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# Foucault, Simon Springer, and Postneoliberalism

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## **Introduction**

When Michel Foucault spoke of neoliberalism in his 1978-79 Biopolitics lectures at the Collège de France; he did so with the express purpose of investigating a genealogy of calculation dependent governmental tactics and practices that seek to emphasize the market, human capital, and economic statistical analysis as the key truth makers in sociopolitical institutions. The term “neoliberalism”, once limited to the vernacular of international relations and the economics of the Austrian School, had thus expanded its grid of philosophical applicability to practices of political power and social discourse<sup>1</sup>. Yet the past several years have seen a number of thinkers contend that the hegemony of neoliberalism is waning – that it is giving way to postneoliberalism<sup>2</sup>. The arguments for neoliberalism’s ‘end’ have typically found their context in the interstices of the protests and social movements in the United States post the 2008 Wall Street crash, mortgage crisis, and subsequent bankruptcy and bailout actions. On the global level these same arguments occasionally cite a weakening in neoliberal power via new political policies in Latin America and South East Asia.

Simon Springer has been one of the few to challenge contemporary postneoliberal theorization from a Foucauldian perspective. In his recent article “Postneoliberalism?” (2014), Springer argues against the inchoate theoretical underpinnings of those currently postulating an end to neoliberal power dynamics<sup>3</sup>. Springer’s nuanced criticism also serves as an attack on the empirical claims of those thinkers who, as evidence of the decline of neoliberalism and rise of postneoliberalism, point to the recent 2008 financial crisis, increased police brutality against

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<sup>1</sup> Humphreys, David. "Discourse as Ideology: Neoliberalism and the Limits of International Forest Policy." (2009) p. 320-321; Mccarthy, James, and Scott Prudham. "Neoliberal Nature and the Nature of Neoliberalism." (2004) p. 276-277.

<sup>2</sup> Ettliger, Nancy, and Christopher D. Hartmann. "Post/neo/liberalism in Relational Perspective." (2015); Peck, et al. "Postneoliberalism and Its Malcontents." (2010).

<sup>3</sup> Springer situates this argument and most of his previous critiques against neoliberalism in Foucauldian terms and using a largely Foucauldian method. See Springer (2010a) and (2012).

protestors, resistance to corporate favoritism, and derision expressed toward economic imperialism. Springer contends that these sorts of postneoliberal assertions are levied against neoliberalism as if, as a noun, “neoliberalism” represents a static and monolithic set of conditions, institutions, and policies. This approach - resonant of early Foucauldian writings on the morphology of discursive practices<sup>4</sup> and the indispensable nature of verbs in discourse<sup>5</sup> - is one in which Springer attempts to shift the static elements of “neoliberalism” as a noun to the verb “neoliberalization”. The result is an attempt to bring postneoliberalism back into the Foucauldian fold as a dynamic set of relational practices within neoliberal discourse. In Springer’s estimate, this move renders semantic distinctions between neoliberalism and postneoliberalism superfluous; which allows for cohesive theories of evaluation and resistance of neoliberalism to be formulated without the baggage of postneoliberal theorization.

I do not disagree with Springer’s methodology or archeology of post/neoliberalism, as it appears to be a functional mimesis of Foucault’s analysis of governmentality offered in his Collège de France lectures between 1977 and 1979. However, I do believe that Springer’s ontological conclusions regarding neoliberalism and the set of possible conditions under which he supposes we can find space for political emancipation within it, fall short of a true Foucauldian account of the power of neoliberal governmentality. It is couched within this characterization of neoliberalism that Springer fails to grasp the true force and adaptability of neoliberalism as postneoliberalism. What Foucault’s ontology of neoliberalism offers, contrary to Springer’s, is a more nuanced and systematically more pervasive socio-political condition in

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<sup>4</sup> Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) Specifically Chapters 1 & 3; Foucault, Michel. *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (1977) p. 199-201.

<sup>5</sup> Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1971) p. 92-96

which the spaces for political emancipation are sufficiently beyond the scope of Springer's discursive solution.

I will begin with an analysis of Springer's concept of neoliberalism and postneoliberalism; specifically where he sees problems in contemporary neoliberal scholarship, his own understanding of neoliberalism/ization, and how the 'post-' distinction becomes virtually meaningless if a more complex understanding of emancipatory practices is postulated. What will follow will be a brief account of what I see as the stronger Foucauldian position on neoliberalism and then a combined retracing of Springer's argument via Foucault's. This line of analysis will continue by exploring the deficiencies of Springer's understanding of political emancipation and resistance and how they are overtaken by the stronger Foucauldian characterization of neoliberal power. From there I will seek to show where Springer's arguments falter in the face of his own underestimation of neoliberalism. Finally I will conclude with several brief closing remarks on a curious and perhaps unintentional strength in Springer's argument, along with a brief remark on the developing research into Foucauldian counter-conducts and their potential use in the broader scheme of post/neoliberal discourse.

### **Springer's Post/Neoliberalism**

In two articles prior to "Postneoliberalism?" Springer considers the origins and structure of his concept of neoliberalism/ization<sup>6</sup> and argues that modern scholarship on the power of neoliberalism has focused on a treatment of "neoliberalism as monolithism" – that is to say it is treated as a single entity with static characteristics that can be avoided, subverted, moved

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<sup>6</sup> Springer (2010a), (2010b).

beyond, etc.<sup>7</sup> Springer argues that the tendency of authors on the subject is to relegate neoliberalism to four camps: (1) Neoliberalism as Ideological Hegemonic Project (2) Neoliberalism as Policy and Program (3) Neoliberalism as Governmentality and (4) Neoliberalism as State Form<sup>8</sup>. While Springer notes that authors tend to interconnect these four points in various ways, they are still treated in relatively discreet terms so as to render the theoretical implications and structures of neoliberalism isolated to the specific writers' treatment of the subject. The result of this style of treatment leads Springer to conclude that "each interpretation of neoliberalism does not exist in isolation"<sup>9</sup>. Neoliberalism thus, traditionally, consists of subject matter that varies by scholar, time, place, and underlying ideological commitments. Yet, for Springer, an analysis of neoliberalizing practices should rely on the ever shifting interplay between these four areas.

This shifting interplay or converse approach to neoliberalism, as opposed to discreet or monolithic interpretations, should best be conceived of as a type of discourse<sup>10</sup>. In order to facilitate this approach, the noun *neoliberalism* should instead be transfigured into *neoliberalization* as a verb. Springer supposes this more accurately depicts neoliberalism as a concatenation of shifting practices which mutate and hybridize in accordance with the discursive backdrop from which the term is deployed. "Neoliberalizing practices are thus understood as necessarily and always overdetermined, contingent, polymorphic, open to intervention... subject to counter tendencies, and in a perpetual process of becoming."<sup>11</sup> Once we have adopted this

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<sup>7</sup> This is also made explicit in Springer's "Neoliberalism as Discourse: Between Foucauldian Political Economy and Marxian Poststructuralism." (2012) p. 135-136

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 136-139, An extensive analysis of these four areas in beyond the scope of the paper – for the comparative piece by which Springer constructs his evaluation see Ward & England (2007).

<sup>9</sup> Springer (2012) p. 137

<sup>10</sup> Ibid p. 139; Springer (2014) p. 6

<sup>11</sup> Springer (2014) p. 7

dynamic understanding of “neoliberalism”<sup>12</sup> we can assess the procedures and characteristics it takes on through the polysemy it produces. In approaching neoliberalism as a discourse we no longer see it as a discreet concept which projects specific ends and limitations. At the same time, this approach gives us a target in which neoliberalizing practices can be contended *with* and emancipated *from* at a chokepoint in the process of discourse production<sup>13</sup>.

Postneoliberal scholarship has tended, according to Springer, to focus less on the process and more so on the institutional features by which neoliberalism can be resisted against “externally”. Meaning that a crisis or collapse of the variety encountered in the 2008 sub-prime mortgage and financial crisis in the United States would suggest that neoliberalism has weakened to such an extent that ‘to resist’ would be to assess the failures in market procedures and/or breakdowns in governmental institutions and suggest alternatives accordingly<sup>14</sup>. This style of treatment is tantamount to labelling neoliberalism as an ideology of tenets - which can be theoretically contradicted - or a set of policies which can be redacted, eliminated, or reconceived. Springer’s assessment of the scholarship is quite accurate – Peck, et al. see neoliberalism’s death as coming about through a resistance to globalizing effects of social and political policy<sup>15</sup> while Radcliffe has identified postneoliberalism with a “shift in development thinking and delivery to stress a rights-based articulation of individual capacities and wellbeing, nature, and resource distribution”<sup>16</sup>. In conceiving of neoliberalism in these terms, postneoliberal scholarship has tended to place discreet origins, aims, and conclusions on neoliberalizing practices. More

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<sup>12</sup> Springer (2010a), (2010b), (2011), (2012), (2014) continues to use the term “neoliberalism” after introducing the concept of neoliberalization. This is presumably done for the ease of the reader and so as to view neoliberalism as a type of multifaceted noun that symbolizes a set of discourses between neoliberalizing practices. Springer briefly laments that “our language and writing has not caught up” to this type of conceptual analysis of terms (2014, p. 7).

<sup>13</sup> Springer (2012) p. 143; Springer (2014) p. 7

<sup>14</sup> Springer (2014) p.7-9

<sup>15</sup> Peck, et al. (2010) p. 96-99

<sup>16</sup> Radcliffe, Sarah A. "Development for a Postneoliberal Era? Sumak Kawsay, Living Well and the Limits to Decolonisation in Ecuador." (2012): p. 240

importantly, thinking about neoliberalism ideologically has allowed the scholarship to conceive of a ‘post-’ that can be applied to neoliberalism in the first place. For Springer, this type of scholarship underestimates the power of neoliberalism and prematurely looks for a way out of its hegemonic potential without giving adequate consideration to its complex dynamism and adaptability.

The next step in Springer’s approach to an ‘end of neoliberalism’ qua postneoliberalism is to draw on the work of Brand & Sekler (2009), and Hendrikse & Sidaway (2010); in the claim that postneoliberalism is a neoliberalism reacting to crises – neoliberalism as a verb which denotes a set of practices is “invariably already... beyond itself.”<sup>17</sup> To explain this, Springer delves into an adaptive process called neoliberal “roll-outs”; in which neoliberalism experiences crises and either finds a solution with what it has at its disposal or undergoes a mutation of its internal socioeconomic practices so as to render a crisis productive<sup>18</sup>. This idea of postneoliberalism as ‘neoliberalism in reaction to  $x$ ’ ends up being a superfluous contention for Springer as neoliberalism, once divorced from a possible static conception, is always ‘in reaction’ to some shifting notion of policy, conduct, practice, etc. Hendrikse & Sidway note that this is the tendency of market neoliberalism as a whole; to atomize individuals while at the same time constructing complex relational pathways between participants which may have contradicting strategies<sup>19</sup>. Thus market strategies can be identified as an ambulatory series of reactions to various conditions and alliances between or against other participants in the market. Building off of this concept of market reactions – and I believe this is Springer’s point as well – neoliberalism has no specific “end” to achieve or “beginning” to necessarily refer back to. We

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 9

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 8; for more on neoliberal “roll-outs” also see McCarthy & Prudham (2004)

<sup>19</sup> Hendrikse & Sidway (2010) p. 2038-2039

cannot say, for instance, that neoliberalism began when governmental policy  $y$  was adopted or will necessarily end when market relation  $z$  concludes.

What is at stake in Springer's analysis is a normative assessment of neoliberalism and the potential for political emancipation. As has been repeatedly mentioned: postneoliberal scholarship has failed to account for the dynamic and expansive typography of neoliberalizations and, in so doing, cannot help but rediscover itself in the discourse of neoliberalism. Springer subsequently states that he wishes to "contribute to the theorizations that might enable more forceful critiques of the power of neoliberalism."<sup>20</sup> The Occupy movement for Springer served as one specific example that pointed toward the inequality inherent in neoliberal practices; the market influence and corporate favoritism that is often associated with neoliberalism; and the divisive nature of neoliberal governmental deployment that is characterized by the use violence to adjust for what it sees as "peacekeeping" against "disobedient adversaries"<sup>21</sup>.

Neoliberalizations, Springer states, "...exacerbate the concentration of wealth, reshape political sovereignty, and reorganize economies along increasingly exclusionary lines..."<sup>22</sup>

The hope is that the exploitative capitalistic underpinning of neoliberalism gives way to movements in the same vein as Occupy – movements that seek to replace the discourse of neoliberalism with a new discourse which has, as its primary concern, a more egalitarian social condition<sup>23</sup>. Springer explains that social, political, and economic resistance against neoliberalism is far from being negated in his view but is rather a completely necessary form of activity. What Occupy did, and what Springer also seeks to do is bring about neoliberal resistance via alterations in discourse – to challenge "[w]ars, famine, racism, poverty,

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<sup>20</sup> Springer (2012) p. 135

<sup>21</sup> Springer (2010b) p. 549

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 553

<sup>23</sup> Springer (2012) p. 142

environmental destruction, forced eviction, alienation, social exclusion, homelessness, inequality, violence, and recurrent economic crises [that] are the footprints of neoliberalism's ever more capricious gait..."<sup>24</sup>.

While I am sympathetic to Springer's normative position, I find it to be summarily vague and consisting of overly broad accusations against a series of practices which we are assuming constitute neoliberalizations. Further still I believe that while Springer's goal is a noble one – to change our sociopolitical world into something of a more radically democratized and egalitarian project<sup>25</sup> – I am not entirely convinced his treatment of neoliberalism is sufficient enough to provide the means by which we can arrive at such conclusions. Rather, I propose that a firm investigation into Michel Foucault's treatment of neoliberalism lends a more helpful take on how to understand a potential 'end' or at least how to best conceive of the sheer scope and power of whatever postneoliberalism - something 'beyond' neoliberalism – is in practice.

### **Foucault and Neoliberalism**

The Foucauldian basis for Springer's analysis of post/neoliberalism primarily occurs in Foucault's lecture series on Biopolitics and Governmentality<sup>26</sup>. While Foucault himself never actually uses the word "postneoliberalism" he does introduce a method of understanding neoliberalism which I believe is remarkably similar to Springer's assessment of neoliberalization. What will follow is a brief layout of the similarities I see between Springer's discursive neoliberalization and Foucault's characterization of neoliberalism. I will then discuss Springer's portrayal of the dynamic nature of neoliberalism in relation to the Foucauldian

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<sup>24</sup> Springer, (2014) p.12

<sup>25</sup> Springer, (2011)

<sup>26</sup> Michel Foucault "Security, Territory, Population" (2007), "The Birth of Biopolitics" (2008)

position of expanding governmentality. I contend that the more comprehensive Foucauldian outlook demonstrates how expansive and dynamic neoliberal practices actually are. This will lead into my criticism of Springer's treatment of the 'end of neoliberalism', and what I see as several contradictions in his argument.

In his methodological explication of neoliberalism Foucault, much like Springer, contended that neoliberalism is not something that should be approached with regards to notions of beginnings and endings. Therefore, building off scholars such as McNay (2009)<sup>27</sup> and Erlenbusch (2013)<sup>28</sup>, it is a mistake to conceive of neoliberalism absent its relation liberalism<sup>29</sup>. Not because of any inherent distinctions in the outcomes of their respective governmental practices or to pose the former as the specific origin of the latter, but rather to draw attention to how practices are deployed in reaction to shifts in the structure of governmentality<sup>30</sup>. What alters this deployment of governmental practices and thereby serves as the caesura between liberalism and neoliberalism is a respite in the adoption of certain truths within governmental institutions; truths that were characterized by notably socialist and Keynesian policies. It was from this respite that central veridical claims of liberalism reemerged within the jurisdiction of politico-economic practices under the name of neoliberalism. This reinstated variation of liberalism was one which could now compensate for the issues inherent in centralizing governmental practices around juridical and sovereign power that had led interventionist episodes in the forms of Keynesian policies in the US and Nazism in Germany<sup>31</sup>. Neoliberal governmentality was the

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<sup>27</sup> McNay, L. "Self as Enterprise: Dilemmas of Control and Resistance in Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics*." (2009) p. 57-63

<sup>28</sup> Erlenbusch, Verena. "The Place of Sovereignty." (2013) p. 60-61

<sup>29</sup> Foucault, Michel "The Birth of Biopolitics" (2008) p. 25-48; 150-172 – much of Foucault's treatment of liberalism is scattered throughout the book, but discussions of liberalism are clearly visible in his set up to German ordoliberalism and the American build-up to Keynesian economics and subsequent shift to neoliberalism.

<sup>30</sup> Oksala, Johanna "Violence and Neoliberal Governmentality" (2011) p. 476-477

<sup>31</sup> Foucault (2008) p. 189-193

reaction of shifting the juridical framework of the state to a secondary, yet still necessary role which would be informed by economic reason. Liberalism-in-reaction qua neoliberalism rendered the original liberal legalistic framework subject to economic indicators and market competition<sup>32</sup>.

Subsequently the central features of liberalism manifest as *neoliberalism* are, at least in Foucault's terminology, similar to Springer's characterization of neoliberalizations – they are multifaceted, dynamic, and mobile but features that can still be assessed as a sort of interplay between processes and institutions. For Foucault a study of neoliberal governmentality meets the same criteria by which one can analyze penal institutions or psychiatric hospitals – that is to say that the study should seek to understand the jurisdiction of the practices and the site of veridiction by which those practices operationalize and elucidate what is conditionally true<sup>33</sup>. Johanna Oksala in speaking of Foucault clarifies what I believe is a good approach to neoliberalism's jurisdiction: “The aim of neoliberal governmentality is to create social conditions that not only encourage and necessitate natural competitiveness and self-interest, but that produce them.”<sup>34</sup> It does not seem problematic to map this aim onto Springer's fluid concept of neoliberalization as practice. In addition, I do not believe this notion of jurisdiction undermines Springer's point to avoid treating neoliberalism as monolithic – jurisdiction is the lacuna in which social objectives themselves can manifest rather than assigning static objectives and ends to neoliberalism as a universalized concept.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid p. 293-297; Terranova (2009) p. 237-239

<sup>33</sup> Foucault (2008) p. 32-36

<sup>34</sup> Nilsson, Jakob, Sven-Olov Wallenstein *Foucault, Biopolitics, and Governmentality*. Huddinge: Södertörn U, (2013). p. 58 - Specifically see, Johanna Oksala's contributed piece "Neoliberalism and Biopolitical Governmentality" p. 53-73

As far as a Foucauldian understanding of veridiction is concerned; there is nothing at odds with Springer's concern for neoliberalism as monolithism – in fact Springer's characterization of neoliberalism looks quite strong here. Veridiction is to be found within market relations (Terranova, 2009; Oksala 2013) – or rather: the principals of the market “mark out” a reality<sup>35</sup> in which we can verify or falsify certain knowledges behind practices and, in doing so, allow us to justify aims and functions (jurisdiction) with what can be verified as true<sup>36</sup>. This understanding of the market as the site of veridiction is exactly the type of adaptability that Springer observes in his analysis of neoliberalism. There is no one specific market crises which can befall a dynamic rendition of neoliberalism that sees the cyclical movement of the market itself as the instrument of truth. Crises – perhaps better described as unpredictable social, political, and economic fluctuations -, as Springer notes<sup>37</sup> in accordance with Foucault<sup>38</sup>, sit at the very basis of the context in which of neoliberal governmentality has developed.

If we are to consider neoliberalism as having its foundations in crisis, than Springer's assessment of postneoliberalism's shortcomings has quite a bit in common with Foucault's explication of the nigh-inescapable power of neoliberalism. Indeed, I believe that this contention of neoliberalism as crises is not altogether inaccurate – the difficulty, however, arises from Springer's lack of consideration as to the sheer force that such an analysis carries with it. Postneoliberal scholarship has struggled, in Springer's estimate, because it has focused on a conception of neoliberalism as a monolithic and static entity, but I believe that Springer does not

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<sup>35</sup> For a more detailed note on the Foucauldian ontology of governmental regimes of truth “marking reality” see Foucault (2007) p. 46-49; 108.

<sup>36</sup> Foucault (2008) p. 53 Presented as one of the formative aspects of liberalism, p. 240 as American neoliberalism's tendency to appropriate economic truths derived from the market to non-market areas.

<sup>37</sup> Springer (2014) p. 7

<sup>38</sup> Foucault (2007) p. 37; (2008) p. 195-197, 216

push this point hard enough. For Foucault, neoliberalism's jurisdiction is constantly expanding and shifting; finding new areas of reality to demarcate via economic rationality which can be carried forward into new, aleatory "non-rational conducts" and areas outside of market analysis<sup>39</sup>.

To be blunt: if Foucault's treatment of neoliberalism's power in terms of veridiction and jurisdiction meshes with Springer's – and I believe it does – then neoliberalism cannot be challenged by merely expanding its conceptualization into a form of discourse. This is a categorical mistake – this is the deployment of neoliberalism into a new realm of discussion. A discursive expansion is just that - an expansion of the scope of jurisdiction that adds to strength of neoliberalism; Springer has done less to assess the potential *end* of neoliberalism and instead furthered its potential *ends* as a field of discourse. In transforming neoliberalism into the verb form "neoliberalization" Springer allows, in Foucauldian terms, for an increasingly possible expansion into non-economic processes, relations, practices, behaviors, and domains by way of economic analysis<sup>40</sup>. Springer's argument against postneoliberalism and intertwined analysis of neoliberalism does little else than expand neoliberal veridical criteria into the realm of possible emancipatory discourse. His argument carries neoliberalism beyond a previous version of itself - exactly as we saw Springer observe above in his address of the false dichotomy between postneoliberalism and neoliberalism. The problem then lies in his conclusion that "neoliberalism may be essentially *dead* [additional emphasis added] as an intellectual product..." - since in appropriating new dynamic areas to study neoliberalism as discourse Springer has either fed his theoretical "zombie" or revived it<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Foucault (2008) p. 269-270

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 243

<sup>41</sup> Springer (2014) p. 12

As briefly mentioned above there is also the concern of Springer's normative critique of what is at stake in an emancipation from neoliberalism. What made the question of postneoliberalism so problematic for Springer was that such a notion, as it was approached in scholarship, missed the mark and thus failed to move us any closer to the scholars' intended sense of emancipation from neoliberal practices. Here "emancipation" is understood as a "perpetual contestation of the alienating effects of contemporary neoliberalization."<sup>42</sup> As we have already seen these alienating effects are wide spread, vague, and subsequently capable of being applied to any governmentality or historical regime of power rather than solely neoliberalism. For this very reason I propose that Springer's argument against a conception of neoliberalism as monolithic can be turned against his normative theory. Springer's normative position views neoliberalism as a universalized, hegemonic force which, somehow - despite its dynamic characterization - creates curiously discreet and static effects (and a seemingly large number of them at that). In fact, it seems reasonable to conclude that given the sheer range of Springer's potential alienating effects of neoliberalism; we are left with a type of monolithic normative conception of neoliberalism that functions as little more than a grand source of all great political, social, and economic ills and inequalities we can identify.

## **Conclusion**

As unsatisfying as it may be, the objective of this paper was not to serve as a bastion of hope for a possible recapitulation of postneoliberal theory; or even offer a new method of emancipation from and beyond neoliberalism. Instead the goal has been fairly modest. I have sought to break down Springer's argument regarding neoliberalism and its potential end both in

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<sup>42</sup> Springer (2011) p. 525

terms of his analysis and normative discussion. I contended that Foucault offers a stronger analysis of neoliberalism; by that I mean its strength is underestimated by Springer. While I do not disagree with Springer in the areas of methodology and find large portions of his analysis in complete compatibility with a Foucauldian study of neoliberalism, I believe that Springer's argument falls short in three interconnected ways. (1) he fell short of pushing the claim of 'neoliberalism beyond itself' to its maximum (and possibly optimal) extent and thus did not grasp its power to mutate, adapt, and account for alterations; because of this (2) he has failed to evaluate his method in terms of a Foucauldian understanding of neoliberal veridiction and jurisdiction which, correspondingly, renders said method as another just form of neoliberalization, and finally (3) his normative critique of neoliberalism as postneoliberalism results in the creation of the exact type of monolithic and static conception he sought to avoid.

While an in-depth analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, I would briefly like to observe a subversive strength in Springer's argument. I believe that Springer distinguishes himself from the rest of postneoliberal or emancipatory scholarship by attempting to approach neoliberalism 'internally'. Carl Death (2010) suggests that "counter-conducts<sup>43</sup>... bring new visibilities, knowledges, techniques, and identities into being while reinforcing existing practices and mentalities of government."<sup>44</sup> I believe that Springer, is attempting to offer a position that loosely resembles a counter-conduct. This form of internal debate about neoliberalism may indeed strengthen neoliberalism in broader non-economic areas, but at the same time might internally promote a discussion that alters how neoliberal governmentality conceives of the conduct of individuals<sup>45</sup>. Internal approaches can potentially strengthen and coax the practices of

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<sup>43</sup> Foucault (2007) p. 196-202. Counter-conducts are, roughly speaking, a Foucauldian type of internal resistance

<sup>44</sup> Death, Carl. "Counter-conducts: A Foucauldian Analytics of Protest." (2010) p. 236

<sup>45</sup> Davidson, Arnold I. "In Praise of Counter Conducts" (2011), p. 26-29

neoliberalism into new discursive conceptions of areas Springer finds normatively valuable: namely greater levels of equality and less alienating socioeconomic conditions. This area of counter-conducts has only recently come to the forefront of scholarship on Foucauldian resistance (Cadman 2009, Davidson 2011, Ball & Olmedo 2012) and hopefully we will see expanded study on its connection with neoliberal emancipation in time.

While neoliberalism may not collapse due to a sudden crises or redaction of some specific set of policies, it seems – on Springer’s account - it can be blamed for nearly any social ill we can conceive and thus serve as an endless excuse for resistances from any angle. I agree with Carl Death’s brief assessment of Foucault on the matter:

we need to escape the dilemma of being either for or against. One can, after all, be face to face, and upright. Working with a government doesn’t imply either a subjection or a blanket acceptance. One can work with and be intransigent at the same time. I would even say that the two things go together.<sup>46</sup>

Neoliberalism itself is a set of practices; those practices shift and mutate in direct proportion to the various relations between individuals, institutions, and market conditions. As such, I think a Foucauldian account gives us an ideation of neoliberalism that not only supplants the common monolithic variety that Springer is concerned about, but goes one step further than Springer’s own supposedly non-monolithic rendition. The mere possibility for emancipation, in so far as there is something like it in terms of neoliberal governmentality, can only exist if we take to studying neoliberalism in terms of its sheer complexity, reach, and influence. Foucault did not underestimate neoliberalism, but rather sought to analyze its expansive jurisdiction and

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<sup>46</sup> This selected quote from *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 Vol, 3* was found in Death (2010) p. 249

veridiction; in agreement with Springer I believe we should not try to rush into a discussion of postneoliberalism but rather, at least for now, seek to continue and deepen the Foucauldian project of analysis.

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