‘Discipline is Control: Foucault contra Deleuze’

Mark G. E. Kelly

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It is often assumed that Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze have compatible philosophical perspectives. There are both biographical and textual grounds for this assumption. I want to suggest however that the two were rather far apart in a number of ways, including on each of the three axes with which we are dealing in this book: Deleuze is more normative, more political, and more theoretical than Foucault.

Biographically, the two men were close friends during the early 1970s. This was a relatively brief association, however, which ended apparently because of political differences between them, specifically over Deleuze’s signing in 1977 of a petition which described the West German state as fascist and appeared to support the Red Army Faction’s armed struggle against it.[1]

Textually, one reason the two are taken to be aligned is their explicit commentary on one another’s work. Deleuze wrote an entire book on Foucault’s thought. He also wrote some relatively brief and informal remarks concerning Foucault, including the focus of this article, his ‘Postscript on Societies of Control’, which takes up and expands upon elements of Foucault’s conceptual toolkit. For his part, Foucault wrote a couple of short pieces on Deleuze. The first was a 1970 review

[1] David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, New York, Vintage, p294.

essay of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, 'Theatrum Philosophicum'. These two books by Deleuze were published only a year apart, in 1968 and 1969 respectively, and represent his main attempt to articulate his own distinctive philosophical position. Foucault's review is a piece of enthusiastic exegesis. This was the era of the burgeoning of their personal friendship, originating around their shared interest in Friedrich Nietzsche's though.[2]

Foucault goes on briefly to incorporate some lexical elements from his review in his inaugural Collège de France lecture later the same year. Here he largely restates his 1960s research program, albeit in a somewhat politicised form. He also affirms what he had previously identified in the review as crucial components of Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*, namely a philosophy of the 'event' concerned to give materiality to the 'incorporeal' – though he admits in his review that the concept of 'incorporeal materiality' he derives from *Logic of Sense* is not one Deleuze would assent to.[3] In any case, any influence on Foucault's thought itself here is overdetermined, in that it is already accounted for by other influences such that it is impossible to say that the influence of Deleuze was particularly decisive in influencing Foucault to make any particular claim here. Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, released the same year as *Logic of Sense*, can readily be described as attempting to give a material reading of incorporeal language through the notion of the statement, and the word 'event' is already almost as prominent in Foucault's book as in Deleuze's. Perhaps Deleuze's attention to ancient Greek thought influenced Foucault to conduct research in this direction in 1970, opening a research program he would return to in force in the 1980s – yet Foucault's longstanding interest in Nietzsche already provides a motivation for

[2] Wendy Grace, '*Faux Amis*: Foucault and Deleuze on Sexuality and Desire', *Critical Inquiry* 36:1, 2009, 54.
[3] Michel Foucault, 'Theatrum Philosophicum', *Essential Works* Vol. 2, New York, New Press, p346.

this turn. Foucault and Deleuze indeed became friends partly because of their mutual interest in Nietzsche's thought.

Foucault also wrote an enthusiastic preface to the English translation, first published in 1977, of Deleuze and Félix Guattari's first collaboration together, *Anti-Oedipus*. Like Foucault's earlier review, this is a case of laudatory exegesis, but in neither case does this imply complete agreement. There are reports that Foucault actually disliked the book.[4]

Anti-Oedipus is, as its title indicates, aimed at usurping the psychoanalytic notion of the Oedipus complex. This was a cause that Foucault and Deleuze had in common: in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault criticises Freud for reinforcing the patriarchal family as an institution via the notion of the Oedipus complex, at a time when paternal authority was otherwise under attack. Foucault and Deleuze are also both critical of psychoanalysis for overvaluing sex itself. However, the pair ultimately have almost contrary positions regarding the question of sexuality, due to a broader difference concerning the notion of social power. As I have argued elsewhere,[5] Deleuze and Guattari's position is very close to Foucault's main critical target in his book, what he calls the 'repressive hypothesis', since they view the things they oppose as repressive, whereas for Foucault the key problem of sexuality and modern power is that it is productive, not repressive. Deleuze still cleaves to the idea that power is essentially negative, something we need simply to be liberated from. Relatedly, he still cleaves to a certain kind of Marxism,[6] whereas Foucault pointedly abandoned any fidelity to Marxism decades before.

[4] François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2010.
[5] Mark G. E. Kelly, *Foucault's History of Sexuality Vol. I*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, p26.
[6] Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, Martin Joughin (trans), New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, p171.

More prominently, and not unconnectedly (since it means positing a nature which can be liberated from contingent distortions), Deleuze aims to produce a materialist metaphysics, whereas Foucault's project is explicitly purely critical. Now, Foucault cannot completely eschew ontology in the sense of not positing anything, and to the extent that he does posit things, they seem to be entities that would be at home in Deleuze's metaphysics. Foucault and Deleuze both emphasise the body, for one thing. Deleuze's emphasis on 'desiring-production' in *Anti-Oedipus* is however a concept lacking any equivalent in Foucault. Deleuze yearns to liberate desire and its productivity that, while Foucault is deeply suspicious of desire precisely as a driver of what he sees as a productive form of power. Foucault for his part advocated the use of pleasure as a counterpoint against desire, something Deleuze opposed in turn. It should be noted, however, though this point is often misunderstood, that pleasure for Foucault is only ever a *point d'appui* for resistance to refer to, rather than something that can actually be liberated to exist in a raw state.[7] This question of desire versus pleasures is the closest thing to an explicit philosophical disagreement between the two thinkers, since they both commented on the divergence as such – although both tended to deflate its importance by suggesting that the problem really amounted to one of terminology.[8]

I believe that the basic divergence between Deleuze and Foucault, underlying Foucault's opposition to both desire and metaphysics is that, whereas Deleuze believes that there is no intrinsic problem in using language to couch desires or describe ontology, Foucault sees language as leading to inevitable problems. This is not to say that Foucault opposes the use of language, but rather that he takes both desire and ontology as inherently problematic enterprises of which we should be wary

[7] Kelly, *Foucault's History of Sexuality*, p117.
[8] For more detail on this point, see Grace, '*Faux Amis*: Foucault and Deleuze on Sexuality and Desire'.

and critical as philosophers, because trying to think either our desire or our being in words inevitably means doing a violence to their richness. By contrast, Deleuze posits an inherent oneness of thinking and being, even if he thinks each of these things in terms of multiplicity.[9] As Peter Hallward indicates, this make Deleuze fundamentally Parmenidean.[10] Foucault by contrast is Heraclitean, asserting that rupture of being with itself is an essential characteristic of thinking.

Postscript

Whereas in Foucault's writings on Deleuze, we can say that this basic disjuncture between their positions remains concealed by dint of the brevity and exegeticality of these publications, Deleuze's writings on Foucault have a different character. Deleuze's monograph on Foucault is much larger anything Foucault wrote about Deleuze, and the 'Postscript' goes far beyond exegesis. That major differences between the two thinkers do not shine through in these works may be attributed to Deleuze's modus operandi, which is to minimise any differences with thinkers he discusses in favour of the ventriloquisation of his own views.

Deleuze's 'Postscript on the Societies of Control' is extremely brief – only a few pages, fewer than two thousand words in length – and relatively obscure in terms of its publication origins.[11] It might indeed for these reasons seem unfair to focus on it to the extent I do in this chapter, but I believe it is necessary because of how

[9] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, Paris, Minuit, 1991, Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (trans), New York, Columbia University Press, 1994.
[10] Peter Hallward, 'The Limits of Individuation, or How to Distinguish Deleuze and Foucault', *Angelaki* 5:2, 2000, p94.
[11] Gilles Deleuze, 'Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle', *L'autre journal*, l, 1990. 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', *October*, 59, 1992, pp3–7. The text has also been published in English, in a different translation, as Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies', in *Negotiations*, Martin Joughin (trans), New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, pp177–182.

influential this text has been, despite how unimportant it might have been from the perspective of its author at the time he wrote it.

I will argue that the 'Postscript' is misguided in multiple ways. Deleuze firstly misinterprets Foucault's notion of discipline. He then moves on to advance a thesis that is partly redundant, inasmuch as he is talking about things already covered by Foucault's notion of discipline, and partly simply false, describing as changes things which are either not new or are simply not happening at all.

Deleuze begins the 'Postscript' by correctly interpreting Foucault as saying that disciplinary societies replaced older societies of sovereignty and characterising this shift as one from a reductive power of death to a positive and productive power. An extraordinary omission, however – the first of several but perhaps the most glaring of them all – is the absence of the word 'power'. Deleuze thus sidesteps Foucault's main political insight, namely the importance of power as an overlooked societal dynamic. Rather than identifying discipline and sovereign power as Foucault does as 'technologies of power', he uses the terms 'sovereignty', 'discipline' and 'control' adjectivally, speaking of 'disciplinary societies'. This allows a serious divergence from Foucault's position to go unmarked: Deleuze takes these notions as essences of societies, whereas for Foucault there is no limit to how many technologies might coexist in a social formation. Deleuze does elsewhere give significant – indeed undue – attention to a different concept of Foucault's, that of the *dispositif* of power, but Deleuze does not conceptualise these technologies as *dispositifs* either, which indeed they are not, being much broader phenomena.[12]

[12] Gilles Deleuze, 'What is a *Dispositif*?' *Two Regimes of Madness*, New York, Semiotext(e), 2007, pp343–52; Gilles Deleuze, 'Desire and Pleasure', Arnold I. Davidson (ed.), *Foucault and His Interlocutors*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp185–6.

Having misunderstood what type of thing Foucault's discipline is, Deleuze also misunderstands its specific nature, wrongly identifying its essence as a matter of *enfermement*. In the two published English translations of the 'Postscript', this notion is rendered variously as 'enclosure' and 'confinement'. While the former translation is more literally correct, it has quite a specific historical meaning in English, whereas the latter is closer to the sense of the French word, which is most commonly used to refer to phenomena of imprisonment and internment, though it should be noted that the French word can also refer to mental and social exclusions, such that no English word provides an entirely adequate translation. *Enfermement* defines discipline negatively and spatially, as a matter of shutting people in, shutting them up, or shutting them out.

Such spatial effects are not those that Foucault's work on discipline in the early to mid-seventies focuses on, but rather is the terrain of Foucault's first major book, the *History of Madness*, written more than a decade before. The confinement that book focuses on occurred in the mid-seventeenth century, before the century, the eighteenth, in which Deleuze in the 'Postscript' correctly has Foucault placing the emergence of discipline. The confinement of the seventeenth century was a precursor to discipline, but not itself disciplinary: it saw people being shut away en masse, implying neither the positive training of bodies nor the differentiation of individuals that are the hallmarks of discipline for Foucault, albeit creating the institutions which later could become bases of discipline. Thus, confinement will occur in disciplinary institutions, but it is not what makes them disciplinary. Foucault specifically notes this movement away from simple *enfermement* multiple times in *Discipline and Punish*,[13] and pointedly avers that 'the principle of "enclosure" is neither constant,

[13] Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, p174, p269.

nor indispensable, nor sufficient in disciplinary machinery'.[14] Deleuze himself seems to have appreciated this at the time of his book on Foucault, taking issue with Paul Virilio for identifying Foucault's primary problematic as one of confinement, arguing that for Foucault confinement is *always* secondary, even in the nineteenth century;[15] though earlier still, in 1972, Deleuze already misidentified discipline with confinement.[16]

Deleuze's eponymous thesis in his 'Postscript' is that discipline has recently been superseded by something he calls 'control'. Such a claim is not without precedent: Jon Simons points out that both Zygmunt Bauman and Jean Baudrillard accused Foucault's account of power of being largely obsolete even at the time he described it.[17] Deleuze differs in avoiding disagreement with Foucault by arguing that Foucault's account of discipline had become outdated, palpably so at least, only after Foucault had written it in the early-to-mid 1970s. Indeed, Deleuze goes further, enlisting Foucault to his cause, saying, without specifying what he means, 'that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future' what Deleuze calls 'control'.[18] In an interview conducted the same year, Deleuze similarly, again without specification, claims Foucault 'was actually one of the first to say that we're moving away from disciplinary societies'.[19]

I will note in passing, that, though Deleuze is careful not to contradict Foucault here, he does contradict his own earlier position during a 1972 conversation with Foucault that the contemporary situation was marked by 'the reinforcement of all

[14] Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1975, Alan Sheridan (trans), *Discipline and Punish*, New York, Random House, p.143.
[15] Deleuze, *Foucault* p42.
[16] 'Intellectuals and Power', *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1977, p206.
[17] Jon Simons, *Foucault & the Political*, London, Routledge, 1995, p40.
[18] Deleuze, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', p4.
[19] Gilles Deleuze, 'Control and Becoming', in *Negotiations*, Martin Joughin (trans), New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, pp177–182, p174.

the structures of confinement'.[20] One could argue that this was true in the mid-1970s, but changed later, but Deleuze's 'Postscript' position is that discipline is confinement, that discipline/confinement has been in decline for much of the twentieth century, and that Foucault recognised this fact. Foucault's response to Deleuze in the 1972 conversation is to raise the problem of power itself, suggesting that *Anti-Oedipus* moved in this direction vis-à-vis Marx and Freud.[21] Deleuze's response, tellingly, is to redefine the problem in terms of desire instead.[22]

There are a several public comments of Foucault's that might seem to provide a basis for Deleuze's 1990 claims that Foucault saw there as being an incipient move away from discipline, though of course we cannot exclude the possibility that Deleuze may have been referring to unrecorded private comments of Foucault's. In a 1975 interview, Foucault identifies an important change, wherein, 'starting in the 1960s, it began to be realised that a cumbersome form of power was no longer as indispensable as had been thought and that industrial societies could content themselves with a much looser form of power over the body'.[23] This form he relates to 'formidable disciplinary regimes in the schools, hospitals, barracks, factories, cities, lodgings, families'.[24] Foucault links this change to the emergence of new forms of sexuality. Foucault is speaking here the year before the publication of the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, hence while that book was in production. In that work, while he acknowledges that there has been a decline in the overt restriction of bodily activities in relation to sex, he famously argues that overall the strategy of power has remained the same, because repression was never its essence, as many seem to think. For

[20] Ibid., p212.
[21] Ibid., p213.
[22] Ibid., p 215.
[23] Michel Foucault, 'Body/Power', *Power/Knowledge*, New York, Pantheon, 1980, p58.
[24] Ibid.

Foucault, the shift in forms of power from repression of bodies to a looser control occurs within essentially the same regime. Since Deleuze equates discipline with confinement, of course, Foucault's position here might to him seem to betoken a decline of discipline, but Foucault downplays the connection of confinement to discipline.

Another remark of Foucault's that might seem to confirm Deleuze's claim is Foucault's assertion that 'This is the age of social control'.[25] However, he says this specifically about the nineteenth century, and about 'a form of power, a type of society that I term "disciplinary society"'.[26] Here, in a lecture that contains one of Foucault's first invocations of the notion of 'biopolitics', he speaks in terms of 'control of the population, continuous control of the behaviour of individuals'.[27] 'Social control' thus for Foucault appears as a synonym for what he in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* will call biopower, a combination of anatomopolitics of the human body which he designates as 'discipline' with the biopolitics of the human population. He continues to use the phrase 'control' in the same way in later years.[28]

One might refer to Foucault's invocation of societies of 'biopolitics' or 'security' or 'government' as coming after discipline, but these terms are largely synonymous for Foucault and do not betoken a shift away from disciplinary power, so much as an addition to it. They are also located by Foucault hundreds of years in the past, so cannot correspond to the new form identified by Deleuze. It is true that Foucault's analysis of discipline – unlike his analysis of biopolitics – primarily concerns itself with the nineteenth century and stops well before the present. Almost

[25] Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Juridical Forms', *Power*, New York, New Press, 2000, p57.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., p59.
[28] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, p10.

all of Foucault's work is like this, essentially historical rather than contemporary, but for Foucault such work comprises 'histories of the present', examinations of historical materials to understand the contemporary situation. He is explicit both that 'We should not see things as the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a society of discipline, and then of a society of discipline by a society, say, of government',[29] and that 'We live in an era of governmentality discovered in the eighteenth century'.[30]

Though Deleuze cannot be blamed for their adoption of his 'Postscript', Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri make its claims central to their joint thought and in so doing did much to popularise it. They magnify Deleuze's misreading of Foucault, claiming that 'only the society of control is able to adopt the biopolitical context as its *exclusive* terrain of reference',[31] implying that only in recent decades has biopolitics really come into its own in a post-disciplinary era. It is not true however on Foucault's conception of biopolitics (which Hardt and Negri evince not the slightest understanding of), however, that society has recently become exclusively biopolitical: it is still marked by a considerable degree of sovereign power, which Foucault calls 'thanatopolitics', biopolitics's antonym. Foucault could not be more explicit moreover that there is no contradiction at all between biopolitics and discipline such as might necessitate the emergence of control as a 'more biopolitical' alternative to the latter.[32]

In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, a rare foray by Foucault into contemporary history, he does argue that our most recent governmentality, neoliberalism, feeds into the formulation of a 'less . . . disciplinary' form of economic policy.[33] Less disciplinary it may be, but this does not make it non- or anti- or post-disciplinary (and I would

[29] Ibid., p107.
[30] Ibid., p109.
[31] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2000, p40.
[32] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, New York, Picador, 2003, p242.
[33] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, p207.

suggest it is if anything less rather than more biopolitical to boot). Contemporary public policy does not bypass discipline, but utilises it in different ways: in neoliberalism we are disciplined not so much through the direct intervention of the state, but the provision of incentives to drive human behaviour characteristic of neoliberal governmentality nevertheless requires disciplining at the level of enterprises.

Still, since Foucault rarely if ever engages in any kind of prognostication about the future, it does not contradict him to suggest things changed after he made all of these comments. Deleuze is right that things have changed in recent decades. It is in the nature of things always to change. The question is to what extent they are changing, whether the changes are breaks in some respect, and if so how. I will maintain that recent changes identified by Deleuze have been of intensity and not of type, at least in relation to the technologies of power outlined by Foucault.

Discipline

Foucault does not anywhere define discipline succinctly, but he consistently characterises it differently to Deleuze. He understands it, as distinct from the older sovereign power that operated by damaging bodies, as shaping and cultivating bodies. For this reason, he uses the phrase 'anatomo-politics' (that is, 'body politics') as a synonym for discipline.[34] Discipline does not stop at the body, however: rather, he argues in *Discipline and Punish* that disciplinary power produces a 'soul' on the basis of the body.[35] This means that there can be 'consensual disciplines', in which those disciplined identify with and accept their disciplining.[36] He also argues that 'at the

[34] Michel Foucault, *La volonté de savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, Robert Hurley (trans), *History of Sexuality Vol. I*, New York, Pantheon, 1978, p139.
[35] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p29.
[36] Michel Foucault, 'Politics and ethics: an interview' P. Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader*, New

heart of all disciplinary mechanisms functions a small penal mechanism',[37] which is to say that punishment (which may or may not take the form of confinement) is always involved in discipline, and that discipline is 'essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical',[38] even though it may be consensual. Any suggestion then that there is a new form of power abroad because today we are in the grip of a soft rather than a hard control that works by subtly influencing our behaviour rather than gruffly mandating it misses the point that such a transition occurring already centuries ago is at the heart of what Foucault calls 'discipline'.

Not only does Deleuze define discipline narrowly and inaccurately, his claims for the decline of discipline even on his definition are overblown. Deleuze declares that 'we're in the midst of a general breakdown of all sites of confinement – prisons, hospitals, factories, schools, the family'.[39] Not only was this not true in 1990, it is still not true today. Imprisonment in particular has increased to previously unseen heights since Deleuze wrote these words, particularly in the United States, which now incarcerates its populace at a rate unprecedented in human history. Prison itself has not changed, at least not in any relevant way: prisons still brutalise inmates, make them work for profit of others; there are calls for reform, but Foucault showed that these have always been a constitutive element of the carceral system. Far from the decline of disciplinary punishment in favour of new forms of punishment, we have seen earlier forms of discipline reappear, such as the chain gang and execution in the United States during the 1990s. Though these have since largely disappeared once again, both are still advocated and practised to an extent that they once were not. Whichever direction this takes going forward, however, it does not pose a threat to

York, Pantheon, 1984, pp373–380. Translated by Catherine Porter. p380
[37] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p178.
[38] Ibid., p222.
[39] Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies', p178

the validity of Foucault's historical analysis, since he does not propound a unidirectional, progressive view of history: discipline has always been incomplete and has wavered historically.[40]

Deleuze claims that the traditional confining prison is being replaced through the use of electronic tagging.[41] Thus far, however, an increase tagging has coincided with a general increase rather than a decrease in confinement. Even were it to displace the prison, moreover, it is not at all clear that this constitutes a decline of discipline, or even of confinement. Deleuze mentions (his major collaborator) Félix Guattari's vision of a card-access city, as an example of 'a control mechanism that can fix the position of any element at any moment'.[42] This does seem like a possible development: with contemporary GPS we can be tracked and fixed to a minute level. But this seems simply to extend the panoptic imperative behind the prison, creating an infinite management of bodies, completing rather than superseding disciplinary power. We are certainly today under much more surveillance than previously, with CCTV, the monitoring of internet content, of mobile phone calls. We are all now in the position of the prisoners in Bentham's panopticon, having to presume we are being monitored all the time. Deleuze does not mention any of these connections, however: the Panopticon, arguably the key figure of Foucault's account of discipline, is missing from the 'Postscript', as are even very general themes, like the surveillance or punishment of *Discipline and Punish*'s original French title, *Surveiller et punir*.

To date, in any case, discipline remains based in the same old cast of institutions – the prison, the hospital, the school – to a large extent. Discipline can indeed never be dead as long as the prison exists in something like its classic form: all

[40] Cf. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp14-16.
[41] Ibid, p182.
[42] Ibid., pp181–2.

discipline has long been underwritten by imprisonment, wielded as the ultimate threat to ensure obedience. But just as prisons are growing, so too are several other disciplinary institutions. Educational institutions continue to expand, and continue to be disciplinary. More and more people study to higher and higher levels. Schools threaten to expand to take in more of the students' day as the proportion of the population corralled in workplaces till five o'clock or later increases. Deleuze invokes continuous assessment as evidence of the crucial change in schools. This is indeed, as he thinks, the same kind of effect as tagging of prisoners; which is to say, not the decline, but intensification of disciplinary control. He is clearly right to see universities as becoming businesses,[43] but this is simply neoliberalism, a shift in the boundary between public and private sectors, which is not a shift in the boundary of discipline, since it always straddled both. The same can be said, for example, of the privatisation of prisons.

Regarding factories, disciplinary workplaces have in recent decades massively expanded their intake. In the First World, this expansion has occurred primarily through the bringing of women en masse from the home into the formal workforce (from the discipline of the family to the discipline of the workplace). Offices have displaced factories as the preeminent form of disciplinary workplace in the West, and discipline here might be described as looser than what prevailed in the factory, but it is less than clear whether it is really looser, since the office involves new forms of surveillance, particularly in the open-plan design that has become predominant in recent years. White collar workers' hours have tended to increase significantly, with work blurring via communications devices into formerly private time, representing an expansion rather than contraction of workplace discipline. In the Third World,

[43] Ibid., p182.

moreover – and hence on a global average basis – factories now employ a greater mass of humanity than perhaps ever before, with new industrialisations of formerly agrarian populaces (Deleuze indeed notes this offshoring tendency in the 'Postscript').[44] The family itself does show some signs of decline or fragmentation, partly under the weight of the pressures of new patterns of work, but thirty years on from the 'Postscript' remains entrenched, albeit via changes, such as the widespread legal and social approval in the West of families centred on same-sex couples. This indeed may be said however to have extended the nuclear family model into an area that was once outside it. The only institution dealt with by Foucault that had unambiguously declined by Deleuze's time is one Deleuze does not mention it in the 'Postscript', the mental asylum. But this institution declined already during the period Foucault was writing, and didn't lead Foucault to revise his thesis about discipline – and indeed Foucault (1980b, 229) seemed already to be aware of the possibility of this shift *before* his writings on discipline. This, I would suggest, is because its replacement, known in Britain as 'care in the community', is also disciplinary, since it involves the tracking, monitoring, and modification of behaviour, albeit with confinement now no longer the rule.

Deleuze claims that the divisions between institutions are breaking down, that schools and factories are blending into one another. Certainly one can note increasing attempts at vocationalisation, and new corporate mantras of lifelong learning. But neither thing is particularly novel, and certainly the distinction has not been abolished: schools are still easily distinguishable from non-educational workplaces. On-the-job education is more rhetoric than reality, moreover: the casualisation of employment means a real decline in pedagogy in the workplace. In any case, the idea of a

[44] Ibid., p181.

hybridisation between disciplinary institutions does not threaten disciplinary power as such, only particular institutional manifestations of it. Foucault tells us how in earlier days of disciplinary technology all kinds of 'utopias' were experimented with. He gives the example of the 'prison factory', in which vast numbers of workers lived and slept shackles to their work stations.[45] These, however, 'were found not to be viable or manageable by capitalism. The economic cost of these institutions immediately proved too heavy, and the rigid structure of these prison factories soon caused many of them to collapse'.[46]

Much of the 'Postscript' consists of a dense catalogue of phenomena which Deleuze presents as indicative of the new control society. It at points reads like a newspaper op-ed piece, complaining about modern life without coherence or factual accuracy. He complains that art has been marketised; it's true that the art market blew up in the 80s, but wasn't this just a tulip mania, the kind of sudden commodification that always accompanied capitalism, as an effect of a surfeit of investment capital? He complains that rate fixing has replaced cost cutting, as if capitalism had not previously exhibited tendencies towards monopolisation or cartels. He complains that 'we are taught that corporations have a soul, which is the most terrifying news in the world'; this is supposed to indicate the depth of our corruption in the new age, and it's is a great line, but who is really saying this? Corporations in the US have long (since 1886) been considered to be legal persons, and this led to accusations that they were soulless persons, and then in short order to corporations attempting to cast themselves as having souls by the 1920s.[47]

[45] Foucault, 'Truth and Juridical Forms', p75.
[46] Ibid., p76.
[47] Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998.

He claims debt has replaced confinement. The two are hardly mutually exclusive, however, as debtors' prisons once attested, and these indeed seem poised to make a comeback with changes to bankruptcy law. And haven't people always been controlled by debt? David Graeber has recently argued prominently that we have, and it's no new argument – Marcel Mauss said something similar the best part of a century earlier: both argue that accruing debts is fundamental to exchange and hence both to the economy and society itself.

Deleuze suggests that the 'new forces' of control assembled gradually, beginning before World War II, but 'accelerating' after it. He thus reads Franz Kafka's *The Trial* as standing, in the early twentieth century, already at the junction of discipline and control, with the old system, supposedly one of decisive judgment, meeting a new 'endless postponement'. Thus, although the eponymous trial threatens to drag on indefinitely, it in fact ends decisively in execution; presumably were the novel written now, by Deleuze's lights it would be entirely without conclusion, a juridical *Waiting for Godot*. From the point of view of the early twenty-first century, *The Trial* however seems perhaps more prescient than ever, with secret charges and secret courts, and guilt presumed, leading to sentences passed. But of course such forms are not entirely new, but rather always haunted the judicial system: the system has long been a nightmare to navigate, baffling, arbitrary, unfair. I would suggest that really this novel deals with what in Foucauldian terms is the replacement of older forms of law with the rule of the norm, by which everyone is endlessly investigable and always guilty of some abnormality, an effect associated with biopower going back to the end of the eighteenth century.

Deleuze is right that things are postponed more than they used to be: criminal trials are longer (though rarely endless), penal sentences are longer (and increasingly

endless); we spend longer in education, wait longer to marry, to have children, wait forever more than we used to, wait longer to establish ourselves in our careers, and in all these areas people increasingly postpone things indefinitely. However, these things are only extended, not fundamentally changed, and with them disciplinary power is extended: postponement is a hallmark of discipline, which introduced prison sentences as an alternative to summary corporal justice, and education to mediate between infancy and adulthood.

Deleuze alleges that we have moved from analogue to digital institutions (*analogique-numérique* in French, though both translators of the 'Postscript' get this wrong: the earlier is slavishly literal, giving us 'analogical'–'numerical'; the more recent renders *numérique* as 'digital', but oddly counterposes it to 'analogical').[48] While clearly several technologies have made this shift, I don't understand what this could refer to in terms of power, and am reminded of Sokal and Bricmont's assessment of Deleuze's use of technical vocabulary.[49] If anything, the opposite is true according to comments he then makes about the modulation of control: it is actually discipline in his schema that is digital and control that is analogue, since it is the former that involves discrete units, whereas the latter is continuous and without boundaries. This distinction would then tend again to correspond to the distinction that Foucault located much earlier in history from inflexible law to the ambiguous norm.

Deleuze also casts the move from the gold standard to fiat currency as significant, though the substance of this claim, that the gold standard is numerical whereas fiat currency is a floating code, seems to me misguided inasmuch as the

[48] Deleuze, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', p4; Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies', p178.
[49] Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, *Intellectual Impostures*, London, Profile, 1998, p154.

value of gold also floats. In a risible crescendo to his litany of complaint, Deleuze inveighs that '*surfing* has taken over from all the old *sports*'.[50] The opposite is true, however: surfing has been codified into a sport, just as other countercultural activities, such as skateboarding, or graffiti, or punk rock, have been professionalised and disciplinarised.

Deleuze's most serious claims concern the way work has been reorganised.[51] There has been a tendential shift away from an older pattern wherein workers at the same level in the same workplace were paid the same rate, to individualised contract negotiations. However, individualisation is the very stuff of discipline. The individual himself is precisely an artefact of discipline on Foucault's account.

Now, Deleuze wants to argue that control has gone further than discipline in this regard, producing not individuals but *dividuals*. This concept, coined by Deleuze in this text, has been taken up widely since. However, it lacks any clear determination – unsurprisingly given the brevity of the 'Postscript'. Deleuze does correlate 'dividuality' to the various other aspects of control society that he enumerates, but then these are themselves confused. The clearest indication he gives in the 'Postscript' of the way in which he believes individuality is heading, though he does not explicitly link this to the concept of the dividual, is to say that today individuals are 'divided each within himself'.[52] However, this seems to me to describe a generic fact of human existence: individuals have never been solid kernels, but rather individuality is a constitutive fiction masking considerable internal dehiscence. Discipline establishes this fiction of individuality in a particularly monolithic way; by setting up individuality as absolute, it creates a particularly fragile subject, beset on all sides by

[50] Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies', p180
[51] Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies', p179.
[52] Ibid., pp179–80.

disintegration, hence leads us to feel peculiarly fragmented today when confronted with the fact of our inherent divisions. One might argue in a quasi-Marxist way that discipline thus undermines itself, causing its own workers to disintegrate at the level of their subjectivity, but if this is so it is a side-effect. We see little decline in any case in the insistence on the individual and his truth and self-presence in contemporary culture. The rampant individualism of social networks is a case in point. While new media clearly open up radical possibilities, they are prevalently used to cultivate individual identity to new heights: the 'selfie' may be held up as the clearest example of this in contemporary culture.

What is odd about Deleuze's complaint about what we might call our 'dividualisation' is that he was even more critical of individuality than Foucault: as Foucault describes the Deleuzian position in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*, 'The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to "de-individualize" by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations.'[53] The difference between this 'de-individualisation' and 'dividualisation' is clear already in this quotation, however: Deleuze proposes to break the individual through establishing linkages between persons that transcend individuality, while dividuals are not more linked to other people, but rather simply more divided; dividualisation is hyper-individualisation. Deleuze claims that a hallmark of discipline is the absence of a contradiction between individual and mass, thus implying that it is only in the era of control did individualism cease to be at odds with group solidarity.[54] However, it is surely not empirically the case that no one protested in the name of the individual against massification during the disciplinary period – quite the opposite. Rather, I

[53] Michel Foucault, 'Preface', in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, xiv
[54] Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies', pp179–80.

would argue that dividualisation is inseparable from individualisation: the more our fictitious individuality is insisted upon, the more its fragility asserts itself, but that this has continuously occurred throughout the process of disciplinary individualisation.

Deleuze in Marxist fashion sees resistance as emerging out of the tendencies of contemporary capitalism. Oddly, he sees this in the fact that today young people boast of being motivated, throwing themselves willingly into unpaid internships.[55] I would suggest that this is a mark of the success of discipline itself that people do willingly what they previously had to be cajoled into: it is a case of consensual discipline. Today's individual has an increased level of autonomy relative to her forebears: she does what is expected without having to be told. This was always the aim of disciplinary power, completely explicit in every disciplinary institution, even if success in this has varied. This is not to say that there is no resistance from such subjects, but there is no particular reason to expect more resistance from them than from others.

Deleuze argues that the loss of solidarity individuals experience in recent times involves a replacement of collective 'watchwords', shared maxims, with individual 'passwords'. From our contemporary perspective, with its profusion of passwords, this seems plausible, but is again an intensification of individualising tendencies inherent in discipline.

The factory is the particular institution that concerns Deleuze the most – this is indicative of his residual Marxist privileging of production, saying of control that 'This technological development is more deeply rooted in a mutation of capitalism'.[56]

[55] Ibid., p182.
[56] Deleuze, op. cit., p180.

The factory is unique among the plethora of examples that Deleuze provides in that it is widely argued today in relation to it that there has been a recent major shift. I believe Deleuze's 'Postscript' is both primarily animated by and has been most influential through its interaction with claims about the changed character of labour.

Deleuze's position in the 'Postscript' represents a cross-fertilisation of his thought with Antonio Negri's Marxism in particular – it is worth noting the extent to which the interview from the same year, 1990, with Negri that precedes it in Deleuze's *Negotiations* shares the Postscript's perspective. Negri, an Italian Marxist philosopher living in exile in Paris since 1983, had become a collaborator of Deleuze's. Negri's perspective is representative of a broader tendency sometimes called 'Autonomism', amongst other appellations. Of central importance to Negri's thought and that of associated Italian Marxists is a particular elaboration of the notion of 'post-Fordism'. Deleuze does not mention 'post-Fordism' by name in the 'Postscript', it corresponds closely to his notion of 'control'.

Theories of post-Fordism start from the premise that the paradigm of early twentieth century working practices were those typified by Henry Ford's car plant in Detroit: the production line, with tasks split up into minute repetitive motions (involving Taylorist time-and-motion management), producing homogenous products. 'Post-Fordism' by contrast refers to a shift in working conditions in recent decades, from such old style factory production to a new kind of work, more flexible, creative, 'affective' and ephemeral. Theorists of post-Fordism emphasise recent trends towards flexitime, working from home, open-plan offices, hotdesking, etc. It cannot be within this remit of this essay properly to consider the post-Fordist paradigm, but I will make a number of points in relation to Deleuze's tendency to argue that such trends portend a shift at the level of social power itself as such.

Some aspects of post-Fordism are not genuinely novel, so much as a return to pre-Fordism. Recent growth in 'precarity' is an example of this, constituting a return to earlier conditions of employment, a loss of security won by workers in twentieth century political and labour struggles. It is undeniable that, as Deleuze notes, the average working practice in the First World has shifted from factory to office, and from inflexible to flexible. Does this entail a shift at the level of technologies of power itself?

Some aspects of the shift affect what may be called the relationship of subjectivity to production, rather than concerning power and control as such, such as increasingly immaterial and affective labour practices.

The innovation that Deleuze points to in this post-Fordist direction that seems most genuinely novel, and most political to boot, is the individualisation of employment contracts. This is a break with the earlier industrial system, which always tended to treat ordinary workers as a mass rather than in such a highly individualised way. The question is what the implications of this difference are. I believe this difference can be characterised as the coincidence of post-Fordism with contemporary neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism is a different kind of thing to post-Fordism: the latter is a form of working conditions, the former characterised by Foucault precisely as a 'governmentality', a logic of government. Neo-liberal governmentality specifically involves the state orienting itself primarily to fostering markets. Neo-liberalism has seen governments aggressively breaking up worker solidarities that are judged to interfere with the operation of market mechanisms – resulting in something similar to the status quo ante those solidarities, but with new mechanisms in place to inhibit them developing again. Neoliberalism can be identified also with the increasing individualisation and marketisation noted by Deleuze in his 'Postscript'. It is not,

however, a new technology of power – rather, it implies a new relation of the state to the economy within disciplinary, biopolitical capitalism.

Deleuze seems to think it possible to in effect deduce effects at the level of power from changes in working conditions. To the extent post-Fordism exists, whatever political and economic implications it has (and it may have many), it is not a form of power or government. Fordism and post-Fordism are both, from the point of view of power, examples of disciplinary power. Deleuze implicitly conflates Foucault's discipline with Fordist production, whereas these are distinct kinds of things – a technology of power versus a mode of production – with different chronologies, to produce a thesis precisely about a social essence. My point then is not to argue that our society remains essentially the same as it was in the nineteenth century, that there are no major differences, only that the array of technologies of power remain the same – and I insist on the Foucauldian point that we should not reduce society to these, any more than we should reduce it to a system of production, of either things or of desire.