal shift in which apparatuses suddenly work through the molecular, neurological, body. What I want to emphasise in what follows are *redeployments* and *intensifications* of the normalisation of discipline and biopolitics together with the *emergence* of new forms of biopower (Foucault 2007, 8–9; Nealon 2008). We find conceptual-political resources to understand these complex mutations in Antonio Negri's account of the 'real subsumption of life' and Michel Foucault's lectures on 'neoliberalism'. Both are resources of hope. As they diagnose transformations in biopower, they also open up an affirmative relation with affective life where 'affect' becomes something more than an 'object-target' to be acted on through apparatuses.

Affect and 'biopower from below'

Antonio Negri's (1991 2003 2008) sole and jointly authored (with Michael Hardt 2000 2009) writings open up a link between the imperative to 'make life live' and contemporary political-economic transformations in capitalism. The connection between capitalism and biopower provides something akin to the 'context' for both Foucault's description of the 'two forms of biopower' as well as recent work on biopower and the molecular, neurological, body (see Clough 2008; Thrift 2005). In a series of brief comments, Foucault (1978, 140–9) contends that the 'bipolar' technology of biopower functioned as the 'essential element in the development of capitalism' through the 'controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes' (see also Foucault 1977, 218–24). Negri updates this by tying the shifting alignments of discipline, biopolitics and, as we shall see, other forms of biopower to the emergence of a systematic relation between life and capital that he names, after autonomist Marxism (Wright 2002), the 'real subsumption of life'. This can be

summarised as involving a twofold relation between value-producing activities and life that results in what Marazzi (2010) provocatively terms a 'bio-economy' or 'bio-capitalism', where the prefix 'bio' includes within it all of human life, rather than only the genetic, microbial or cellular levels of biological life (see Cooper 2008).

First, in the 'real subsumption of life' desires, subjectivities and needs are constantly mutating alongside capital. If the 'formal' subsumption of life involves capitalist forms (wage labour, the commodity, money) being imposed on a pre-existent non-capitalist sphere, in the 'real' subsumption processes of capital accumulation occur throughout the spheres of circulation and reproduction. Thus the 'limit condition' is a time-space where value creation becomes indistinct from social activity in general (Read 2003, 126, see also 104–14). Of particular interest here is the phenomena of the 'consumer-as-producer', examples of which range across 'word-of-mouth' advertising that relies on the buzz of sociality, beta-testing of video games by consumers, and the delegation of production functions to the consumer (as in the IKEA model) (Marazzi 2010). Second, and consequently, productive labour becomes any act that involves the direct production of potentials for doing and being (Lazzarato 2004). A series of changes in the relation between capital and life have meant that all the faculties that make up human species-being become a source of value, including the putting to work of the entirety of worker's lives in order to overcome the Fordist–Tayloristic separations between work and worker and work and free time (Marazzi 2008; Virno 2004), and the entry of communicative-relational processes into production, most obviously through services, design and branding (Thoburn 2007; Thrift 2005). Think only of how expressive creativity exists as a factor of production in the cultural and digital economies and of how types of work revolve around the promise of realising affectively imbued values such as autonomy, flexibility and self-development (Botanski and Chiapello 2007; Peck 2010).

This type of accumulation has been discussed in depth elsewhere, as have its myriad (dis)connections with other capital/life relations such as accumulation by dispossession and financialisation (Cooper 2008; Hardt and Negri 2009; Read 2003). What I want to emphasise here is that Negri invites us to update Foucault's brief comments on the link between biopower and capitalism by

showing how surplus value is extracted throughout all of life. Nothing can remain 'exogenous'. Everything has the potential to become an 'economic factor' that may contribute to 'growth' (Connolly 2008). The claim being made is not only that 'affect itself' is now bought and sold, including affective labour in the service sector and all the forms of bodily labour that feminist work has long recognised (Fortunati 1995). More than this, it is that affective capacities are harnessed across production processes. The risk in invoking the 'real subsumption of life' is, however, that it could function as a kind of 'macro-economic' background that determines mutations of discipline and biopolitics. To counter this risk, we should understand the 'real subsumption of life' as a systematic relation between capital/life that has to be *made* systematic through multiple, partially connected, apparatuses for producing and capturing value. Web 2.0 companies, to give one example, rely on harnessing 'diffused desires of sociality, expression, and relation' (Terranova 2004, cited in Marazzi 2010, 55), including affective relations such as friendship and activities such as browsing or linking. Slightly differently, we can think of how brands work through affective capture. Embodying 'passion', 'trust' and other qualities, brands aim to connect consumer and company at the level of affect (Lury 2004).

Discipline and biopolitics were, for Foucault (1978, 140), 'essential elements' in capitalism because they aimed to *adjust* or *insert* life into fixed sites and processes of production. However, once value is extracted from all of life, the relation biopower has with contingency changes; the homeostasis and equilibrium that are the aim of discipline and biopolitics are no longer possible or desirable. On the one hand, productive life must be constantly secured in relation to the dangers that lurk within it. Life is tensed on the verge of disasters that may emerge in unexpected and unanticipated ways to disrupt, momentarily or permanently, value-producing activities. As Massumi (2009) has shown, events ranging from terrorism to climate change have been governed as economic emergencies, which threaten to interrupt productive activity. On the other hand, the securing of life must not be antithetical to the positive development of a creative relation with contingency. Life must be open to the unanticipated if the 'freedom' of commerce and self-fashioning individuals is to be enabled. Contingency is both threat and

opportunity in a 'meta-stable' world in which value-producing activities are found throughout life (Anderson 2010; Dillon 2007).

In the context of this double relation with contingency, a form of biopower emerges that addresses the interplay between freedom and danger: security. Security aims to either stop disruptive events before they occur, or prepare for an interval in-between the occurrence of a disruptive event and its damaging a valued life. Neither relation with contingency necessarily involves forbidding or prescribing. Instead, security consists of a set of apparatuses that aim to regulate within reality, because the field of intervention is a series of aleatory events that perpetually *escape* command. Foucault outlines how apparatuses of security regulate a specific spatial-temporal topology – milieus –

not so much by establishing limits and frontiers, or fixing locations, as above all and essentially, making possible, guaranteeing, and ensuring circulations: the circulation of people, merchandise, and air, etcetera. (2007, 29)

Apparatuses of security function, then, to *enable* the circulations that define the personal and commercial 'freedoms' of liberal-democratic life. The means are an array of anticipatory logics (see Anderson 2010). For example, precautionary and preemptive logics are used to act before a determinate threat has emerged. Cutting across responses to climate change, terrorism and other events, precaution and preemption intervene in anticipation of disruption (de Goede and Randalls 2009). Pre-empting terror might involve identifying 'suspicious' activity by 'joining the dots' across transactions, credit card use, travel data and supermarket purchases, rather than simply stopping circulations *per se* (Amoore and de Goede 2008). By contrast, forms of emergency planning prepare for an 'interval' of emergency after a disruptive event has occurred but before valued circulations are irredeemably damaged (Anderson and Adey forthcoming). What is prepared for is how to respond to an emergency in a way that stops the cascading 'effects' of events, minimises interruptions to normal life and ensures the continuity of the 'critical infrastructures' that enable circulations.

Security can be understood as a break with discipline and an intensification of biopolitics. The spatial-temporal logic of discipline is discontinuous: it masses and individuates across institutional sites that are separate. By contrast, security like biopolitics

is dispersive. States, commercial organisations or networks of governance act on circulations and interdependencies that extend throughout a life understood to be tensed in a 'state of constant metastability' (Deleuze 1995, 179). The object-targets of 'security' are *processes of emergence* that may become determinate threats. In comparison to the distinction between normal/abnormal that underpins discipline and biopolitics, securing a 'meta-stable' life works through what Massumi (1998, 57) terms a 'rapid inflation' of the 'normative' whereby 'classificatory and regulative mechanisms are elaborated for every socially recognisable state of being' (on 'curves of normality' and differential 'mobile norms', see also Foucault 2007, 63). The consequence is that all of life is assayed in ways that may reproduce forms of racialised suspicions or fears (Adey 2009; Puar 2007).

This is a bleak picture; as production extends to all of life, all of life must be secured to ensure 'good' circulations amid threats that are imminent to life. At its limit, security becomes war and life is killed to protect valued lives (Dillon and Reid 2009). For example, the extension and blurring of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency may herald a 'new normal' of perpetual peace-war in which threats are acted on before they emerge as threats (Anderson 2011; Gregory 2010). Negri's work is, however, not only of importance because through it we can diagnose a connection between the intensification of security and a changing form of capital accumulation. He also invites us to pause and think again about the relation between affect and biopower. As he offers a diagnosis of the contemporary condition, Negri (with Michel Hardt) evokes a world in which new relations, subjectivities and commonalities may be created and organised. If up until now I have somewhat bleakly described affective capacities and states as 'object-targets' in apparatuses, Negri's 'biopower from below' opens up a second seemingly opposed relation: affective life is the non-representational 'outside' that opens up the chance of something new. Of course, Negri is not alone in making this argument. A range of techniques and styles of research have been experimented with in order to describe how affective life exceeds attempts to make it into an object-target for forms of power. Consider, for example, Jane Bennett's (2001) now well-known work on enchantment as a specific ethos of engagement (see Holloway 2010 on other forms of

enchantment). Through a combination of wonder and disturbance, Bennett discloses a world of things with lively properties and capacities. Her wager is that disclosing sites of enchantment has the chance of opening up new attachments against the background of environmental destruction.

Consider how Negri discusses love. For Negri, love is the paradigmatic affect of cooperation, difference and creation. Distinguishing a specific type of love from either the love of the same or love as a process of unification, both of which for him involve repetition without difference (see Wylie 2009), Negri valorises love as an event of constitution and composition (2003, 209–24; see Negri with Dufourmantelle on panic [2004, 131–3]). The following passage from *Commonwealth* shows how affective relations and capacities are understood as *events*, ruptures and beginnings that herald the birth of new ways of living:

When we engage in the production of subjectivity that is love, we are not merely creating new objects or even new subjects in the world. Instead we are producing a new world, a new social life ... Love is an ontological event in that it marks a rupture with what exists and the creation of the new. (Hardt and Negri 2009, 180–1)

Negri's discussion of love as 'the constitutive praxis of the common' (2003, 209) demands a deliberately abrupt shift in focus from affect as an 'object-target' to affective life as an 'outside' that exceeds attempts to control and organise it. On this account, it is in part through bodily feelings, bursts of emotion and collective affects that new ways of living may appear, emerge or be produced (or as Negri puts it in more technical terms, affect as 'capacity to act' holds an 'expansive power' of 'ontological opening' that is a 'power of freedom' (1999, 9)).

There is a tension then between the deliberately claustrophobic diagnosis of the contemporary condition that I have drawn out from Negri and Foucault and the openness to the birth of new ways of living that Negri also invites us to attend to. Negri offers the clearest account of his affirmative concept of how life exceeds apparatuses in dialogue with the literary theorist Cesare Casarino. He is careful to stress the nature of his encounter with Foucault; he 'extracts', 're-elaborates' and 'expands' the concept of biopower (Negri with Casarino 2008, 146, 148; see also Negri 2008, 30–6). It is worth quoting at length a passage from Negri's dialogue with Casarino because it opens up an analytic split *within* the concept of biopower that while quite

different nevertheless resonates with Foucault's (1978) claim cited in the introduction that there is something vital about life that escapes biopower. This split is central to how Negri develops a theory of the constitutive powers of life – a 'biopower from below' (hereafter biopotentialia):

biopolitics, on the one hand, turns into biopower [biopotere] intended as the institution of a dominion over life, and, on the other hand, turns into biopower [biopotenza] intended as the potentiality of constituent power. In other words, in biopolitics intended as biopower [biopotenza], it is the *bios* that creates power, while in biopolitics intended as biopower [biopotere], it is power that creates the *bios*, that is, that tries alternately either to determine or annul life, that posits itself as power against life. (Negri and Casarino 2008, 167; emphasis in original)

Negri's split between two partially connected 'aspects' or 'tendencies' of biopolitics provides the basis to a very different account of the relation between power and life. The focus on apparatuses is disrupted by being worked through the distinction Negri draws from Spinoza between *potentia* and *potestas* (Negri 1991). Hardt summarises this distinction:

In general, Power [potestas] denotes the centralized, mediating, transcendental force of command, whereas power [potentia] is the local, immediate, actual force of constitution. (1991, xiii)

On the one hand, biopower as Power negates, lessens and subtracts. Thus security, for example, 'makes life live' by ensuring circulations but is nevertheless an example of command over life. On the other hand, biopower as power creates, produces and constitutes. In Negri's terms, this is a power of life that is not reducible to Power as command, even as it is in complex relation with it. New ways of living are continually being constituted and composed. Discipline, biopolitics and security are for Negri negative movements that can only be parasitical on the productive powers of an affective life of cooperation and association (and it is these powers that are harnessed in the 'real subsumption of life' and, although not the subject of this paper, provide the basis to the Multitude as 'a multiplicity, a plane of singularities, an open set of relations, which is not homogenous or identical to itself' (Hardt and Negri 2000, 103)).

How, then, does an understanding of affect as an 'outside' connect to the first relation between

affect and biopower: affect as an 'object-target'? Negri's (and Hardt's) intervention is important because it counters the risk that work on affect and biopower could become yet another account of the domination of life without limit or remainder (see Negri's (2006) critique of Agamben for his 'neutralisation' of biopotential). By invoking love as well as joy, happiness and other affects, Negri opens up a second relation between affect and biopower: affective life is both the inassimilable that must be reduced if it is to be acted on, and the unattributable that escapes attempts to name, know, target and sort life. By provoking us to affirm the potentialities of living against Power, Negri's writings function as events of hope. They jolt us to remember the perpetual belatedness of apparatuses by evoking '[a] power that expresses itself from life, not only in work and language, but in bodies, affects, desires, sexuality' (Negri 2003, 81, cited in Toscano 2007, 118).

There are many resonances between Negri's affirmative 'biopower from below' and the work on affect, contingency and the political cited in the introduction, not least a shared concern with events that cannot be determinately indexed to prior determinations (Lim 2010) and the birth of new ways of living. However, Negri's distinction between the two forms of biopower does lead to some serious difficulties once we fold this theory of 'biopower from below' back into the diagnosis of the intensification of security and redeployments of discipline and biopolitics. The main problem is that it only becomes possible to conceive of one relation between the two biopowers; a capture or domination that is nevertheless doomed to fail (Toscano 2007). Biopower as potential is locked in a relation of antagonism with Biopower as potestas. For Negri (2008, 39), there is an 'ontological dissymmetry' between biopotestas as measurable and biopotential as 'the non-measurable, the pure expression of irreducible differences'. The reduction of plural power relations to one of antagonism sits uneasily with any attempt to think the productivity of power, or the intensifications or redeployments of apparatuses. Moreover, in a present marked by discipline, biopolitics, security and, as we shall see, other modes of biopower it is difficult to see how the relation between power and affect can be thought of in terms of command. As I argued above, discipline, biopolitics and security do not only prevent and prescribe, but primarily work to making life productive via the force of a

norm – whether by exercising capabilities, regulating the dynamics of populations or anticipating processes of emergence.

Once we start from the liveliness of apparatuses – that is discipline, biopolitics and security as inventive and productive – a new task for work on affect and biopower emerges: mapping the 'intricate topology' (Toscano 2007, 120) whereby attempts to act on and through affect constantly become part of affective life. Negri tends to stage this relation in one way: Power reduces an immeasurable excess. In part this is because, as Ruddick (2010) argues, Negri ties affect too tightly to the force and dynamics of 'living labour', anchoring his 'biopower from below' in a specific kind of collective subject. An alternative would have to do two things. First, it would have to show how biopolitical techniques shape, determine and condition capacities to affect *and* be affected. Second, it would have to show how affective life is patterned and organised in ways that exceed biopolitical techniques, without being entirely separate from them. Before offering a different way of relating to 'biopower from below', one that in conclusion will return us to non-representational inspired work, it is necessary to focus on the co-existence of security with neoliberalism. This will open up a third relation between affect and biopower – affect as a 'condition' for the birth of biopowers – that unsettles any effort to counterpoise strategies to 'make life live, or let die' with an expressive, inventive, 'life'.

State-phobia and 'environmentalities'

Paraphrasing Foucault (2008, 317), we could say that neoliberal logics of governing provide the 'general framework' for both the 'real subsumption' of life and the intensification of security. As is now well known, the 'rolling out' of neoliberal state forms, modes of (self)governance and regulatory relations has been based on the extension of a market rationality (Larner 2003; Peck 2010; Peck and Tickell 2002). In economic liberalism, the market is simultaneously the limit of and site of verification for government action. Foucault (2008) shows that in neoliberalism it is the market understood in terms of the 'formal game' of competition that becomes the truth and measure of society. The claim I want to make is that as production extends to all of life, and contingency becomes both danger and opportunity, life is intervened on through 'environmental technologies' (Foucault 2008, 261)

that accompany and merge with ways of securing life. 'Environmentalities' act on an affective-rational subject but also emerge from a specific organisation of affective life and this gives us cause to question Negri's invocation of the 'power of life to resist and determine an alternative production of subjectivity' (Hardt and Negri 2009, 57).

Let's backtrack a little so we can open up the third relation between affect and biopower and understand how specific 'affective atmospheres' become part of neoliberalism understood as a mobile 'logic of governing that migrates and is selectively taken up in diverse political contexts' (Ong 2007, 3). In the 1978–1979 lectures, Foucault (2008) discusses the differences between European ordoliberalism and the neoliberalism of Freedman and the Chicago School (albeit while recognising the imbrications of the two through individuals such as Hayek). Each offers a different solution to the shared problem of how to enable the market. Briefly, ordoliberalism separates the market from society and intervenes on the latter to enable the former through a *Vitalpolitik*, while neoliberalism enables the market through an absolute generalisation of a specific form of the market to domains that previously escaped its logic. On this understanding neoliberalism is neither a descriptive term nor an explanatory concept, but rather the always provisional, always locally contested, working out of a problem: 'how the overall exercise of political power can be modelled on the principles of a market economy' (Foucault 2008, 131). Common to both types of liberalism is an ethos closely tied to a concern with the '[t]he irrationality peculiar to excessive government' (2008, 323). Foucault terms this collective affect 'state-phobia' and describes it variously in terms of a fear or anxiety regarding the state (2008, 77). For Foucault, state-phobia is only a secondary 'sign' or 'manifestation' of a crisis of liberal governmentality (2008, 76). However, I think we can understand it slightly differently: as one example of an 'affective condition' through which apparatuses emerge, intensify or otherwise change. On this understanding, transformations in ways of 'making live, and letting die', and the emergence of new 'object-targets', are bound up with the *organisation* of affective life.

By 'affective condition' I mean an affective atmosphere that predetermines how something – in this case the state – is habitually encountered, disclosed and can be related to. Bearing a family resemblance to concepts such as 'structure of feeling' (Williams

1977) or 'emotional situation' (Virno 2004), an 'affective condition' involves the same doubled and seemingly contradictory sense of the ephemeral or transitory alongside the structured or durable. As such, it does not slavishly determine action. An 'affective condition' shapes and influences as atmospheres are taken up and reworked in lived experience, becoming part of the emotions that will infuse policies or programmes, and may be transmitted through assemblages of people, information and things that attempt to organise life in terms of the market. State-phobia obviously exists in complex coexistence with other affective conditions. To give but two examples, note how Connolly (2008) shows how existential bellicosity and resentments infuse the networks of think tanks, media and companies that promote neoliberal policies. Or consider how Berlant (2008) shows how 'nearly utopian' affects of belonging to a world of work are vital to the promise of neoliberal policies in the context of precariousness. In addition state-phobia has and will vary as it is articulated with distinct political movements. For example, the USA 'Tea Party' phenomenon is arguably animated by an intensified state-phobia named in the spectre of 'Big Government' and linked to a reactivation of Cold War anxieties about the threat of 'Socialism'. But the 'Tea Party' also involves a heady combination of white entitlement and racism, affective-ideational feelings of freedom, and the pervasive economic insecurity that follows from economic crisis.

How, then, do we get from state-phobia to a logic of governing that purports to govern 'as little as possible' but actually intervenes 'all the way down' through 'permanent activity, vigilance and intervention' (Foucault 2008, 246)? State-phobia traverses quite different apparatuses, and changes across those apparatuses. As Foucault puts it, it has many 'agents and promoters' (2008, 76), meaning that it can no longer be localised. It circulates alongside the concern with excessive government, reappears in different sites and therefore overflows any one neoliberalising apparatus (2008, 187). Hinting to a genealogy of state-affects, Foucault differentiates it from a similarly 'ambiguous' phobia at the end of the 18th century about despotism, as linked to tyranny and arbitrariness (2008, 76). State-phobia is different. It gives a push to the question of whether government is excessive, and as such animates policies and programmes that are based on extending the market form to all of soci-

ety. State-phobia is, on this account, both cause and effect of the neoliberal identification of an 'economic-political invariant' (2008, 111) across disparate forms of economic intervention (including the New Deal, Keynesianism and Nazism). Developing Foucault's brief comments on its 'inflationary' logic (2008, 187), we can think of state-phobia as being bound up with the anticipatory hyper-vigilance of paranoia (Sedgwick 2003). It is based on an 'elision of actuality' that passes over what the state is actually doing to always find the 'great fantasy of the paranoid and devouring state' (Foucault 2008, 188). In short, neoliberalism is imbued with a suspicion of any state economic action that is not wholly in the service of organising life around the market form.

The great insight of Foucault's lectures course is to show that state-phobia is bound up with the intensification of efforts to extend the market form. As was argued in the previous section, productive powers are to be found throughout life. The consequence of the 'real subsumption of life' is that affective life is situated in a 'non-place' with respect to capital (Negri 1999). There is no outside; value is captured throughout the surpluses of life and all of life must be secured in a way that ensures circulations. In this context, neoliberal modes of (self)governance provide a means of attempting to act on what promises to enable economic activity: everything. Intervention must extend throughout life without limit or remainder in order to make life live for the market. Security is one way of doing this, but one that co-exists with other forms of biopower, including a redeployment of elements from discipline and biopolitics. For example, while not reducible to discipline as it manages 'lifestyle', workfare policies and programmes involve various disciplinary techniques, not least numerous forms of surveillance alongside an emphasis on duty, obedience and punishment (Peck 2001). Likewise, marginal populations are subject to numerous biopolitical techniques of survey, sorting and classification (Amin 2010). But we also find a complementary but distinct form of intervention that is novel to neoliberalism: an economic intervention in domains that previously escaped the logic of the economic. More specifically, the economy conceived by neoliberals as a living, self-organising and self-correcting system (Cooper 2008) is rendered actionable through 'environmental technologies' orientated to the actions of a specific 'object-target' – *Homo economicus*.

Let us unpack this much commented on 'figure' a little as it is central to the birth of new forms of self-governance and is complexly articulated with the 'real subsumption of life' and the intensification of security. *Homo economicus* involves a reworking of the three characteristics of the liberal economic and political subject. Summarising a range of work, we could say that the ideal subject of liberalism is composed of three characteristic affects: insatiable desires such as pride, lust or greed; a set of disinterested interests such as charity or compassion; and utilitarian self-interest (Feher 2009). Discipline, security and biopolitics are ways of intervening before such a subject is formed (through capabilities or emergencies) and after such a subject links with others (as a population). Now it is vital to remember that the liberal subject is always-already an affective subject; obviously so in terms of desire and disinterested interests. But 'interests' have also long held a unique role in conceptualisations of human species-being (Hirschman 1977). As a combination of passion and reason, the hybrid 'interests' were first conceptualised as a counter-weight to the destructiveness of passions and the ineffectiveness of reason. *Homo economicus* is a reorganisation of these components of the liberal subject; specifically, the intensification of the subject of interest and the subject of desire through processes of privatisation, personalisation and responsabilisation. As an 'object-target' that actualises and expresses state-phobia, *Homo economicus* has a triple performative role in neoliberalising apparatuses: it is a *principle* in whose name governmental action must be evaluated; an *interface* between government and individual; and an *ideal form* of action that must be artfully created.

More specifically, neoliberalism involves what Foucault first describes as a 'considerable shift' (2008, 225) and then a 'complete change' (2008, 226) in how it acts over the subject of interests. This is underpinned by a *specific* understanding of the market that Foucault takes to involve a break from conceptions of the 'nature' of the market in classic liberalism. Foucault explains this shift as one where, animated by state-phobia, the organising and regulatory norm of state and society becomes competition as a 'formal game between inequalities' (2008, 120) rather than exchange between equals. Mechanisms of competition must be extended so that they have the 'greatest possible surface and depth' (2008, 147) in society. The universalisation of a specific economic form – competi-

tion – means that any way of life that does not fit, or cannot be made to fit, with that form is devalued. Competition becomes both the transcendent measure for all of life (a norm) and a means of organising inter-personal affective relations around winning and losing. The effect sought is of a ‘society subject to the dynamic of production’ (2008, 147).

When we fold this argument back into the previous section we find an intriguing connection: as production is expanded in the ‘real subsumption of life’, efforts are made to expand the scope of relations of competition (Read 2009). Contra Negri, not only is affective life always-already becoming organised into collective affects such as state-phobia, but also neoliberalising processes attempt to harness the creative, inventive, dimensions of life. Summarising a range of neoliberal economists, Foucault goes on to argue that *Homo economicus* is acted on as a specific type of producer: an investor orientated to future gains or losses. Indicative of this shift for Foucault is the elaboration of a theory of ‘human capital’ by Theodore Schultz, Gary Becker and other economists working or linked to the Chicago economics department (Foucault 2008, 223–33). Their re-description begins by arguing that from the standpoint of the worker wages are an income of the worker’s capital (rather than the sale price of labour power). This capital is indistinguishable from the worker, since the ability to work cannot be separated from the person who works (Foucault 2008, 224). What is of concern is, therefore, the changing dynamic of ‘human capital’, the conditions of which reside throughout non-economic fields and domains. Consider attempts to entrain ‘confidence’ in workfare programmes as a way of developing ‘employability’, the *capacity* to gain, maintain and obtain work. Partly disciplinary as they involve ways of entraining how to feel, confidence training is also more-than-disciplinary as it aims to intervene throughout an individual’s life. Like other future-orientated relations such as ‘aspiration’, the absence of confidence is seen as a barrier to realising the value of an individual’s existing stock of ‘human capital’ or increasing their ‘assets’. Courses are therefore taught in how to maintain self-confidence while unemployed. For the unemployed, ‘confidence boosting’ training courses are provided. Measures such as compulsory non-paid work are justified as a means of repairing confidence. Being confident becomes a productive activity (Feher 2009).

Moreover, *Homo economicus* is ‘eminently governable’ (Foucault 2008, 270) because it may be acted on in a specific way: the subject of interest who is always-already a rational-affective being is taken to respond systematically to modifications in the variables that compose his or her ‘environment’. In relation to such a ‘responsive’ subject, neoliberalising processes involve ‘environmental technologies’ (see Foucault 2008, 259–61, 269–71; Massumi 2009). These are attempts to manage and manipulate the contingent ‘environments’ in which action occurs in order to indirectly act on the investments that the subject of interests makes. As well as training capabilities in discipline, regulating populations in biopolitics and anticipating emergences in security, ‘environments’ are arranged and shaped so as to enable

an optimisation of systems of difference, in which the field is left open to fluctuating processes, in which minority individuals and practices are tolerated, in which action is brought to bear on the rules of the game rather than on the players. (Foucault 2008, 259–60)

Environmentalities work through systematic modifications of the ‘environment’ within which an action occurs, rather than directly on the body’s capabilities. One prominent contemporary example is the combination of behaviouralism and neuroscience that is currently being rolled out in UK public policy to govern a range of everyday ‘problem’ behaviours, such as unhealthy eating or speeding. Environments – rendered actionable as ‘choice architectures’ – are set up to shape the actions of ‘predictably irrational’ subjects (Jones *et al.* 2010). Modifications of ‘environments’ attempt to shape the interplay between the future gains and losses associated with a choice or decision (see also Langley (2006) on the making of ‘investor subjects’ in the financialisation of pensions and social insurance). ‘Environmentalities’ orientated to the subject of interest accompany the extension of future orientated ‘security’: both ‘make life live, and let die’ through action orientated to the future in a ‘metastable’ world. If discipline and biopolitics both engender expectation, and aim for a homeostasis, environmentality and security act in relation to the contingencies of life by attempting to seize possession of the future before it occurs and shaping how contingent decisions or events will unfold.

Perhaps, though, Foucault’s assertion that ‘minority practices’ are ‘tolerated’ in environmentalities is a little too benign and risks hiding some of

the connections with contemporary ways of abandoning, damaging or destroying life. As Foucault hints, tolerance is conditional. Individuals or practices that do not fit with the market are devalued. Moreover, a new pathological figure emerges: the individual or group that makes the wrong choice and is forced to take individual responsibility. In addition, 'environmental technologies' are now interlinked with forms of security and war. UK and USA counterterrorism and counterinsurgency policies both now emphasise anticipatory action on the 'environment' of terrorist/insurgent formation in order to shape the 'decision' to support terrorism/insurgency (Anderson 2011). Targeting and then damaging the environment has become a weapon of war deployed by western militaries in forms of violence such as aerial bombing and interrogation (Adey 2010; Sloterdijk 2009). Perhaps, then, the meeting of 'environmentalities' and 'security' is one point where contemporary types of biopower mutate into ways of taking life and making die. A mutation that occurs in the context of the problem of how to 'make life live' when the contingencies of life must be constantly assayed and sorted but never eliminated.

A politics of affect

To recap: I have argued that affective life is an 'object-target' for security, environmentality and redeployments of discipline and biopolitics under two conditions: first, when value may be created and extracted from all of life (in the 'real subsumption of life') and, second, when attempts are made to understand all of life in terms of the market and competition (in economic neoliberalism). Specific organisations of affect – including state-phobia – are essential elements in those conditions, traversing and animating apparatuses. Like any thesis, these claims invite discussion and contestation. They also leave much out for further elaboration, including an exploration of the links between affects such as panic, confidence or exhaustion and other modes of value creation and accumulation, most notably financialisation and accumulation by dispossession. As I have developed this argument, I have also staged a series of encounters between 'affect' and 'biopower'. My aim has been to open up a 'contextual-pragmatic' (Ngai 2005) problem space where affective life is conceptualised as simultaneously an *object-target of, outside to and condition for* ways of 'making life live, and letting die'.

How might work on the relations between affect and biopower proceed if its task is to understand contemporary ways of 'making life live, and letting die'? One consequence of my argument is that undertaking a type of criticism that attempts to disclose new potentialities should occur alongside attempts to understand how affective life is an 'object-target of' and 'condition for' specific forms of biopower. This leads to two questions. How are affective relations and capacities known and intervened on through specific apparatuses? And how do affective atmospheres condition how apparatuses emerge and change? Take state-phobia. To understand its formation, and organisation, we might begin by following it through some of the same sites that Peck tracks mutations of neoliberal reason:

from the backrooms of think tanks to the seminar rooms at the University of Chicago, from the op-ed pages to guru performance spaces, from the brightly lit stages of presidential politics to the shady world of political advice. (2010, xiv)

But we might also want to show how state-phobia emerges in everyday life and coalesces in the midst of other ways in which affective capacities and relations are organised, whether that be forms of economic insecurity associated with precarity, apathy, anger and other types of political engagement, or the lived force of ideals of freedom. In short, we might describe how affective life is imbricated in the working out of the neoliberal problem of how to organise life according to the market.

While these questions may suggest a departure from some recent work on affect, the paper is simultaneously an affirmation of attempts to attend to affective life. This work holds such promise because it experiments a different relation with 'life' than we find across discipline, biopolitics, security and environmentality. To understand this difference it is necessary to return to the imperative to think an affirmative relation with the events of living that animates Negri's thought and provides the third question for work on life and contemporary forms of biopower: how should we relate to the creation and composition of diverse ways of life? While sharing this question with Negri, I think we find a more nuanced description of affective life and its dynamics in non-representational inspired work on affect. What defines this work is that it has experimented with methods, concepts and modes of presentation that aim to work with the processes whereby diverse ways of living emerge

(e.g. Brown 2008; Dewsby 2003; Lim 2010; McCormack 2008). By bearing witness to the forces of an 'impersonal and yet singular life' (Deleuze 2001, 28), it affirms the singularity of ways of life and refuses any attempt to establish a 'break' within life by reference to a norm (i.e. 'normation' of discipline, the 'normalisation' of biopolitics, the 'mobile norms' of security, or a universal 'economic form'). More specifically, attending to the dynamics of a life might become political in relation to forms of biopower if as well as describing the organisation of affective life it also reversed the points at which they blur with ways of 'making' or 'letting' die. To the privatisation and enclosure of the commons that follows the extraction of surplus value from all of life, it might explore the specific forms of cooperation and association that characterise productive activities in the 'real subsumption of life', for example. To the destruction and/or abandonment of lives that do not fit with competition, it might explore the ways in which lives subject to neoliberalising processes exceed relations of rivalry and competition, to give another example. These are only possible suggestions for a distinct type of affirmative practice. As an intervention in an economic-political conjuncture, such an affective politics would affirm Foucault's important caveat – 'It is not that life has been totally integrated into techniques that govern and administer it; it constantly escapes them' (1978, 143).

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