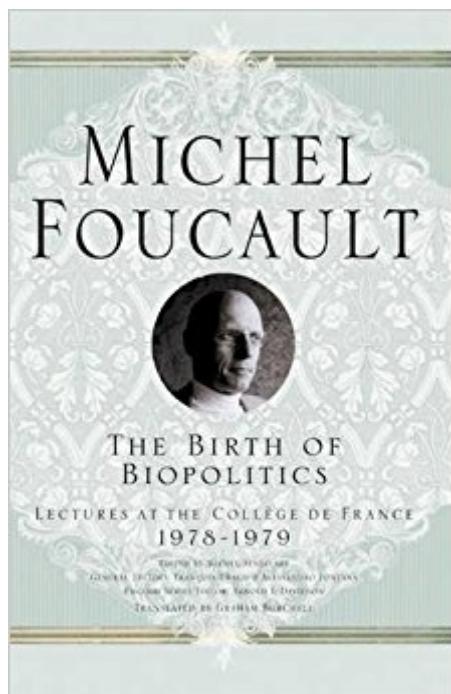


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The Birth Of Biopolitics: Lectures At The College De France, 1978-1979 (Lectures At The Collège De France)



Synopsis

this liberal governmentality.Â This involves describing the political rationality within which the specific problems of life and population were posed:Â "Studying liberalism as the general framework of biopolitics".Â What are the specific features of the liberal art of government as they were outlined in the Eighteenth century?Â What crisis of governmentality characterises the present world and what revisions of liberal government has it given rise to?Â This is the diagnostic task addressed by Foucault's study of the two major twentieth century schools of neo-liberalism:Â German ordo-liberalism and the neo-liberalism of the Chicago School.Â In the years he taught at the CollÃ"ge de France, this was Michel Foucault's sole foray into the field of contemporary history.Â This course thus raises questions of political philosophy and social policy that are at the heart of current debates about the role and status of neo-liberalism in twentieth century politics.Â A remarkable feature of these lectures is their discussion of contemporary economic theory and practice, culminating in an analysis of the model of homo oeconomicus.Â Foucault's analysis also highlights the paradoxical role played by "society" in relation to government.Â "Society" is both that in the name of which government strives to limit itself, but it is also the target for permanent governmental intervention to produce, multiply, and guarantee the freedoms required by economic liberalism.Â Far from being opposed to the State, civil society is thus shown to be the correlate of a liberal technology of government.Â Â Â

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Customer Reviews

These lectures demonstrate persuasively that the attempt to master life, especially human life, is not the legacy of Nazism or sci-fi nightmares, but the spontaneous consequence of economic liberalism in its modern form. The idea that government should intervene in society but only to establish, strengthen, and extend the market and its principles to all areas of society means that the population must be managed and even remediated or improved to ensure its members can participate productively in the market. Foucault ends these lectures, after this important demonstration, by showing how the idea of civil society is both a complement to this vision of the market economy and the motor of history that leads to potentially radical changes in politics. This book is a must-read for all serious students of Foucault, critical theory, and contemporary politics.

I bought this book in French when it was first published in 2004. At the time the topic meant very little to me in that we were living in a world that had re-elected GWB and seemed somehow to have found stability in its grandiose fantasies... House prices were up up up... The Stock market was up up up... Iraq was becoming another Vietnam ... Liberal thought was as solid a dogma as ever and not a set of evolving ideas ... We lived in a form of ideologically blocked society. 'If you're not for us...' The Security volume caught my attention. Last week - after having it literally fall on my knee - I picked it up and opened it. Not only was it fascinating but it helped me understand better the thinking behind the world that fell apart these past six months. A great read and his developments on liberalism are clear and brilliant!

I am a historian doing researches on the economic and legal development in Chinese early modern history. Reading Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics* is a wonderful experience, I learned a lot and cannot help but to think that the dialectics between "external politics" and "internal politics" in Europe from 17thc on may probably constitute an interesting and plausible comparative framework against the deployment of statecraft project in the sixteenth to eighteenth century China.

This book is a collection of lectures that Foucault gave. They are focused on the development of Neo-liberalism after World War II, in Germany and the U.S. Foucault traces the development of this theory and how it differs in Germany and the U.S. respectively. The book being a collection of his lectures, it is at times choppy when reading, because at times the recordings were not able to pick up what was being said. The editor of the book does a wonderful job at acknowledging these parts, but I did not find them detracting from the work. The editor also wrote the lectures in a way

that reproduces the lecture so that one can close their eyes and easily imagine themselves there listening to them. The analysis of Neo-Liberalism in this book is the best that I have ever read, and the depth of thought is amazing. It is not an easy read, but one that anyone interested in theory or Foucault should read. It is enjoyable and worth every penny spent.

Very good book, very actual.

A book that was due to be translated in English and provides the first attempt of Foucault to circumscribe the neoliberal enterprise.

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