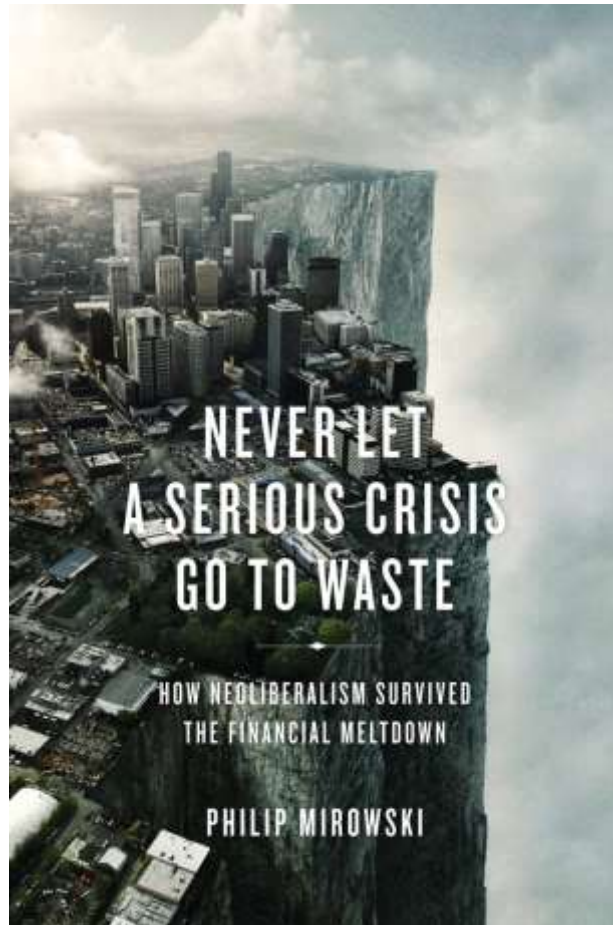


# Everyday neoliberalism and the entrepreneurial self

Jacob Zonneberg

*Never let a serious crisis go to waste*  
Philip Mirowski



# The neoliberal universe

- Neoliberalism is a constructivist project: not a spontaneous order.
- The role of the market is redefined as either the ultimate information processor – the only way to determine what people really want; as state organized competition; or in line with neoclassical views, leaving vague what the market is and concentrating on what it should do.
- Despite its constructivism it is portrayed as best fitting human nature, leading to hybrid forms of science like evolutionary psychology, neuro-economics and network sociology. The market is the instrument that processes all types of information, not just consumer desires.
- The neoliberal project doesn't want to push back the state, but reshape its form and function. Democracy can be an obstacle if a majority decides against neoliberal principles.
- Being a citizen means being a client of state services, nothing more. Politics is to be treated as a market as well.

# The neoliberal universe

- Everyone is an entrepreneur, exploiting his human capital.
- The market knows no coercion, so mo' market, mo' freedom.
- Capital has a natural right to go wherever it wants, necessitating supranational institutions to facilitate its movement (IMF, Wereldbank, WTO).
- Unequal economic means and political rights are not an unfortunate byproduct, but natural and necessary for progress.

# The neoliberal universe

- Big, market dominating corporations are not a problem. Monopolies result from misguided state interference, not some internal dynamic of capitalism.
- Every problem has a market solution, including problems caused by markets.
- Criminality of the poor must be met with criminal law. The rich, however, have so much to lose that civil law and financial settlements are sufficient.
- Neoliberals look for a moral code to embed their political and economic theories, like in their alliance with the christian right in America.

# Michel Foucault (1926-1984)

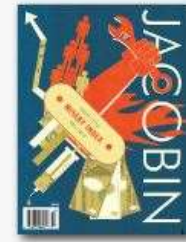
- Fragmentation of the self through the entrepreneurial self.
- Entrepreneurship as a model for all social relations, not just economical.
- Calculation of self interest is reprocessed as a warm, soulful moral economy.
- Malleability of the self down to the most elementary level of our existence, as in genetic manipulation.
- The entrepreneurial self accepts reward and punishment as an outcome of risk calculation.
- Ignorance is the natural state of humanity and guarantees the neoliberal order.

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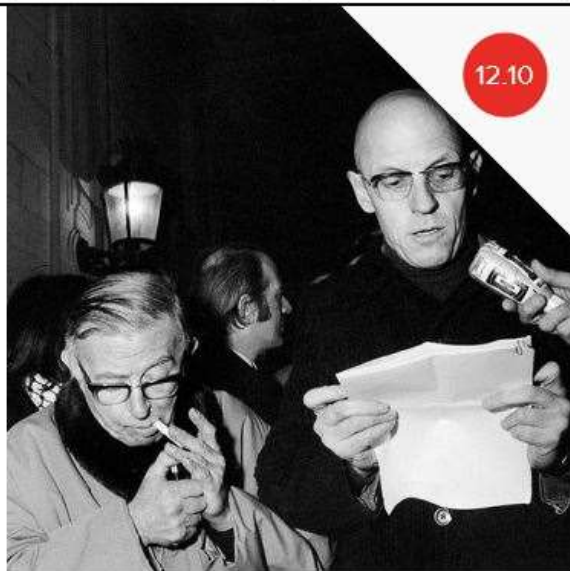
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## Can We Criticize Foucault?

Daniel Zamora

Late in life, Michel Foucault developed a curious sympathy for neoliberalism.



BOOKMARKS

*Because the internet needs a vanguard.*

Payday loans are for the children.

Content Moderation

Smells like counterrevolution.

You can be what you want, become what you want

...and if it doesn't pan out, you didn't want it enough.





# What consultants do

“It’s expanding their choices and options. So there is no false self. There’s just limited awareness and the options we have at any one time... It’s not false, it’s out of date. So they just come in for an upgrade.

My job is to create an upgrade of their life that is structured in such a way that it will have an inbuilt self-updating ability.”

# Playing entrepreneur

“Salvation through the market comes not from solidarity with any delusional social class or occupational category; but instead bold assertion of individuality through capitulation to a life of risk.”

# Everyday sadism



“The poor must bear the brunt of austerity now, because it will only get worse for them later if they do not.”



# Everyday sadism

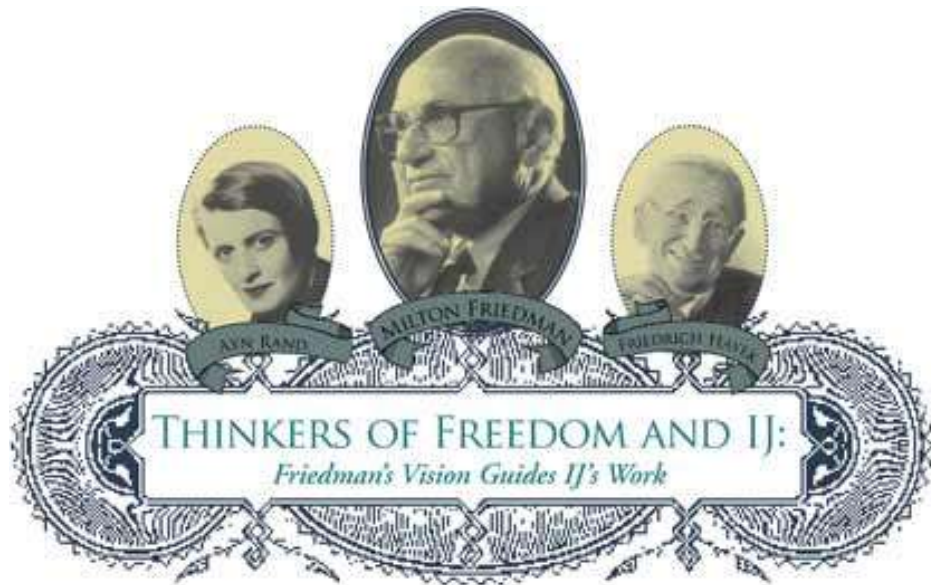
“Shock jock or shock doctrine, it cannot be written off as merely a surefire expedient to divert attention. To paint it prematurely as a cynical sideshow forecloses the option that everyday sadism [...] serves a more targeted purpose, such as teaching techniques optimized to fortify the neoliberal self.”



# First Law of Economics: For every economist, there is an equal and opposite economist.

- Economists are no better at predicting economical developments than lay people, usually they do even worse;
- Economists don't foresee economical turning points;
- No specific economist jumps out at predicting;
- Consensus among economists doesn't augment the accuracy of their prediction;
- Predictions haven't become more accurate over the last decennia.

Not only like this...



...but also like this



# Why?

1. Permanent neoliberal revolution.
2. Society is fragmented and social institutions disappeared.
3. 'Self reliance', risk and reward.
4. Hatred of the losers, adulation of the winners.
5. Training in market thinking in all aspects of human existence.
6. Thinkers of the ruling class don't fault the ruling class.
7. Only ideas that are within the liberal horizon, are acceptable.



Let them buy cake

“Laten we wél die auto kopen, laten we wél dat huis kopen, we moeten een beetje risico nemen en vertrouwen hebben.”

- Mark Rutte, 2013