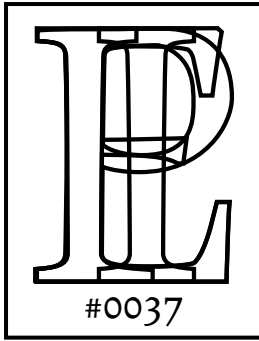


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**GUNK XI**  
(Published: November 2019)

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|||||  
Gunk (mereology) ...any whole whose parts all have further proper parts. That is, a gunky object is not made of indivisible atoms or simples. Because parthood is transitive, any part of gunk is itself gunk.  
1 Nihilism is either necessarily true, or necessarily false.  
2 Gunk is metaphysically possible.  
3 If gunk is metaphysically possible, the nihilism is not necessarily true.  
4 Therefore, nihilism is necessarily false.  
|||||

Gunkin' about with BIOPOLITICS.

power - SUN?  
power - INFLUENCE?  
power - VIOLENCE?  
power - GRAVITY?

power does not have to be oppressive

power can be creative

SUBJECT - POWER - KNOWLEDGE

the human as an object

humanity as a species

new information about our object-ness gives us new knowledge and new options to act

this objective knowledge about ourselves subjectivises us

our linguistics and economics are formed by the patterns of consumption of the last few centuries

a rational transfer of information

but there are more rationalities

what, then, justifies one action from another if both their rationalities are sound?

the justification is power

bio-power: a general political strategy of Power through the mechanism of addressing the biological features of the human object-species

traditional understanding of Power is based on the Enlightenment - justifications of Juridical Power, rationalizing the rule of law

Bio-power: management power and mercantilism, psychiatry, planning, epidemic control, the power of to produce subjects, inherited in the West from the Church, knowing humanity, seeks to direct desire itself

wastage of human Power and potential by societies is a tragedy

apprenticeships and aptitudes are locked behind regulated

communication models, applying enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy

bio-power influences possible future actions and choices, it is acting upon action itself

juridical Power is subtracting and repressive

but bio-power is productive as well through discipline and training

standards and norms develop in large populations

populariton is wealth, illth becomes a thing to regulate and assess

modern population results in modern governality, sovereignty over territory, discipline in bodies of individuals, security over the whole population

discipline creates Subjects through Power and Knowledge

productivity is key for sovereignty?

#### Criticism:

Are there normative criteria to differentiate types of power?

Power is the product of shifting human values, no universal Power criterion can be established

the swarm of the points of resistance, the fractures and regroupings, traverse social stratifications and individual unities

the network of judicial and normative power ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions without becoming localized - the same happens to the resistance

bio-political Power can be similar to power in physics

#### RESOURCES:

Biopolitics: An advanced introduction; Thomas Lemke translated by Eric Frederick Trump

Then & Now Channel  
Foucault: Biopower, Governmentality, and the Subject  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXyr4Zasdkg>

Biopolitics is not (Primarily) about Life: On Biopolitics, Neoliberalism and Families  
Gordon Hull [ghull@uncc.edu](mailto:ghull@uncc.edu)

#### Hull

First, it is unclear what the "life" on which biopolitics operates actually refers to.

Second, it is unclear how biopolitics relates to the economy, either in the classical form of the family/household (oikos) or in the current form of neoliberalism

Foucault's interest is less in life itself as an object, but in the techniques - the dispositives - through which "life" becomes an object of political knowledge/power. These techniques are essentially those of risk management, where contingent, aleatory and stochastic events are treated in statistical terms.

In this regard, economics - and neoliberalism specifically - can be read as an attempt to provide an answer to what form of life is proper to humans. Neoliberalism and biopolitics are thus intimately connected.

### Two aspects of Life:

Zoe: the simple fact of living common to all living beings - the household (oikos)

Bios: the form or way of living proper to an individual or a group - the city (polis)

the zoe/oikos pairing is subservient to bios/polis in the sense that it does not present the end proper to humans

modernity effaces the distinction between the two terms, subordinating bios into zoe: our bios is biological life itself, with disastrous consequences

### Foucault

"we see something new emerging in the second half of the eighteenth century," a technology of power that "does not exclude" disciplinary power "but does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques"

### Hull

embedded in discipline, this "'biopolitics' of the human race" (SMD 243) is distinguished by its operation on "a multiplicity of men, not to the extent that they are nothing more than their individual bodies, but to the extent that they form, on the contrary, a global mass that is affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on

With the emergence of this biopolitics comes the emergence of its key object, the "population."

the point of biopolitical intervention is to enable the optimal productivity of the

population - in other words, to push it along toward achieving what is taken as the end proper to human life

the distinction between an object of knowledge and the techniques for knowing it is an artificial one. There are no pure facts.

the understanding of life processes enabled by demographics and statistics is central, not the fact that the statistics and demographics are first brought to bear on life processes

security mechanisms have to be installed around the random element inherent in a population of living beings so as to optimize a state of life

the goal is that these processes are "not disciplined, but regularized"

the point of biopolitics is the transformation of the aleatory into the stochastic, the statistically and governmentally tractable: "the phenomena addressed by biopolitics are, essentially, aleatory events that occur within a population that exists over a period of time"

management of endemics - that "sapped the populations' strength"

"health" emerges as a political issue in the century, as a question of "the disposition of society as a milieu of physical well-being, health, and optimum longevity"

in addition to ensuring that people live, policy "must also ensure that everything in their activity that may go beyond this pure and simple subsistence will in fact be produced, distributed, divided up, and put in circulation in such a way that the state really can draw its strength from it"

"the essential issue of government will be the introduction of economy into political practice"

To govern a state will thus mean the application of economy, the establishment of an economy, at the level of the state as a whole, that is to say, [exercising] supervision and control over its inhabitants, wealth, and the conduct of all and each, as attentive as that of a father's over his household and goods.

Economics as a discourse, as a site of knowledge-power, is accordingly central to understanding the management of populations: it is the technique for managing the population.

Thomas Lemke

the objects of biopolitics [for Foucault] are not singular human beings but their biological features measured and aggregated on the level of populations

Dusty B

Foucault was one of modern day coiners of the term, actually biopolitics stems from frederich ratzel, it is actually a school of German geopolitics from the 19th century that attempted to capture the concept that it is not merely constitutionally, rationally-minded subjects that come to form a nation, rather it is based on geographical dimensions and also darwinian survival mechanisms, living, breathing, digesting, excreting that are at the basis of a nation and particularly that are tied to their soil

Biopolitics extends in all domains and suits our current paradigm especially with data collection, surveillance, monitoring and of course it does entangle itself with the market, Foucault made the point to biopolitics is about 'letting certain things CIRCULATE and be considered good, and Other things regulated', basically pointing out that economy and life are merged on grounds that what becomes regulated, administered, or permitted entry in terms of goods, logistical supply chain etc. is a way to calculate and at the same time game the possibilities of life being preserved on grounds that it is trying to ensure populations survive and importantly the economy. You can also link it to the Black Death, there were many ships where goods were needed to be circulated and at the same time where people were dying, but again this was the age of merchants and the need to fulfill commitments of exchanging and ensuring products reach certain places certain times...

Hull

A central aspect of contemporary neoliberalism is the demand that one be an "entrepreneur of oneself," managing risks and rewards as productively as possible, viewing expenditures of resources as investments in expected future returns.

Michel Callon

homo economicus "is obviously not to be found in a natural state ... He is formatted, framed and equipped with prostheses which help him in his calculations and which are, for the most part, produced by economics"

Hull

Evidence of this production process is evident in the saturation of contemporary cultural discourse in a relentless parade moral of stories

designed to teach self-entrepreneurship, from the rise of extreme sports like mountaineering and the mythology of hyper-individual achievement that accompany them, to workplace management strategies like "total quality management" and the demand to "embrace" risk at work.

In order for homo economicus to calculate, she requires, above all, the ability to understand alternatives in terms of their probabilities and their consequences, i.e., in terms of risk. This calculation, evident at the social level in the techniques of population and epidemic management, is here reproduced at the level of individual agency.

If biopolitics in the eighteenth century politicized the household, neoliberalism appears to politicize individual bodies by imposing a theory according to which homo economicus is the bios most appropriate to people.

One result is that "biological life" and "health" are increasingly informatic, managed not in terms of disease, but as problems of self-entrepreneurship and risk assessment.

As knowledge/power, biopolitics is about the management of uncertainty through statistical risk.

...for those whose existence becomes overdetermined by risk management, even the act of reproduction becomes something inseparable from and unintelligible outside of the biopolitical context in which it finds itself.

Foucault's summary:

In contrast to the former conception of biopolitics, Foucault describes biopolitics as an explicit rupture with the attempt to trace political processes and structures back to biological determinants.

By contrast, he analyzes the historical process by which "life" emerges as the center of politics strategies...

From this perspective, biopolitics denotes a specific modern form of exercising power.

||||  
Long live the new flesh. With pirates, it's never just for the money, is it? There is nothing real outside our perception of reality. Have you been hallucinating lately? No, Should I be? Yes, you should be.  
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