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REVIEW

Gary Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2nd edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). ISBN 0-521-60053-7.

The second edition to the *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, published in 2005, comes ten years after the original version. During this period, important posthumous works from Foucault have been released in French and in English. Among these, we find interviews and articles but also the infamous lectures at the Collège de France.[1] The original contributions of the 1994 edition have either been updated or replaced to take into account these new resources in Foucauldian scholarship. For instance, in the new chapter "The Analytic of Finitude and the History of Subjectivity", Béatrice Han makes use of the 1982 lectures *L'Herméneutique du sujet* in order to discuss Foucault's conceptions of subjectivity. Also, Gerald L. Burns in "Foucault's Modernism" explores Foucault's relationship to literature, to Baudelaire's and Mallarmé's own modernism, and to contemporary authors such as Georges Bataille or Maurice Blanchot. For this enquiry, he makes extensive use of *Dits et Ecrits* and of the other collections of interviews published in English.[2] The three other new contributions approach the biography and bibliography of Michel Foucault in relation to psychoanalysis in Joel Whitebook's chapter, to phenomenology in Todd May's, to German philosophy in Hans Sluga's (Nietzsche and Heidegger) and David Ingram's (Habermas).

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1 In the original French: Michel Foucault, *"Il faut defendre la société." Cours au Collège de France 1976* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 1997); Michel Foucault, *Les Anormaux. Cours au Collège de France 1974-1975* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 1999); Michel Foucault, *L'Herméneutique du sujet. Cours au Collège de France 1981-1982* (Paris: Gallimard-Seuil, 2001); Michel Foucault, *Le pouvoir psychiatrique: Cours au Collège de France 1973-1974* (Paris: Gallimard-Seuil, 2003). The only English translations published before the second edition of the *Companion* are Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended." Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador US, 2003) and Michel Foucault, *Abnormal. Lectures at the Collège de France 1974-1975*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador US, 2003). Translations of the other sets of lectures were published later in 2005 and 2006.

2 Michel Foucault, *Dits et Ecrits*, vol. I-IV (Paris: Gallimard, 1994). In English, a similar but less complete collection was published, organized thematically: Paul Rabinow, ed., *Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, vol. I-III (New York: New Press, 1997-1998).

The new contributions thus add to the breadth of analysis proposed by the *Companion*. They work in conjunction with the original chapters analysing Foucault's relation to the discipline of history (Gary Gutting), discussing his important contribution to the French tradition of the history of science (Georges Canguihlem) or working through his influence on feminist theory (Jana Sawicki). Together, they highlight the impressive reach of Foucault's intellectual enterprise--impacting most of the social sciences and humanities--as well as his complex relationships to key figures of philosophy's recent history. In this review, I will consider the volume as a whole and draw from both original and new contributions to illustrate its strengths: its interdisciplinarity, its careful and nuanced analyses of Foucault's texts, and its introduction to current Foucauldian scholarship.

In his introduction to the volume, Gary Gutting stresses two distinctive aspects of Foucault's work: "its specificity and its marginality." It is specific because each of his analyses is determined by the terrain studied, not by a prior general theory or methodological commitment. (pp. 3-4) It is marginal because his attacks on "the apparently necessary presuppositions … that define disciplines" can be "launched only from the peripheral areas". These two characteristics contribute to Foucault's *inter*-disciplinarity or rather *anti*-disciplinarity. Foucault approached each discipline from the margins and for this reason impacted them greatly while refusing to let his thought be appropriated by any of them. This also contributes indirectly to the timeliness of Michel Foucault's thought: his refusal to remain prisoner of the academic trends and methods of a particular time, and his place at the intersection of several disciplines guarantee the foresight and durability of his insights and analyses. This anti-disciplinarity justifies the heterogeneity of the volume, in terms of the authors' backgrounds (although philosophy remains the dominant discipline), the objects of study selected and the approaches chosen.

Despite the heterogeneity of the volume, one common thread tying the contributions together can be identified: the concern with the ethical and critical paradox of Foucault's work. By ethical and critical paradox, I am referring to the almost nihilist temptation often felt in Foucault's writings, the idea that his works would be very powerful and effective in undermining traditional interpretive narratives or normative systems, yet would fail to provide some ground or standpoint on which to build positive theories and liberating practices. For instance, in "Power/Knowledge," Joseph Rouse explains how Foucault tried to escape from traditional theorizations of power around sovereignty and legitimacy. This perspective, however, has been criticized for "undercutting any possible stance from which Foucault might be able to criticize the modern forms of knowledge and power he has described." (p. 96) Joseph Rouse argues that this critical pitfall can be avoided if one considers "Foucault's understanding of both power and knowledge as *dynamic*." (p. 96) However, the

objection remains strong: in many of his books, the tone of Foucault seems to encourage resistance to the new forms of power/knowledge identified and yet he keeps rejecting any possible ground "from which such a call to resistance could be legitimated." (p. 102) For Joseph Rouse, this challenge refers to the impossibility of political and epistemic sovereignty.

This impossibility is also a central issue for James W. Bernauer and Michael Mahon in "Michel Foucault's Ethical Imagination" and, more generally, this concern is familiar to the readers of Charles Taylor and Jürgen Habermas, who both deny the critical potential of Foucault's historical analyses. (p. 149) For James W. Bernauer and Michael Mahon, these critiques are the sign of the originality and exceptionality of Foucault's ethics, a form of ethics which does not require 'normative yardsticks' but instead a particular relationship to oneself—a self-transformation. (p. 160) Béatrice Han is also optimistic about the potential offered by "an ethics of the self as the heart of resistance to power," (p. 201) yet she recognized at the end of her analysis that "Foucault's thought is caught between a rock and a hard place, because the idea of overcoming the epistemology with a return to the ethical" might end up "referring philosophy back to the scientific perspective that it sought to emancipate itself from." (p. 204) Thus, Foucault's own discourse finds itself out of criteria for its own acceptability, and runs the risk of being self-defeating.

This Foucauldian paradox can occupy a more or less important place within the chapters, but though worded differently, it is apparent in each contribution. Hans Sluga, for example, while exploring the intellectual relations between Foucault and Nietzsche, comes to a similar conclusion: "it must be admitted that Foucault's anti-Nietzschean Nietzscheanism comes at a price. Can a general critique of morality be derived from specific genealogies of the sort that Foucault's constructs?" (p. 234) He then describes the genealogical enterprise as a "never-ending diagnostic and destructive process." (p. 234) Gerald L. Burns in "Foucault's Modernism" also mentions that "from a philosophical standpoint the desire to break with the sovereignty of the philosophical subject … is completely incoherent." (p. 369) He suggests that rather than a break, what Foucault is attempting is a re-conceptualization, and he then distinguishes between two conceptions of freedom in Foucault: a traditional one in terms of autonomy and agency, and a post-subjectivist one. This distinction would allow for the possibility of resistance in Foucault, a resistance in terms of self-escape rather than traditional liberation. The philosophical incoherence is avoided but the project seems to lose political potential. Even Georges Canguilhem, who is primarily concerned with Foucault's contribution to his field, the history of science, proposes a very telling analogy. With Foucault, "we are dealing with an explorer not a missionary of modern culture" (p. 79): an explorer, whose task is to discover and map new intellectual territories, not to provide salvation or

emancipation. Yet, we might add that, whether literally or figuratively, these two vocations are more interdependent than the explorer or missionary are ready to admit.

Each chapter not only mentions this Foucauldian paradox but also suggests its own ways to overcome or lessen this problem, through new interpretations of Foucault's own texts and through the works of contemporary scholars. On the issue of interpretation, the *Companion* proposes an interesting compromise. Faithful to the spirit of the first edition, the second edition shies away from polemics and proposes "sympathetic" yet critical readings of Foucault's works. Gary Gutting starts his introduction with a rather common definition of interpretation, that of "finding a unifying schema through which we can make overall sense of an author's works." (p. 1) As noted by the author himself, this is quite removed from Foucault's own critical considerations on interpretation and hermeneutics. The contributors are generally aware of the dangers associated with such interpretive exercises and the pitfalls associated with commentaries.[3] Still, the type of interpretations called for by a *Companion* are likely in fact to lead to a *non-Foucauldian* approach to Foucault–-a more traditional, academically oriented, explication of texts or use of biography. Although such exercises might also imply an excessive search for unity or consistency, they remain a quite legitimate and useful intellectual enterprise.

The two first chapters by Thomas Flynn on "Foucault's mapping of history" and by Gary Gutting on "Foucault and the History of Madness" are illustrative of the type of studies to be found in this volume: respectively, an overview of Foucault's thought, and a careful analysis of specific texts. Thomas Flynn explains Foucault's relationship to history, as well as his diverse conceptualization and practice of historical analyses: archaeologies, genealogies and problematizations. This allows for an explanation of the different periods within Foucault's work and its characterization as a form of "post-modern history." (p. 43) In contrast to this overarching survey, Gary Gutting approaches Foucault's relationship to history through a close reading of the *History of Madness*. The question here is: what type of history is Foucault practising, if any? The study of the text seems to indicate that Foucault has "an idealist approach to history" where facts are not used as supports for an interpretive schema, but as mere illustrations. The interpretive schema is then evaluated according to its internal coherence. Drawing on the other contributions, one could even say that the interpretive schema ought to be evaluated according to its discursive and, more importantly, ethical effects.

Finally, in the *Companion*, the balance is nicely struck between the analysis of Foucault's own work and the scholarship it has inspired. Most contributions focus

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[3] David Ingram, for example, notes at the beginning of his contribution: "I confess a deep reluctance to commenting on Foucault in light of his astute observation that commentaries only 'say what has already been said and repeat tirelessly what was nevertheless never said.'" (p. 240)

principally on Foucault's own writings, but also introduce the readers to the academic debates that followed, the issues still at stake in Foucauldian scholarship, and the paths of inquiry opened up by Foucault and pursued by others. For instance, Gary Gutting mentions the impact of Foucault's early works on the 'new cultural history' (p. 50), while David Ingram gives us an updated look at the Habermas-Foucault debate. The last contribution is the most illustrative in this regard. In "Queering Foucault and the Subject of Feminism," Jana Sawicki shows how Foucault's "political therapy" can be followed up by feminist theorists. She discusses the reception of Foucault's work among feminist critical theorists (such as Nancy Fraser) and in the work of Judith Butler. Whereas the first group of theorists are left dissatisfied with Foucault's understanding of social criticism, Judith Butler, by "queering" Foucault, is able to use a "remarkably Foucauldian understanding of subjection" to address "the production of gendered subjects." (pp. 392-393) This last essay shows that Foucault's concepts and analyses have great potential in contemporary social theory.

However, in this quick overview of the directions taken by Foucauldian scholarship nowadays, one regrets not to see an essay devoted specifically to *governmentality studies*, which followed from Foucault's conceptualization of art of government and political reason in the late 70s. The two seminal books in this sub-field, *The Foucault Effect* and *Foucault and Political Reason*, date from 1991 and 1996.[4] With the recent publications of the 1977-79 lectures at the Collège de France, *Securité, territoire et population* on governmentality and *Naissance de la biopolitique* on twentieth-century liberalism, a new component of Foucault's work is available; governmentality studies might be able to assert a more important position within Foucauldian scholarship, and in social and political science in general.[5]

In brief, *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* is neither an introduction nor an explanatory textbook of Michel Foucault's thought. It is more challenging: it is actually a true companion in that it encourages reading or re-reading Foucault's own works, and pushes the reader towards diverse and intellectually stimulating lines of enquiry and reflection. Michel Foucault often described his work as a "conceptual toolbox;" the second edition of the *Companion* works as a "secondary toolbox" for Foucault's own works.

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4 Graham Burchell et al, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Andrew Barry et al, *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

5 Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire et population. Cours au Collège de France 1977-1978* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2005); Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la Biopolitique. Cours au Collège de France 1978-1979* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2005).