

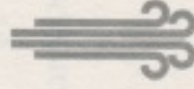
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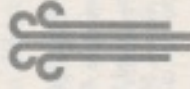
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The Birth of Biopolitics

LECTURES AT THE COLLEGE DE FRANCE,

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Questions of method. ~ Suppose universals do not exist. ~ Summary of the previous year's lectures: the limited objective of the government of raison d'Etat (external politics) and unlimited objective of the police state (internal politics). ~ Law as principle of the external limitation of raison d'Etat. ~ Perspective of this year's lectures: political economy as principle of the internal limitation of governmental reason. ~ What is at stake in this research: the coupling of a set of practices and a regime of truth and the effects of its inscription in reality. ~ What is liberalism?

[YOU KNOW] FREUD'S QUOTATION: "Acheronta movebo."¹ Well, I would like to take the theme for this year's lectures from another, less well-known quotation from someone who, generally speaking at least, is also less well-known, the English Statesman Walpole,² who, with reference to his way of governing, said: "Quiesca non movere."³ "Let sleeping dogs lie."⁴ In a sense, this is the opposite of Freud. In fact, this year I would like to continue with what I began to talk about last year, that is to say, to retrace the history of what could be called the art of government. You recall the strict sense in which I understood "art of government," since in using the word "to govern" I left out the thousand and one different modalities and possible ways that exist for guiding men,

* Fourault gives the French translation of the Latin phrase as: "A ce qui reste tranquille il ne faut pas toucher" (or "Do not disturb what is at rest or settled")

directing their conduct, constraining their actions and reactions, and so on. Thus I left to one side all that is usually understood, and that for a long time was understood, as the government of children, of families, of a household, of souls, of communities, and so forth. I only considered, and again this year will only consider the government of men insofar as it appears as the exercise of political sovereignty.

So, "government" in the strict sense, but also "art," "art of government" in the strict sense, since by "art of government" I did not mean the way in which governors really governed. I have not studied and do not want to study the development of real governmental practice by determining the particular situations it deals with, the problems raised, the tactics chosen, the instruments employed, forged, or remodeled, and so forth. I wanted to study the art of governing, that is to say, the reasoned way of governing best and, at the same time, reflection on the best possible way of governing. That is to say, I have tried to grasp the level of reflection in the practice of government and on the practice of government. In a sense, I wanted to study government's consciousness of itself, if you like, although I don't like the term "self-awareness (*conscience de soi*)" and will not use it, because I would rather say that I have tried, and would like to try again this year to grasp the way in which this practice that consists in governing was conceptualized both within and outside government, and anyway as close as possible to governmental practice. I would like to try to determine the way in which the domain of the practice of government, with its different objects, general rules, and overall objectives, was established so as to govern in the best possible way. In short, we could call this the study of the rationalization of governmental practice in the exercise of political sovereignty.

This immediately entails a choice of method that one day I will finally try to come back to at greater length, but I would like to point out straightaway that choosing to talk about or to start from governmental practice is obviously and explicitly a way of not taking as a primary, original, and already given object, notions such as the sovereign, sovereignty, the people, subjects, the state, and civil society, that is to say, all those universals employed by sociological analysis, historical analysis, and political philosophy in order to account for real governmental practice. For my part, I would like to do exactly the opposite and, starting

from this practice as it is given, but at the same time as it reflects on itself and is rationalized, show how certain things—state and society, sovereign and subjects, etcetera—were actually able to be formed, and the status of which should obviously be questioned. In other words, instead of deducing concrete phenomena from universals, or instead of starting with universals as an obligatory grid of intelligibility for certain concrete practices, I would like to start with these concrete practices and, as it were, pass these universals through the grid of these practices. This is not what could be called a historicist reduction, for that would consist precisely in starting from these universals as given and then seeing how history inflects them, or alters them, or finally invalidates them. Historicism starts from the universal and, as it were, puts it through the grinder of history. My problem is exactly the opposite. I start from the theoretical and methodological decision that consists in saying: Let's suppose that universals do not exist. And then I put the question to history and historians: How can you write history if you do not accept a priori the existence of things like the state, society, the sovereign, and subjects? It was the same question in the case of madness. My question was not: Does madness exist? My reasoning, my method, was not to examine whether history gives me or refers me to something like madness, and then to conclude, no, it does not, therefore madness does not exist. This was not the argument, the method in fact. The method consisted in saying: Let's suppose that madness does not exist. If we suppose that it does not exist, then what can history make of these different events and practices which are apparently organized around something that is supposed to be madness? So what I would like to deploy here is exactly the opposite of historicism: not, then, questioning universals by using history as a critical method, but starting from the decision that universals do not exist, asking what kind of history we can do. I will come back to this at greater length later.⁵

You recall that last year I tried to study one of those important episodes in the history of government. Roughly, this episode was that of the organization of what was called at the time *raison d'Etat*, in an infinitely stronger, stricter, more rigorous, and also fuller sense than was later given to this notion.⁶ I tried to locate the emergence of a particular type of rationality in governmental practice, a type of rationality that

would enable the way of governing to be modeled on something called the state which, in relation to this governmental practice, to this calculation of governmental practice, plays the role both of a given—since one only governs a state that is already there, one only governs within the framework of a state—but also, at the same time, as an objective to be constructed. The state is at once that which exists, but which does not yet exist enough. *Raison d'Etat* is precisely a practice, or rather the rationalization of a practice, which places itself between a state presented as given and a state presented as having to be constructed and built. The art of government must therefore fix its rules and rationalize its way of doing things by taking as its objective the bringing into being of what the state should be. What government has to do must be identified with what the state should be. Governmental *ratio* is what will enable a given state to arrive at its maximum being in a considered, reasoned, and calculated way. What is it to govern? To govern according to the principle of *raison d'Etat* is to arrange things so that the state becomes sturdy and permanent, so that it becomes wealthy, and so that it becomes strong in the face of everything that may destroy it.

A few words on what I tried to say last year, by way of a summary of last year's lectures. I would like to emphasize two or three points. First, you recall that the characteristic feature of this new governmental rationality of *raison d'Etat*, which was broadly formed during the sixteenth century, was that it defined the state and separated it out as both a specific and an autonomous, or relatively autonomous, reality. That is to say, government of the state must obviously respect a number of principles and rules which are above or dominate the state and are external to it. The government of the state must respect divine, moral, and natural laws as laws which are not homogeneous with or intrinsic to the state. But while respecting these laws, government has to do something other than ensure the salvation of its subjects in the hereafter, whereas in the Middle Ages the sovereign was commonly defined as someone who must help his subjects gain their salvation in the next world. Henceforth, government of the state no longer has to concern itself with the salvation of its subjects in the hereafter, at least not directly. It no longer has to extend its paternal benevolence over its subjects or establish father-child relationships with them, whereas in the Middle Ages the sovereign's

paternal role was always very emphatic and marked. In other words, the state is not a household, a church, or an empire. The state is a specific and discontinuous reality. The state exists only for itself and in relation to itself, whatever obedience it may owe to other systems like nature or God. The state only exists through and for itself, and it only exists in the plural. That is to say, there is nothing like an imperial structure which it has to merge with or submit to at a more or less distant point on the historical horizon and which would in some way represent God's theophany in the world, leading men to a finally united humanity on the threshold of the end of the world. So there is no integration of the state in the Empire. The state only exists as states, in the plural.

Specificity and plurality of the state. I tried to show you how this specific plurality of the state was embodied in a number of precise ways of governing with their correlative institutions. First, on the economic side, was mercantilism, that is to say, a form of government. Mercantilism is not an economic doctrine; it is something much more than and very different from an economic doctrine. It is a particular organization of production and commercial circuits according to the principle that: first, the state must enrich itself through monetary accumulation; second, it must strengthen itself by increasing population; and third, it must exist and maintain itself in a state of permanent competition with foreign powers. The second way for government according to *raison d'Etat* to organize and embody itself in a practice is internal management, that is to say, what at the time was called police, or the unlimited regulation of the country according to the model of a tight-knit urban organization. Finally, third, is the development of a permanent army along with a permanent diplomacy: the organization, if you like, of a permanent military-diplomatic apparatus with the objective of keeping the plurality of states free from imperial absorption in such a way that an equilibrium can be established between them without the production of imperial types of unification across Europe.

So, we have mercantilism with the police state and European balance: all of this was the concrete body of this new art of government organized in terms of the principle of *raison d'Etat*. These are three interdependent ways of governing in accordance with a rationality whose principle and domain of application

the state is far from being a kind of natural-historical given which develops through its own dynamism like a "cold monster"⁷ whose seed having been sown at a given moment has gradually eaten away at history. The state is not a cold monster; it is the correlative of a particular way of governing. The problem is how this way of governing develops, what its history is, how it expands, how it contracts, how it is extended to a particular domain, and how it invents, forms, and develops new practices. This is the problem, and not making [the state]* a puppet show policeman overpowering the different figures of history.

Several comments on this subject. First of all, I think there is a distinctive feature of this art of government organized in terms of *raison d'Etat* which is important for understanding what comes after. This is that in its foreign policy, let's say in its relations with other states, the state, or rather government according to *raison d'Etat*, has a limited objective in comparison with the ultimate horizon, the project and desire of most sovereigns and governments in the Middle Ages to occupy the imperial position with regard to other states so that one will have a decisive role both in history and in the theophany *Raison d'Etat*, on the other hand, accepts that every state has its interests and consequently has to defend these interests, and to defend them absolutely, but the state's objective must not be that of returning to the unifying position of a total and global empire at the end of time. It must not dream that one day it will be the empire of the last day. Each state must limit its objectives, ensure its independence, and ensure that its forces are such that it will never be in an inferior position with respect to the set of other countries, or to its neighbors, or to the strongest of all the other countries (there are different theories of European balance at this time, but that's not important here). In any case, this external self-limitation is the distinctive feature of *raison d'Etat* as it manifests itself in the formation of the military-diplomatic apparatuses of the seventeenth century. From the Treaty of Westphalia to the Seven Years War, or to the revolutionary wars that introduce a completely different dimension, military-diplomatic policy is organized by reference to the principle of the state's self-limitation, to the principle of the necessary and sufficient competition between different states.

* An evident slip. Foucault says: history

On the other hand, what is entailed by what we will now call international policy, by the police state? Well, it entails precisely an objective or set of objectives that could be described as unlimited, since for those who govern in the police state it is not only a matter of taking into account and taking charge of the activity of groups and orders, that is to say, of different types of individuals with their particular status, but also of taking charge of activity at the most detailed, individual level. All the great seventeenth and eighteenth century treatises of police that collate and try to systematize the different regulations are in agreement on this and say explicitly: The object of police is almost infinite. That is to say, when it is a question of an independent power facing other powers, government according to *raison d'Etat* has limited objectives. But there is no limit to the objectives of government when it is a question of managing a public power that has to regulate the behavior of subjects. Competition between states is precisely the hinge connecting these limited and unlimited objectives, because it is precisely so as to be able to enter into competition with other states, that is to say, maintain an always uneven, competitive equilibrium with other states, that government [has to regulate the life of] its subjects, to regulate their economic activity, their production, the price [at which] they sell goods and the price at which they buy them, and so on [...]. The correlative of this limitation of the international objective of government according to *raison d'Etat*, of this limitation in international relations, is the absence of a limit in the exercise of government in the police state.

The second remark I would like to make about the functioning of *raison d'Etat* in the seventeenth century and at the start of the eighteenth century is that while there is no limit to the internal objectives of government according to *raison d'Etat*, or of the police state, this does not mean that there are no compensating mechanisms, or rather a number of positions that form the basis for trying to establish a boundary or frontier to the unlimited objective prescribed to the police state by *raison d'Etat*. There were, of course, a number of ways in which theology was called upon to fix limits to *raison d'Etat*, but what I would like to emphasize is another principle of limitation at this time, and this is law.

In actual fact, something curious took place. What fundamentally was the basis for the

course, the army. The growth of royal power was also based on judicial institutions. It was as the keystone of a state of justice, of a system of justice, doubled by a military system, that the king gradually reduced the complex interplay of feudal powers. Throughout the Middle Ages, judicial practice was a multiplier of royal power. Now when this new governmental rationality develops in the sixteenth century, and especially from the start of the seventeenth century, law provides the basis for anyone who wants to limit in one way or another this indefinite extension of *raison d'Etat* that is becoming embodied in a police state. Legal theory and judicial institutions no longer serve as the multiplier, but rather as the subtractor of royal power. Thus, from the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century we see the development of a series of problems, polemics, and battles around, for example, fundamental laws of the realm that jurists argue, against *raison d'Etat*, cannot be called into question by governmental practice or *raison d'Etat*. These fundamental laws exist, as it were, before the state, since they are constitutive of the state, and so, some jurists say, the king, however absolute his power, must not tamper with them. The law constituted by these fundamental laws thus appeared to be outside *raison d'Etat* and a principle of its limitation.

There is also the theory of natural law and the assertion of inprescriptible natural rights that a sovereign may not transgress under any circumstances. Then there is the theory of the contract that individuals enter into in order to constitute a sovereign and which contains clauses to which he must abide, since it is precisely on completion of this contract, and of the clauses formulated in it, that the sovereign becomes sovereign. In England, more than in France, there is the theory of an agreement established between sovereign and subjects in order to constitute a state and on completion of which the sovereign is committed to doing some things and not others. There is also a whole part of this historical-juridical reflection, which I spoke about two or three years ago, I no longer remember when exactly,⁵ in which there was the historical claim that for a long time royal power was far from having been an absolute government, that the reason that reigned and was established between the sovereign and his subjects was not at all *raison d'Etat*, but was rather a sort of transaction between, for example, the nobility and

military chief during, and maybe for a short while after, a period of war. The king would be the outcome of this kind of situation of original law, later abusing this situation in order to overturn these historically original laws that must now be rediscovered.

Anyway, these discussions of law, their liveliness, and what's more the development of all the problems and theories of what could be called public law, the reappearance of the themes of natural law, original law, the contract, and so forth, which were formulated in the Middle Ages in a completely different context, are all in a way the other side and consequence, and the reaction against, this new way of governing on the basis of *raison d'Etat*. In fact, law and the judicial institutions intrinsic to the development of royal power now become, as it were, external and excessive in relation to government exercised according to *raison d'Etat*. It is not surprising that all these problems of law are always formulated, in the first place at least, by those opposed to the new system of *raison d'Etat*. In France, for example, it is members of the *parlements*, protestants, and the nobility who take up the historical-juridical aspect. In England it is the bourgeoisie against the absolute monarchy of the Stuarts, and religious dissidents from the start of the seventeenth century. In short, the opposition always makes a legal objection to *raison d'Etat* and consequently uses juridical reflection, legal rules, and legal authority against it. In a word, let's say that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries public law is oppositional,* although it is true that some theorists favorable towards royal power took up the problem and tried to integrate questions of law, legal questioning, within *raison d'Etat* and its justification. Anyway, I think we should keep it in mind that even if it is true that *raison d'Etat* formulated and manifested as the police state, embodied in the police state, has unlimited objectives, it is also the case that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there are constant attempts to limit *raison d'Etat*, and the principle or reason of this limitation is found in juridical reason. But you can see that it is an external limitation. Moreover, the jurists are fully aware that their question of law is extrinsic to *raison d'Etat* insofar as this is precisely that which exceeds the legal domain.

External legal limits to the state, to *raison d'Etat*, means first of all that the limits one tries to impose on *raison d'Etat* are those that come from God, or those which were laid down once and for all at the origin, or those which were formulated in the distant past of history. Saying that they are extrinsic to *raison d'Etat* also means that they function in a purely restrictive, dramatic way, since basically the law will only object to *raison d'Etat* when the latter crosses these legal limits, at which point the law will be able to define the government as illegitimate, to argue against its encroachments, and if necessary to release subjects from their duty of obedience.

Broadly speaking, this is how I tried to describe this way of governing called *raison d'Etat*. I would now like to place myself around the middle of the eighteenth century—with the qualification that I will talk about in a moment—when Walpole said: "*quieta non movere*" ("let sleeping dogs lie"). I think it is around this time that we are forced to note an important transformation that in a general way will be a characteristic feature of what could be called modern governmental reason. In what does this transformation consist? Well, in a word, it consists in establishing a principle of limitation that will no longer be extrinsic to the art of government, as was law in the seventeenth century, [but] intrinsic to it: an internal regulation of governmental rationality. What is this internal regulation in abstract and general terms? How can it be understood before any precise and concrete historical form? What can an internal limitation of governmental rationality be?

In the first place, it will be a de facto regulation, a de facto limitation. That is to say, it will not be a legal limitation, although at some point the law will have to transcribe it in the form of rules which must not be infringed. At any rate, to say that it is a de facto limitation means that if the government happens to push aside this limitation and go beyond the bounds laid down for it, it will not thereby be illegitimate, it will not have abandoned its own essence as it were, and it will not be deprived of its basic rights. To say that there is a de facto limitation of governmental practice means that a government that ignores this limitation will not be an illegitimate, usurping government, but simply a clumsy, inadequate government that does not do the proper thing.

Second, intrinsic limitation of the art of government means that, while being a de facto limitation, it is nonetheless general. That is to say, it is not

simply a question of sorts of recommendations of prudence which point out that in a particular circumstance it would be better not to do something, that in this or that circumstance it would be better to refrain from intervention. No. Internal regulation means that there really is a limitation that is general while being de facto, that is to say, that, whatever happens, follows a relatively uniform line in terms of principles valid at all times and in all circumstances. The problem is precisely one of defining this general and de facto limit that government will have to impose on itself.

Third, internal limitation means that in looking for the principle of this limitation, because we need to know what this generality depends on, we will not seek it in the natural rights prescribed by God to all men, for example, or in revealed Scripture, or even in the wills of subjects who at a given moment agree to enter into society. No, the principle of this limitation is not to be sought in what is external to government, but in what is internal to governmental practice, that is to say, in the objectives of government. And this limitation will then appear as one of the means, and maybe the fundamental means, of attaining precisely these objectives. To attain these objectives it may be necessary to limit governmental action. Governmental reason does not have to respect these limits because they are limits laid down once and for all somewhere outside, before, or around the state. Not at all. Governmental reason will have to respect these limits inasmuch as it can calculate them on its own account in terms of its objectives and [the] best means of achieving them.

Fourth, this de facto, general limitation, which is effectuated in terms of governmental practice itself, will establish, of course, a division between what must be done and what it is advisable not to do. It will mark out the limit of a governmental action, but this will not be drawn in the subjects, the individuals—subjects directed by government. That is to say, one will not try to determine a division within subjects between one part that is subject to governmental action, and another that is definitively, once and for all, reserved for freedom. In other words, this governmental reason does not divide subjects between an absolutely reserved dimension of freedom and another dimension of submission which is either consented to or imposed. In fact, the division is not made within individuals, men, or subjects, but in the very domain of governmental practice, or rather within governmental practice itself, between the

operations that can be carried out and those that cannot, between what to do and the means to use on the one hand, and what not to do on the other. The problem, therefore, is not: Where are the basic rights, and how do they separate the domain of fundamental freedom from the domain of possible governmentality? The dividing line is established between two sets of things that Bentham listed in one of his most important texts (to which I will try to return):⁹ the division between the *agenda* and the *non-agenda*, between what to do and what not to do.

Fifth, this limitation is therefore a *de facto*, general limitation, a limitation in terms of the objectives of government that does not divide the subjects but the things to be done, and it is not those who govern who, in complete sovereignty and full reason, will decide on this internal limitation.* Inasmuch as the government of men is a practice which is not imposed by those who govern on those who are governed, but a practice that fixes the definition and respective positions of the governed and governors facing each other and in relation to each other, "internal regulation" means that this limitation is not exactly imposed by either one side or the other, or at any rate not globally, definitively, and totally, but by, I would say, transaction, in the very broad sense of the word, that is to say, "action between," that is to say, by a series of conflicts, agreements, discussions, and reciprocal concessions: all episodes whose effect is finally to establish a *de facto*, general, rational division between what is to be done and what is not to be done in the practice of governing.

In a word, the principle of right—whether historically or theoretically defined doesn't matter here—previously confronted the sovereign and what he could do with a certain limit: You will not step over this line, you will not infringe this right, and you will not violate this basic freedom. At this time the principle of right balanced *raison d'Etat* with an external principle. Let's say that now we enter—you can see it quite clearly—an age of critical governmental reason. You can see that this critical governmental reason, or internal criticism of governmental reason, no longer revolves around the question of right and the question of the sovereign's usurpation or legitimacy. It will no longer have that kind of penal appearance that public law still had in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries when it said: If the sovereign breaks this law, then he must be punished by a sanction of illegitimacy. The whole question of critical governmental reason will turn on how not to govern too much.¹⁰ The objection is no longer to the abuse of sovereignty but to excessive government. And it is by reference to excessive government, or at any rate to the delimitation of what would be excessive for a government, that it will be possible to gauge the rationality of governmental practice.

Before giving this abstract description, I said that this fundamental transformation in the relations between law and governmental practice, this emergence of an internal limitation of governmental reason could be located roughly around the middle of the eighteenth century. What permitted its emergence? How did it come about? Obviously, we should take into account an entire, comprehensive transformation (I will come back to this, at least partially, afterwards), but today I would just like to indicate the intellectual instrument, the form of calculation and rationality that made possible the self-limitation of governmental reason as a *de facto*, general self-regulation which is intrinsic to the operations of government and can be the object of indefinite transactions. Well, once again, the intellectual instrument, the type of calculation or form of rationality that made possible the self-limitation of governmental reason was not the law. What is it, starting from the middle of the eighteenth century? Obviously, it is political economy.

The very ambiguities of the term "political economy," and of its meaning at this time, indicate what was basically at issue in all this, since you know that between 1750 and 1810-1820 the expression "political economy" oscillates between two semantic poles. Sometimes this expression aims at a particular strict and limited analysis of the production and circulation of wealth. But, in a broader and more practical sense, "political economy" also refers to any method of government that can procure the nation's prosperity. And finally, political economy—the term employed by Rousseau in his famous article in the *Encyclopédie*¹¹—is a sort of general reflection on the organization, distribution, and limitation of powers in a society. I think that fundamentally it was political economy that made it possible to ensure the self-limitation of governmental reason.

Why and how did political economy make this possible? Here again—I will

some points which I think are indispensable for understanding the set of things I want to talk about this year. First, unlike sixteenth and seventeenth century juridical thought, political economy was not developed outside *raison d'Etat*. It was not developed against *raison d'Etat* and in order to limit it, at least not in the first place. Rather, it was formed within the very framework of the objectives set for the art of government by *raison d'Etat*, for what objectives did political economy set itself? Well, it set itself the objective of the state's enrichment. Its objective was the simultaneous, correlative, and suitably adjusted growth of population on the one hand, and means of subsistence on the other. Political economy offered to ensure suitable, adjusted, and always favorable competition between states. It proposed precisely the maintenance of an equilibrium between states such that competition can take place. That is to say, it took up exactly the objectives of *raison d'Etat* and the police state that mercantilism and the European balance had tried to realize. So, to start with, political economy lodges itself within the governmental reason of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and to that extent is not in the kind of external position occupied by juridical thought.

Second, political economy does not put itself forward as an external objection to *raison d'Etat* and its political autonomy since—and this will be an historically important point—the first political consequence of the first economic reflection to exist in the history of European thought is precisely a consequence which goes completely against what the jurists were after and concludes that total despotism is necessary. The first political economy was, of course, that of the physiocrats, and you know that from the very start of their economic analysis the physiocrats—I will come back to this—concluded that political power must be a power without external limitation, without external counterbalance, and without any bounds other than those arising from itself, and this is what they called despotism.¹² Despotism is an economic government, but an economic government which is not hemmed in and whose boundaries are not drawn by anything but an economy which it has itself defined and which it completely controls. It is a matter of absolute despotism and so you can see that in that respect political economy does not reverse the tendency marked out by *raison d'Etat*, at least not at first or at that level, and political economy can appear to be in a direct line of descent from a *raison d'Etat* that gave the monarch total and absolute power.

Third, on what does political economy reflect, what does it analyze? It is not something like prior rights inscribed in human nature or in the history of a given society. Political economy reflects on governmental practices themselves, and it does not question them to determine whether or not they are legitimate in terms of right. It considers them in terms of their effects rather than their origins, not by asking, for example, what authorizes a sovereign to raise taxes, but by asking, quite simply: What will happen if, at a given moment, we raise a tax on a particular category of persons or a particular category of goods? What matters is not whether or not this is legitimate in terms of law, but what its effects are and whether they are negative. It is then that the tax in question will be said to be illegitimate or, at any rate, to have no *raison d'être*. The economic question is always to be posed within the field of governmental practice, not in terms of what may be found it by right, but in terms of its effects: What are the real effects of the exercise of governmentality? Not: What original rights can be found this governmentality? This is the third reason why political economy, in its reflection and its new rationality, was able to find a place, if you like, within the governmental practice and reason established in the previous epoch.

The fourth reason is that, in responding to this type of question, political economy revealed the existence of phenomena, processes, and regularities that necessarily occur as a result of intelligible mechanisms. These intelligible and necessary mechanisms may, of course, be impeded by the practices of some forms of governmentality. They may be impeded, jammed, or obscured, but they cannot be avoided and it will not be possible to suspend them totally and definitively. In any case, they will force a reappraisal of governmental practice. In other words, political economy does not discover natural rights that exist prior to the exercise of governmentality; it discovers a certain naturalness specific to the practice of government itself. The objects of governmental action have a specific nature. There is a nature specific to this governmental action itself and this is what political economy will study. The notion* of nature will thus be transformed with the appearance of political economy. For political economy, nature is not an original and reserved region on which the exercise of power should not impinge, on pain of being illegitimate.

* Foucault adds: natural and

Nature is something that runs under, through, and in the exercise of governmentality. It is, if you like, its indispensable hypodermis. It is the other face of something whose visible face, visible for the governors, is their own action. Their action has an underside, or rather, it has another face, and this other face of governmentality, its specific necessity, is precisely what political economy studies. It is not background, but a permanent correlative. Thus, the *économistes* explain, the movement of population to where wages are highest, for example, is a law of nature; it is a law of nature that customs duty protecting the high price of the means of subsistence will inevitably entail something like dearth.

Finally, the last point explaining how and why political economy was able to appear as the first form of this new self-limiting governmental *raison* is that if there is a nature specific to the objects and operations of governmentality, then the consequence of this is that governmental practice can only do what it has to do by respecting this nature. If it were to disrupt this nature, if it were not to take it into account or go against laws determined by this naturalness specific to the objects it deals with, it would immediately suffer negative consequences. In other words, there will be either success or failure; success or failure, rather than legitimacy or illegitimacy, now become the criteria of governmental action. So, success replaces [legitimacy].* We touch here on the whole problem of utilitarian philosophy, which we will have to talk about. You can see how utilitarian philosophy will be able to plug directly into these new problems of governmentality. This is not important for the moment; we will come back to it.

Success or failure, then, will replace the division between legitimacy and illegitimacy—but there is more. What makes a government, despite its objectives, disrupt the naturalness specific to the objects it deals with and the operations it carries out? What will lead it to violate this nature despite the success it seeks? Violence, excess, and abuse? Maybe, but ultimately these are not merely or fundamentally a matter of the wickedness of the prince. What is at issue, what explains this, is precisely that when a government violates these laws of nature, it quite simply ignores them. It ignores them because it is unaware of their existence, mechanisms,

and effects. In other words, governments can be mistaken. And the greatest evil of government, what makes it a bad government, is not that the prince is wicked, but that he is ignorant. In short, through political economy there is the simultaneous entry into the art of government of, first, the possibility of self-limitation, that is, of governmental action limiting itself by reference to the nature of what it does and of that on which it is brought to bear, [and second, the question of truth].* The possibility of limitation and the question of truth are both introduced into governmental reason through political economy.

You will tell me that this is certainly not the first time that the question of truth and the question of the self-limitation of governmental practice are raised. After all, what was traditionally understood by the prince's wisdom? The prince's wisdom told him: I know God's laws too well, I know human weakness too well, and I know my own limits too well not to restrain my power and fail to respect my subject's right. But we can see that the relationship between the principle of truth and the principle of self-limitation in the prince's wisdom is completely different from their relationship in the emerging governmental practice that is anxious to know the natural consequences of its actions in the objects it deals with and manipulates. The prudent counselors who previously fixed limits of wisdom to the prince's presumption no longer have anything to do with these new economic experts whose task is to tell the government what in truth the natural mechanisms are of what it is manipulating.

So, with political economy we enter an age whose principle could be this: A government is never sufficiently aware that it always risks governing too much, or, a government never knows too well how to govern just enough. The principle of maximum/minimum replaces the notion of equitable equilibrium, of "equitable justice" that previously organized the prince's wisdom. With this question of self-limitation by the principle of truth, I think political economy introduced a formidable wedge into the unlimited presumption of the police state. This is evidently a crucial moment since it establishes, in its most important features, not

* M.F.: failure

* Unfinished sentence. Manuscript p. 20: "In short, through political economy there is the simultaneous entry into the art of government of the possibility of self-limitation and the question of truth."

of course the reign of truth in politics, but a particular regime of truth which is a characteristic feature of what could be called the age of politics and the basic apparatus of which is in fact still the same today. When I say regime of truth I do not mean that at this moment politics or the art of government finally becomes rational. I do not mean that at this moment a sort of epistemological threshold is reached on the basis of which the art of government could become scientific. I mean that the moment I am presently trying to indicate is marked by the articulation of a particular type of discourse and a set of practices, a discourse that, on the one hand, constitutes these practices as a set bound together by an intelligible connection and, on the other hand, legislates and can legislate on these practices in terms of true and false.

In concrete terms this means the following. Basically, from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even before, until the middle of the eighteenth century, there was a whole set of practices of tax levies, customs charges, manufacture regulations, regulations of grain prices, the protection and codification of market practices, and so on. But what were these practices, and how were they thought about? Well, all of this was conceived of as the exercise of sovereign rights, of feudal rights, as the maintenance of customs, as effective procedures of enrichment for the Treasury, or as techniques for preventing urban revolt due to the discontent of this or that group of subjects. In short, all of these practices were certainly reflected on, but on the basis of different events and principles of rationalization. From the middle of the eighteenth century it becomes possible to establish a reasoned, reflected coherence between these different practices going from customs charges to tax levies, to the regulation of the market and production, and so on: a coherence established by intelligible mechanisms which link together these different practices and their effects, and which consequently allows one to judge all these practices as good or bad, not in terms of a law or moral principle, but in terms of propositions subject to the division between true and false. Thus, in this way a whole section of governmental activity enters into a new regime of truth with the fundamental effect of reconfiguring all the questions formerly posed by the art of governing. At one time these amounted to the question: Am I governing in proper conformity to moral, natural, or divine laws? Then,

in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with *raison d'Etat*, it was: Am I governing with sufficient intensity, depth, and attention to detail so as to bring the state to the point fixed by what it should be, to bring it to its maximum strength? And now the problem will be: Am I governing at the border between the too much and too little, between the maximum and minimum fixed for me by the nature of things—I mean, by the necessities intrinsic to the operations of government? The emergence of this regime of truth as the principle of the self-limitation of government is the object I would like to deal with this year.

The question here is the same as the question I addressed with regard to madness, disease, delinquency, and sexuality. In all of these cases, it was not a question of showing how these objects were for a long time hidden before finally being discovered, nor of showing how all these objects are only wicked illusions or ideological products to be dispelled in the [light]* of reason finally having reached its zenith. It was a matter of showing by what conjunctions a whole set of practices—from the moment they become coordinated with a regime of truth—was able to make what does not exist (madness, disease, delinquency, sexuality, etcetera), nonetheless become something, something however that continues not to exist. That is to say, what I would like to show is not how an error—when I say that which does not exist becomes something, this does not mean showing how it was possible for an error to be constructed—or how an illusion could be born, but how a particular regime of truth, and therefore not an error, makes something that does not exist able to become something. It is not an illusion since it is precisely a set of practices, real practices, which established it and thus imperiously marks it out in reality.

The point of all these investigations concerning madness, disease, delinquency, sexuality, and what I am talking about now, is to show how the coupling of a set of practices and a regime of truth form an apparatus (*dispositif*) of knowledge-power that effectively marks out in reality that which does not exist and legitimately submits it to the division between true and false.

* A clear slip. M.F.: mist

In the things I am presently concerned with, the moment when that which does not exist is inscribed in reality, and when that which does not exist comes under a legitimate regime of the true and false, marks the birth of this dissymmetrical bipolarity of politics and the economy. Politics and the economy are not things that exist, or errors, or illusions, or ideologies. They are things that do not exist and yet which are inscribed in reality and fall under a regime of truth dividing the true and the false.

This moment, whose main components I have tried to indicate, is situated between Walpole, whom I have talked about, and another text. Walpole said: "*quæta non movere*" ("let sleeping dogs lie"). This is no doubt a counsel of prudence, and we are still in the realm of the wisdom of the prince, that is to say: When the people are peaceful, when they are not agitating and there is no discontent or revolt, stay calm. So, wisdom of the prince. I think he said this around the 1740s. In 1751 an anonymous article appeared in the *Journal économique*. It was in fact written by the marquis d'Argenson,¹⁵ who, had just given up his official activities. Recalling what the merchant Le Gendre said to Colbert—when Colbert asked him: "What can I do for you?" Le Gendre replied: "What can you do for us? Leave us alone (*Laissez-nous faire*)"¹⁶—in this text to which I will come back,¹⁵ d'Argenson says that what he would like to do is comment on this principle of "*laissez-nous faire*,"¹⁶ because, he shows, in economic matters this really is the essential principle which all governments must respect and follow.¹⁷ At this moment he has laid down clearly the principle of the self-limitation of governmental reason. But what does "the self-limitation of governmental reason" mean? What is this new type of rationality in the art of government, this new type of calculation that consists in saying and telling government: I accept, wish, plan, and calculate that all this should be left alone? I think that this is broadly what is called "liberalism."¹⁸

¹⁵ In inverted commas in the manuscript. Foucault does not read the last pages of the manuscript (pp. 25-32). Elements of this conclusion are taken up and developed in the next lecture.

¹⁶ The word ["liberalism"] should be understood very broadly.

¹⁷ Acceptance of the principle that somewhere there must be a limitation of government and that this is not just an external right.

¹⁸ Liberalism is also a practice: where exactly is the principle of the limitation of government to be found and how are the effects of this limitation to be calculated?

I thought I could do a course on biopolitics this year. I will try to show how the central core of all the problems that I am presently trying to identify is what is called population. Consequently, this is the basis on which something like biopolitics could be formed. But it seems to me that the analysis of biopolitics can only get under way when we

3. In a narrower sense, liberalism is the solution that consists in the maximum limitation of the forms and domains of government action.

4. Finally, liberalism is the organization of specific methods of transmission for defining the limitation of government practices:

—constitutions, parliament

—opinion, the press

—commissions, inquiries

[p. 27] One of the forms of modern governmentality. A characteristic feature is the fact that instead of coming up against limits formalized by jurisdictions, it [gives?] itself intrinsic limits formulated in terms of veridiction.

2. Of course, there are not two systems, one after the other, or in insuperable conflict with each other. Heterogeneity does not mean contradiction, but tensions, frictions, mutual incompatibilities, successful or failed adjustments, unstable mixtures, and so on. It also means a constantly resumed because never completed task of establishing either a coincidence or at least a common regime. This task is that of giving a legal form to the self-limitation that knowledge (*le savoir*) prescribes to government.

[p. 28] From the eighteenth [century] to the present, this task will take two forms.

—Either, questioning governmental reason, and the necessity of its limitation, in order to identify, through what must be left free, what rights can be recognized and given status within governmental practice. Thus, questioning the objectives, ways, and means of an enlightened and so self-limited government can give rise to the right to property, to possible means of subsistence, to work, etcetera.

—Or, questioning the basic rights, asserting them all and at once. And, on this basis, only allowing a government to be formed on condition that its self-regulation reproduces all of them. Method [crossed out: revolutionary] of governmental subordination.

[p. 29] Liberal practice adopts the method of the necessary and sufficient juridical remainder. Revolutionary procedure adopts the method of exhaustive governmental conditions.

b. Second comment: this self-limitation of governmental reason characteristic of 'liberalism' has a strange relationship with the regime of reason d'État.—The latter opens up an unlimited domain of intervention to governmental practice, but on the other hand, through the principle of a competitive balance between states, it gives itself limited international objectives.

—The self-limitation of governmental practice by liberal reason is accompanied by the break-up of these international objectives and the appearance of unlimited objectives with imperialism.

[p. 30] Reason d'État was correlative with the disappearance of the imperial principle and its replacement by competitive equilibrium between states. Liberal reason is correlative with activation of the imperial principle, not in the form of the Empire, but in the form of imperialism, and this in connection with the principle of the free competition between individuals and enterprises.

Chiasmus between limited and unlimited objectives with regard to the domain of internal intervention and the field of international action.

c. Third comment: liberal reason is established as self-limitation of government on the basis of a 'naturalness' of the objects and practices specific to government. What is this naturalness?

have understood the general regime of this governmental reason I have talked about, this general regime that we can call the question of truth, of economic truth in the first place, within governmental reason. Consequently, it seems to me that it is only when we understand what is at stake in this regime of liberalism opposed to *raison d'État*—or rather, fundamentally modifying [it] without, perhaps, questioning its bases—only when we know what this governmental regime called liberalism was, will we be able to grasp what biopolitics is.

So, forgive me, for some weeks—I cannot say in advance how many—I will talk about liberalism. In this way, it may become a bit clearer what is at stake in this—for, after all, what interest is there in talking about liberalism, the physiocrats, d'Argenson, Adam Smith, Bentham, and the English utilitarians, if not because the problem of liberalism arises for us in our immediate and concrete actuality? What does it mean when we speak of liberalism when we apply a liberal politics to ourselves, today, and what relationship may there be between this and those questions of right that we call freedoms or liberties? What is going on in all this, in today's debate in which Helmut Schmidt's¹⁵ economic principles bizarrely echo the voice of dissidents in the East, in this problem of liberty, of liberalism? Fine, it is a problem of our times. So, if you like, after having situated the historical point of origin of all this by bringing out what, according to me, is the new governmental reason from the eighteenth century, I will jump ahead and talk about contemporary German liberalism since, however paradoxical it may seem, liberty in the second half of the twentieth century, well let's say more accurately, liberalism, is a word that comes to us from Germany.

—Naturalness of wealth? Yes, but only as increasing or diminishing, stagnant or [p. 31] circulating means of payment. But goods rather insofar as they produced, are useful and utilized, insofar as they are exchanged between economic partners.

—It is also the naturalness of individuals. Not, however, as obedient or intractable subjects, but insofar as they are themselves linked to this economic naturalness, insofar as their longevity, health, and ways of conducting themselves have complex and tangled relationships with these economic processes.

With the emergence of political economy, with the introduction of the restrictive principle in governmental practice itself, an important substitution, or doubling rather, is carried out, since the subjects of right on which political sovereignty is exercised appear as a *population* that a government must manage.

[p. 32] This is the point of departure for the organizational line of a "biopolitics." But who does not see that this is only part of something much larger, which [is] this new governmental reason? Studying liberalism as the general framework of biopolitics."

1. Quotation from Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII, 312, placed as an epigraph of the *Translation* (Leipzig: Deutscher, 1911); English translation by James Strachey, *The Interpretation of Dreams in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1958) vol. IV (First Part) p. ix, and repeated in the text (vol. V, Second Part, p. 608, fn. 1): "Fluctuat in aequo Superno, Acheronta movebo" where it is translated as: "If I cannot bend the Higher Powers, I will move the Infernal Regions" [or more colloquially, "I will raise hell"]; G.B.). The phrase was quoted by Foucault, without explicit reference to Freud, in *Le Volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976) p. 103; English translation by Robert Hurley as *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. One: An Introduction (New York: Pantheon, 1978; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984) p. 79: "In reality, this question so often repeated nowadays, is but the recent form of a considerable affirmation and a secular prescription: there is where the truth is; go see, if you can uncover it. *Acheronta movebo*: an age-old decision." Before Freud, this quotation was already much appreciated by Bismarck, who used it several times in his *Peutres et Souvenirs*. See C. Schmitt, *Théorie des Partisanes* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1963); French translation by M.L. Steinbäuser, *Théorie du partiisme* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1972) p. 253.

2. Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford (1676-1745). Whig leader who, as first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1720 to 1742, was effectively Britain's first Prime Minister; he governed pragmatically, using Parliamentary corruption, with the aim of preserving political peace.

3. See Foucault's clarification on p. 20: "I think he said it around the 1740s." The formula is known for being Walpole's motto, as evidenced by various writings of his son Horace; see, for example, *Letters*, VIII (London and New York: Lawrence and Bullen; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1903) p. 121. See L. Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Smith and Elder, 1902; reprint, Bristol: Thoemmes Antiquarian Books, 1991) vol. 2, p. 168. The phrase comes from Sallust, *De Conjuracione Catilinae*, 21, 1: "Postquam acciperet ea homines, quibus mala abunde inopia erant, sed neque spes bona ulla, tamen illis quædam movere magna invidia videbatur (...);" French translation by F. Richard, *Coproduction de Catilina* (Paris: Garnier-Flammariion, 1968) p. 43; English translation by A.W. Pollard, *The Catiline of Sallust* (London: Macmillan, 1928), p. 39: "These words were listened to by men who had every evil in abundances, but no good fortune, nor any hope of it. Great, however, as the wages of revolution appeared to them ..."; and by J.C. Rolfe, "The War with Catiline" in *Sallust* (London and Cambridge, Mass.: William Heinemann/Harvard University Press, The Loeb Classical Library, 1947) p. 39: "When these words fell upon the ears of men who had misfortune of every kind in excess, but neither means nor any honourable hope, although disorder alone seemed to them an ample reward..." It illustrates the rule of precedent in English Common Law, according to which, in judicial matters one must keep to what has been decided and not modify what exists ("stare decisis" and "quærit non movetur"). It is also cited by F. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, (1960) 1976) p. 410: "Though given now more may at times be a wise maxim for the Statesman, it cannot satisfy the political philosopher."

4. See Paul Veyne, "Foucault révolutionnaire l'historien" (1978), in Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire* (Paris: Le Seuil, "Points Histoire", 1979) pp. 227-230; English translation by Catherine Porter, "Foucault Revolutionizes History" in Arnold I. Davidson, ed., *Foucault and his Interlocutors* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997) pp. 167-170, on methodological nominalism with regard to the phrase "madness does not exist." In view of the fact that Veyne's text dates from 1978, it would seem that Foucault is here pursuing his dialogue with the author of *Le Pouvoir et le Corps*, to which he paid tribute in the previous year's lectures (see *Science, Territoires, Population. Cours au Collège de France*, 1977-1978, ed. Michel Seurelart (Paris: Gallimard-Le Seuil, 2004); English translation by Graham Burchell, *Science, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège de France*, 1977-1978, English series ed. Arnold I. Davidson (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); lecture of 8 March 1978, p. 239. See also Foucault's comments on the same theme in the lecture of 8 February 1978, p. 118. The criticism of universals is also reaffirmed in the article "Foucault" which appeared in 1984 in the *Dictionnaire des philosophes* of

- Denis Huismans, under the pseudonym Maurice Florens. See, M. Foucault, "Foucault" in *Déb et Erès*, 1954-1988, four volumes, eds. D. Defert and F. Ewald, with the collaboration of J. Lagrance (Paris: Gallimard, 1994) vol. 4, p. 634; English translation by Robert Hurley in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, volume 2: Assisted, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: The New Press, 1998) p. 461; the first choice of method entailed by "the question of the relations between the subject and truth" was "a systematic skepticism toward all anthropological universals."
5. Foucault does not return to this question in the following lectures.
6. See *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*; *Security, Territory, Population*, lectures of 8, 15, and 22 March 1978.
7. See *ibid.*, lecture of 1 February 1978; (Eng.) *ibid.*, p. 109 and note 39.
8. See, "Il faut défendre la vie." *Cours au Collège de France, 1975-1976*, eds. M. Bertani and A. Fontana (Paris: Gallimard-Le Seuil, 1997); English translation by David Macey, "Security Must be Defended," *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, English series ed. Arnold I. Davidson (New York: Picador, 2003).
9. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), *Method and Leading Features of an Institute of Political Economy (including Finance) considered not only as a science but as an art (1800-1804)*, in *Jeremy Bentham's Economic Writings*, ed. W. Stark (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954) vol. 3, pp. 305-380. It is at the end of the first part, "The Science," in the section on "Genesis of the Matter of Wealth," that Bentham introduces the famous distinction between *power and agenda* and *non-agenda*, which structures the three chapters ("Wealth," "Population," and "Finance") of the following part, "The Art." The *power acts* are economic activities spontaneously developed by members of a community without any governmental intervention. The *agenda and non-agenda* designate the economic activities of government intervention, whether or not they increase happiness (the maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain), which is the aim of all political action. The division of the domains between these three classes varies according to time and place, the extension of the *power acts* being relative to a country's level of economic development. Foucault makes another brief reference to Bentham's list of the *agenda* in the lecture of 7 March 1979 (see below p. 195), but strictly speaking he does not speak again of the text cited (except, perhaps, indirectly at the end of the lecture of 24 January (below p. 67), with regard to the passportion as a general formula of liberal government).
10. The formula "do not govern too much (*par trop gouverner*)" is from the marquis d'Argenson (see below, note 16). See also, B. Franklin, *Principles of Trade* (London: Brotherton and Sewell, 1774, 2nd edition) p. 34: "It is said, by a very solid Writer of the same Nation, that he is well advanced in the Science of Politics, who knows the full Force of that Maxim *Par trop gouverner*: Not to govern too strictly." [In same section, pp. 33-34 there is following "When Colbert assembled some wise old Merchants of France; and desired their Advice and Opinion, how he could best serve and promote Commerce; their answer, after Consultation, was, in three Words only, *Laissez nous faire*. Let us alone."] This article was printed for the first time in volume 5 of the *Encyclopédie* pp. 337-349, which appeared in November 1755. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Economie politique," in *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964) vol. III, pp. 241-278; English translation by G.D.H. Cole, *A Discourse on Political Economy*, in *The Social Contract and Discourses* (London: J.M. Dent, 1993). On this text, see *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*; *Security, Territory, Population*, lecture of 1 February 1978, p. 95 and note 21.
11. See P.P.F.J.H. Le Mercier de La Rivière, *L'Ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques* (published without the author's name, London: Jean Nourse, and Paris: Desaint, 1767) ch. 24: "Du despotisme legal." The text was republished twice in the twentieth century: (i) Paris: P. Geuthner, "Collection des économistes et des réformateurs sociaux de la France," 1910, and (ii) Paris: Fayard, "Corpus des oeuvres de philosophie en langue française," 2000.
12. René-Louis de Voyer, marquis d'Argenson (1694-1757), Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1744 to 1747, the author of *Mémoires et Journal*, published and annotated by the Marquis d'Argenson, Paris, 1858 (a first, very incomplete edition appeared in 1835 in the Baudouin collection of "Mémoires sur la Révolution française") and of *Considérations sur le gouvernement ancien et présent de la France* (Amsterdam: Rey, 1764). With the abbot de Saint-Pierre, he was one of the assiduous members of the Club de l'Entresol, opened in 1720 on

- the initiative of the abbot Alary and closed in 1731 by cardinal Fleury "Laissez faire" was already a recurring expression in the sketch of a memorandum on free trade, dated 31 July 1732 (*Journal et Mémoires*, ed. J.B. Rathery [Paris: Renouard, 1862] vol. IV: "Memorandum to be written to consider the arguments for and against and to decide whether France should allow the free entry and exit into the kingdom of all national and foreign goods"). L.-P. Abeille, *Leite d'un négociant sur la nature du commerce des grains* (Marseille: 8 October 1763); republished in *Premiers opuscules sur le commerce des grains: 1763-1764*, introduction 1763; republished in *Premiers opuscules sur le commerce des grains: 1763-1764*, introduction and analytical table b E. Deptire (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1911) p. 103: "I cannot end this letter better except by applying particularly to the corn trade what a merchant of Rouen said to M. Colbert on commerce in general: *Laissez-nous faire*."
15. Foucault does not refer to this text again.
16. D'Argenson, "Lettre à l'auteur du *Journal économique* au sujet de la *Dissertation sur le commerce* de M. le Marquis Belloni," *Journal économique*, April 1751, pp. 107-117; republished in G. Klantz, ed., *Politique et Économie au temps des Lumières* (Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 1995) pp. 41-44; "It is told that M. Colbert gathered several delegates of commerce at his home in order to ask them what he could do for commerce; the most reasonable and least flatterer of them told him simply: *Laissez-nous faire*. Have we ever sufficiently considered the great meaning of these words? This is only an attempt at commentary" (p. 42). The name of Le Genêtre is first mentioned in the eighteenth century in Turgot's *L'Éloge de Gournay*, written in 1759 ("We know Le Genêtre's words to Colbert: *Laissez-nous faire*") in *Œuvres de Turgot*, ed. E. Daire (Paris: Cuillieumin, 1844) vol. 1, p. 288; Turgot, *Formation et Distribution des richesses* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion) pp. 150-151. D'Argenson is also the author of the maxim "do not govern too much (*par trop gouverner*)."
- See G. Weulersse, *Le Mouvement physiocratique en France, de 1756 à 1770*, in two volumes (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1910) vol. 1, pp. 17-18, which quotes this extract from the tribute that appeared in the *Épémérades du cayen*, July, 1768, p. 156: "He composed a book with the excellent object and title: *do not govern too much*." D'Argenson claims to have written a treatise entitled *Par gouverner mieux, et fonder le gouvernement mieux* (*Mémoires et Journal*, vol. V, p. 362; quoted by A. Oucken, *Die Maxime "Laissez faire et laissez passer"* (Bern: K.J. Wyss, 1886) p. 58).
17. D'Argenson, "Lettre à l'auteur du *Journal économique*" p. 44: "Yes, regular and enlightened freedom will always do more for a nation's commerce than the most intelligent domination." He defends the same position with regard to the grain trade in another article in the *Journal économique*, May 1754, pp. 64-79: "Arguments en faveur de la liberté du commerce des grains," republished in G. Klantz, ed., *Politique et Économie*, pp. 45-54.
18. Helmut Schmidt (born 1918): deputy for the SPD in the Bundestag in 1953, he became Chancellor in May 1974 after the retirement of Willy Brandt. Losing his majority, he gave way to Helmut Kohl in 1982.