
European



Doctorate

Seminars

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Routledge, London, 1995

Governmentality and Culture Theoretical and Historical Approaches

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Με την υποστήριξη του



Government and Culture

Theoretical and Historical approaches

My purpose in this presentation is to develop a set of theoretical and historical arguments concerning the relationships between culture and government. I shall do so by drawing on the perspective of governmentality initially proposed by Michel Foucault and since developed into a wide-reaching body of work that focuses on the ways in which particular knowledges and apparatuses interact in programmes directed at what Foucault called the 'conduct of conduct'. Governmentality theory is thus concerned with how agents of various kinds (governments, scientific and learned associations, institutions) seek to mobilise specific forms of knowledge in specific contexts in order to influence how the members of the population – or of specific sections of it – conduct themselves.

What implications does this perspective have for the study of culture? I shall argue that these are best identified in terms of a historically specific – but mutable and dynamic - set of relations between culture and the social represented by what I call the 'culture complex'. I mean by this a network of interacting knowledges (the cultural disciplines of art history, literary studies, aesthetics, heritage studies, archaeology, folk studies, etc) and apparatuses (museums, art galleries, heritage sites, archives, libraries, the cinema, broadcasting, national and international cultural policy agencies) whose practices have resulted in the development of distinctive forms of cultural action on the social linked to the development of governmental forms of power. I shall illustrate this perspective with particular reference to how museums operate as the sites for particular forms of knowledge and expertise which shape the cultural resources brought together in them in order to shape and order social and civic conduct in specific ways.

Tony Bennett