The Politics of Our Selves

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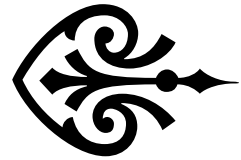

The Politics of Our Selves

Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory

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For my children
Clark
Oliver
Isabelle
and
Eloise

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The Impurity of Practical Reason

POWER AND AUTONOMY IN FOUCAULT

IN A set of lectures delivered at Dartmouth College in 1980, titled "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self," Foucault characterizes his research as a "genealogy of the modern subject."[1] Such a genealogy provides a way out of "the philosophy of the subject," a philosophical project that "sets as its task *par excellence* the foundation of all knowledge and the principle of all signification as stemming from the meaningful subject."[2] Foucault's principal targets here are Husserlian phenomenology—which he mentions explicitly in the lecture—and Sartrean existentialism—which, although not mentioned by name, is clearly on Foucault's mind when he notes that the appeal of the philosophy of the subject was enhanced by the political climate of the twentieth century.[3] In the twentieth century, the philosophy of the subject increasingly came under attack from two very different directions: analytic epistemology and structuralism. As Foucault notes with characteristic wit:

> These were not the directions I took. Let me announce once and for all that I am not a structuralist, and I confess with the appropriate chagrin that I am not an analytic philosopher—nobody is perfect. I have tried to explore another direction. I have tried to get out of the philosophy of the subject through a genealogy of the subject, by studying the constitution of

> the subject across history which has led us up to the modern concept of the self.[4]

Note that Foucault does not suggest the eradication of the concept of subjectivity, nor does he claim that the subject is a fiction or an illusion. Instead, he proposes a historical investigation of the ways in which the subject has been constituted. Thus, his complaint against the philosophy of the subject is not that it holds on to the concept of subjectivity, but that it gives the subject a foundational and constitutive role vis-à-vis knowledge and meaning. Therefore, as I argued in the previous chapter, his critique is directed not at the concept of subjectivity per se, but at a particular conception of it, namely, the transcendental-phenomenological subject.

Foucault characterizes this genealogy of the subject as "another kind of critical philosophy … a critical philosophy that seeks the conditions and the indefinite possibility of transforming the subject, of transforming ourselves."[5] Foucault distinguishes two components of this critical-genealogical project: technologies (or techniques) of domination and technologies (or techniques) of the self. The former are "techniques which permit one to determine the conduct of individuals, to impose certain wills on them, and to submit them to certain ends or objectives," whereas the latter are "techniques which permit individuals to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves, and to attain a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power, and so on."[6] Foucault argues that a critical genealogy of the modern subject must take into account both of these technologies and their interrelation and suggests that "the contact point, where the [way] individuals are driven by others is tied to the way they conduct themselves, is what we can call, I think, government."[7] Whereas he admits that his earlier work focused too narrowly on technologies of domination, he indicates that he intends in his later work to highlight technologies of the self and governmentality.[8]

In this discussion, Foucault seems to presuppose the possibility of autonomy in at least two senses of that term. First, he presupposes that individuals are capable of taking up a critical perspective on the technologies of domination and the self that are currently in use. Second, he presupposes that individuals have the capacity for deliberate transformation of these technologies. In light of Foucault's earlier work on discourse and power, however, this presupposition of autonomy has struck many of Foucault's Habermasian and feminist critics as problematic.[9] These critics maintain

that Foucault's archaeological and genealogical works undermine the ideal of autonomy, by showing that, as Fraser has put it, "the conception of freedom as autonomy is a formula for domination *tout court*."[10] McCarthy pushes this point further, arguing that this undermining of the ideal of autonomy poses problems not only at the level of Foucault's description of social practices but also at the metalevel of his genealogical methodology: "If the self-reflecting subject is nothing but the effect of power relations under the pressure of observation, judgment, control, and discipline, how are we to understand the reflection that takes the form of genealogy?" [11] McCarthy acknowledges that Foucault's late work views individuals as capable of reflecting critically on the cultural and institutional systems that organize their practices and, within limits, transforming these systems. As such, his late work "corrects the holistic bias we found in his work of the 1970s"; however, McCarthy continues, "the question now is whether he hasn't gone too far in the opposite direction and replaced it with an individualistic bias."[12] The implication is that Foucault cannot have it both ways: if his analyses of power and subjection are compelling, then autonomy is illusory (and genealogy itself is impossible); if the self is autonomous in the ways Foucault's late work suggests, then his earlier analyses of power and subjection must be wrong.

McCarthy places Foucault in this double bind in part because he misconstrues the relationship between power and subjectivity in Foucault. He assumes that Foucault's middle-period works argue that the subject is *merely* or *nothing more than* an effect of power.[13] If this were true, then the presupposition of an autonomous subject in his late work would indeed be contradictory to that project; a subject that is merely or nothing more than an effect of power would obviously be incapable of reflecting critically on relations of power and acting deliberately so as to transform them. However, as I have argued elsewhere, critics who interpret Foucault's claim that the subject is an effect of power in such strong terms have overreacted to what he actually did say.[14] In what follows, I offer a more faithful and fruitful reading of Foucault's analyses of power and subjection. Although it is no doubt true that some ways of conceiving of autonomy would contradict Foucault's analysis of power and subjection, I argue that the conception of autonomy presented in his late work does not do so. The main reason for this is that Foucault conceives of autonomy—both in the sense of the capacity for critical reflection and in the sense of the capacity for deliberate self-transformation—as always bound up with power. The result may be a somewhat less robust and more ambivalent conception of autonomy than some of Foucault's critics would prefer, but it is compatible with his analyses of power and subjection.

In order to make this case, I begin by reviewing Foucault's analyses of power and subjection. Next, I focus on the concept of governmentality, which serves as a theoretical bridge between Foucault's analysis of power and his later work on the self. When I turn to the later work, my aim is to reconstruct the implicit conception of autonomy in Foucault's late work and argue, contra his feminist and Habermasian critics, that this conception is not only compatible with but also extends in interesting and important ways his analyses of power and subjection. However, this does not mean that Foucault's conception of autonomy and the self is fully satisfactory. In the end, I argue that what is missing from Foucault's account is an appreciation for the role played by nonstrategic relations with others in the constitution of autonomous selves. Although it is common to read Foucault as denying the very possibility of reciprocity, I argue that this is not the case. Nevertheless, this idea is very underdeveloped in Foucault's work; thus, in order to develop a fully satisfactory account of power, autonomy, and the self, we will have to go beyond Foucault.

Technologies of Domination

Fraser, in her influential article on Foucault's conception of power, accuses Foucault of "call[ing] too many different sorts of things power and simply leav[ing] it at that."[15] It is undoubtedly true that Foucault does not distinguish in a careful or consistent manner between power and such related notions as domination, force, and violence. Indeed, he admits as much in a late interview, when he says that "all these concepts have been ill defined, so that one hardly knows what one is talking about. I am not even sure if I made myself clear, or used the right words, when I first became interested in the problem of power."[16] Foucault's tendency to be imprecise with his terminology poses some problems for the commentator. For example, in many of his discussions of power, including the Dartmouth lectures, Foucault uses the terms "power" and "domination" interchangeably.[17] However, in one of his late interviews, he takes care to distinguish between power and domination, using the term "power" to refer to unstable, reversible, microlevel force relations and "domination" to refer to broader, systemic, macrolevel asymmetries of power.[18] When Foucault speaks of "technologies of domination," he seems to be understanding "domination" in the wider sense of the term, the sense in which it is interchangeable with "power." Thus, for now, I will follow Foucault in this usage.[19]

The best way to approach Foucault's notion of technologies of domination, then, is through his conception of power. The first thing to note

about this conception is that Foucault understands power not as a substance, but as a relation. In his 1975–1976 lecture course, *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault credits the eighteenth-century French historian Henri Comte de Boulainvilliers with this insight. He claims that Boulainvilliers "defined the principle of what might be called the relational character of power: power is not something that can be possessed, and it is not a form of might; power is never anything more than a relationship that can, and must, be studied only by looking at the interplay between the terms of that relationship."[20] Like Arendt, then, Foucault maintains that "[power] is something that is exercised and that it exists only in action."[21]

So power is a relation, but what kind of relation is it? Initially, one might think of power as a relation of repression in which one individual or group of individuals thwarts or blocks the desires and aims of another individual or group of individuals. Foucault, by contrast, argues that "the widespread notion of repression cannot provide an adequate description of the mechanisms and effects of power, cannot define them."[22] Foucault makes this case in detail in volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality*, where he argues that the extraordinary proliferation of discourses concerning sexuality during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reveals the falsity of the hypothesis that sexuality in contemporary Western societies is simply or straightforwardly repressed. And yet it seems obvious that power and sexuality are intricately intertwined in such societies, so it must be the case that with respect to sexuality, power cannot be explained solely or even primarily in terms of repression. Foucault views sexuality as a privileged example, "since power seemed in this instance, more than anywhere else, to function as prohibition";[23] thus, the debunking of the repressive hypothesis with respect to sexuality is enough to compel us to search for new ways of analyzing power that do not understand it as a relation of repression. Power, for Foucault, is a relation of production; as he puts it, "we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes,' it 'represses,' it 'censors,' it 'abstracts,' it 'masks.' In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth."[24] Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis should not, however, be taken to mean that he thinks that power never functions repressively; he acknowledges that it often does so. He insists, however, that repression is not the sole or even the primary form that relations of power take.[25]

Rather than analyzing power in terms of repression, Foucault conceives of it as a strategic relation; hence, his account might most appropriately be referred to as the strategic model of power.[26] When Foucault defines power in terms of strategic relations, he seems to have at least two points

in mind: first, that power relations involve a confrontation or struggle between opposing forces; second, that there is an instrumentalist logic to these confrontations or struggles, such that each party to the struggle is concerned with getting the other to do what he/she wants. The strategic nature of power is evident in Foucault's definition of "technologies of domination"; as I noted above, technologies of domination "permit one to determine the conduct of individuals, to impose certain wills on them, and to submit them to certain ends or objectives." This emphasis on strategy, force, and struggle is also evident in the definition of "power relations" that Foucault offers in volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality*:

> Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions or contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies.[27]

Despite the other shifts in emphasis and approach between the middle and the late Foucault, the definition of power in terms of strategic relations remains constant. For instance, in an interview conducted in January 1984, just a few months before his death, Foucault defines "power" as "the strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others."[28]

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault articulates his strategic model of power by contrasting it with the juridical model of power, the predominant conception of power in traditional political philosophy. In this conception, power is understood in terms of law, and the main question is whether an exercise of power by the sovereign is legitimate or illegitimate. According to Foucault, the juridical conception presents power "as a right which can be possessed in the way one possesses a commodity, and which can therefore be transferred or alienated, either completely or partly, through a juridical act or an act that founds a right—it does not matter which, for the moment—thanks to the surrender of something or thanks to a contract."[29] Foucault rejects the juridical conception of power on conceptual, normative, and historical grounds. His conceptual point is simply that it is a mistake to conceive of power as something that can

be possessed, transferred, or withheld. His normative point is that talk of legitimate and illegitimate uses of power by the sovereign obscures the relations of domination that underwrite and make possible sovereignty. As he puts it,

> I have been trying … to stress the fact of domination in all its brutality and its secrecy, and then to show not only that right is an instrument of that domination—that is self-evident—but also how, to what extent, and in what form right (and when I say right, I am not thinking just of the law, but of all the apparatuses, institutions, and rules that apply it) serves as a vehicle for and implements relations that are not relations of sovereignty, but relations of domination.[30]

Foucault's point here is not the obvious one that sovereign or juridical power can be used in the service of domination; instead, he is making the more radical claim that sovereignty itself—that is to say, the law and the institutions that apply and enforce it—is a mechanism of domination. Traditional political philosophy, with its discourses of right and sovereignty and its adherence to the juridical model of power, obscures this fact.

Foucault's justification for these conceptual and normative claims is connected to his historical argument, which centers on his contention that although the juridical conception may have been an appropriate way of conceiving of power relations in premodern, feudal societies, it is not appropriate for conceptualizing the power relations that are central to modern societies.[31] Foucault argues that "an important phenomenon occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries: the appearance—one should say the invention—of a new mechanism of power which had very specific procedures, completely new instruments, and very different equipment. It was, I believe, absolutely incompatible with relations of sovereignty."[32] Foucault calls this new mechanism "disciplinary power," and he maintains that it "cannot be described or justified in terms of the theory of sovereignty. It is radically heterogeneous and should logically have led to the complete disappearance of the great juridical edifice of the theory of sovereignty."[33] Curiously, however, the emergence of disciplinary power has not had this result; instead, in the modern era, sovereignty has been superimposed on disciplinary power. According to Foucault, modern "juridical systems, no matter whether they were theories or codes, allowed the democratization of sovereignty, and the establishment of a public right articulated with collective sovereignty, at the very time when, to the extent that, and because the democratization of sovereignty was heavily ballasted by the mechanisms of disciplinary coercion."[34]

Simply put, in the modern era, sovereignty and discipline "necessarily go together."[35]

But what exactly is the relation between sovereignty and disciplinary power? In what way is the democratization of sovereignty stabilized and supported by mechanisms of disciplinary coercion? Why, in other words, does sovereignty need disciplinary power in order to function in the modern era? Foucault's answer is that disciplinary power provides the social cohesion necessary for sovereignty to function. As he puts it, "we have then in modern societies, on the one hand, a legislation, a discourse, and an organization of public right articulated around the principle of sovereignty of the social body and the delegation of individual sovereignty to the State; and we also have a tight grid of disciplinary coercions that actually guarantees the cohesion of that social body."[36] Without disciplinary power, Foucault suggests, there would be no cohesive social body that could either delegate its rights to self-governance to a sovereign, as in Hobbesian social contract theory, or engage in the practice of collective will formation and self-governance, as in Rousseauian theories of popular sovereignty. In both cases, Foucault maintains:

> The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines.... The disciplines provide, at the base, a guarantee of submission of forces and bodies. The real, corporal disciplines constituted the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties.[37]

Despite this synergy of disciplinary power and sovereign power in the modern era, Foucault insists that the juridical conception of power is useless for illuminating disciplinary power inasmuch as it is "utterly incongruous with the new methods of power whose operation is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus."[38] If we are to understand and critique disciplinary power relations, we must break free of the conception of power as sovereignty; we must, as Foucault famously put it, cut off the head of the king.

Of these three criticisms of the juridical conception of power, the historical point is the most decisive, for both the conceptual and normative arguments rest upon it. Foucault's normative criticism makes sense only in conjunction with his historical claim, since the plausibility of his nor-

mative critique of the quasi-ideological function played by the juridical conception of power rests on that of the historical story that he tells about the emergence of disciplinary power in the modern era. Foucault's conceptual claim that power should be thought of as a relation rather than a substance rests on his historical story as well, though in a less obvious way. In the abstract, it is hard to imagine how the conceptual dispute over whether power is a substance or a relation could be settled. One might be tempted to settle it by appealing to metaphysical claims about the nature of power; indeed, Foucault has an unfortunate tendency to succumb to this temptation and to make overly broad claims about the nature of power that leave him vulnerable to this reading. However, such metaphysical claims obviously go against his general postmetaphysical commitments. Moreover, an ahistorical, metaphysical claim about the relational nature of power would be difficult to reconcile with Foucault's acknowledgment that the juridical model of power *is* appropriate for theorizing premodern forms of power. If, however, we connect the conceptual claim to the historical one, then it becomes clear that Foucault's point is not metaphysical but methodological: in light of certain historical developments, power is best understood as a relation rather than as a thing; conceiving of it in this way allows us to understand aspects of the modern world that would otherwise remain obscure. Of course there is a substantive component to this methodology in the sense that it rests on certain assumptions about how power in fact functions in modern Western societies—presumably what makes certain methodologies more appropriate than others is that they do a better job of making sense of the way the social world is—but these assumptions are grounded sociohistorically, not metaphysically. As Foucault puts it, in response to the question of whether we need a "theory" of power: "since a theory assumes a prior objectification, it cannot be asserted as a basis for analytical work. But this analytical work cannot proceed without an ongoing conceptualization. And this conceptualization implies critical thought—a constant checking."[39] An appeal to the nature of power would likewise assume a "prior objectification"; instead, Foucault offers an analysis of power that is informed by the social world that it aims to conceptualize.

The following conceptual and methodological propositions provide a useful summary of Foucault's account of modern power. First, power is not restricted to the sovereign or the state but is instead spread throughout the social body. Thus, when we study power, we ought to look for it at the extremities of the social body, at the points where it becomes "capillary."[40] Second, power comes from below, which is to say that it is generated in the myriad mobile force relations that are spread throughout

the social body.[41] Thus, when we study power, we should not view it, at least not initially, as "a phenomenon of mass and homogeneous domination"[42] or as a "binary and all-encompassing opposition between ruler and ruled."[43] Foucault does not deny that wide-ranging, systematic relations of domination exist;[44] indeed, the more restricted use of the term "domination" that I discussed above is an attempt to capture such broad, structural asymmetries of power. However, he does insist that these are best understood not as the *causes* but as the *results* of the power relations that are spread throughout the social body; thus, our analysis of power should be ascending rather than descending.[45] Finally, power relations are "intentional and non-subjective."[46] By "intentional," Foucault means that power relations have a point or an aim, that they are directed toward a certain end, by "non-subjective," that they are neither possessed nor controlled by individual subjects.[47] Thus, rather than attempting to discern the intentions of the one who "has" power, an attempt that would lead us "into a labyrinth from which there is no way out," we should investigate "the multiple peripheral bodies, the bodies that are constituted as subjects by power-effects."[48] In other words, rather than viewing power as subjective—as possessed by a subject—we should view the subject as constituted by power.

This last point brings us to Foucault's account of subjection (*assujettissement*). Whereas the juridical conception of power presupposes "an individual who is naturally endowed … with rights, capabilities, and so on"[49] and then asks under what circumstances it is legitimate for such a subject to be subjugated by the state, Foucault, by contrast, proposes to "begin with the power relationship itself, with the actual or effective relationship of domination, and see how that relationship itself determines the elements to which it is applied. We should not, therefore, be asking subjects how, why, and by what right they can agree to being subjugated, but showing how actual relations of subjugation manufacture subjects."[50] Foucault's aim is to uncover the "immense labor to which the West has submitted generations in order to produce … men's subjection: their constitution as subjects in both senses of the word."[51]

As I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, many of Foucault's critics have interpreted the claim that subjects are constituted by or are effects of power as implying that autonomy is a mere illusion. Thus, more than any other, it is this claim that raises the specter of a contradiction between Foucault's analysis of power and his later account of technologies of the self. But consider the following passage, which offers one of the earliest and most nuanced of Foucault's discussions of subjection:

> It is . . . , I think, a mistake to think of the individual as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom or some multiple, inert matter to which power is applied, or which is struck by a power that subordinates or destroys individuals. In actual fact, one of the first effects of power is that it allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual. The individual is not, in other words, power's opposite number; the individual is one of power's first effects. The individual is in fact a power-effect, and at the same time, to the extent that he is a power-effect, the individual is a relay: power passes through the individuals it has constituted.[52]

On the juridical conception of power, the individual itself is unsullied by power relations, an "elementary nucleus" or a "primitive atom" on or against which power is applied. Foucault, by contrast, aims to illuminate how power shapes our very individuality. However, he insists that this does not mean that individuals are merely or nothing more than effects of power; he explicitly rejects this idea when he says that individuals are not "inert." On the contrary, the notion that the individual is always the "relay" of power suggests that individuals play an active role in the maintenance and reproduction of power relations. They convey the power relations that make them who they are; their very individuality is a conduit for power relations. Foucault is not, then, arguing for the obliteration of subjectivity and individuality, as many of his critics have assumed. What he is suggesting is nonetheless potentially disturbing: power is (at least in part) what individuates us; thus, our individuality provides the perfect conduit for power relations. But even this disturbing conclusion does not preclude the existence of a self that is in some sense autonomous, provided that selfhood and autonomy are properly understood. Thus, as I shall discuss in more detail below, it need not contradict his account of technologies of the self.

Unfortunately, however, Foucault did not provide an explicit and detailed account of how his work on the self is to be integrated with his analysis of subjection. The closest he comes to giving such an account is in his work on the notion of government, which he describes as the "contact point" between technologies of domination and technologies of the self. Foucault's account of governmentality is a theoretical bridge between his analyses of power and his work on the self. As a result, it provides important clues as to how his analyses of power and subjection and the conception of autonomy implicit in his work on the self might fit together.

Governmentality and Governmentalization

Up to now, I have discussed only one of the two poles of modern power—disciplinary power. The reason for this is that Foucault initially presents disciplinary power as the unique form of power invented by modern societies.[53] Later, however, Foucault identifies two distinct but interrelated poles of modern power: disciplinary power and biopower.[54] Understanding these two poles and how they are related is crucial for understanding Foucault's analysis of governmentality. Disciplinary power emerges first, in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; it operates at the microphysical level and targets individual bodies. Biopower emerges later, in the latter half of the eighteenth century; it targets not individuals but populations or, in the extreme, the species as a whole. Foucault notes that this new technology of power "does not exclude disciplinary technology, but it 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."[55] The intertwining of these two technologies results in a mode of power characteristic of modern societies, a mode that is simultaneously individualizing and totalizing.

It is precisely this point—that modern power is simultaneously individualizing and totalizing—that Foucault returns to again and again in his studies of governmentality. According to Foucault, the problematic of government, which he sees as a question of "how to be ruled, how strictly, by whom, to what end, by what methods, and so on," seems "to explode in the sixteenth century."[56] The art of government that emerges in the sixteenth century involves the bottom-up and top-down integration of three levels of government: self-government, the science of which is morality; government of family, the science of which is economics; and government of the state, the science of which is politics. These levels are integrated from the bottom up in the idea that only the individual who governs himself well is fit to govern his family and his state and from the top down in the idea that a well-run state fosters well-governed families and individuals. Since both lines of continuity run through the family, the economic sphere, Foucault suggests that "the essential issue in the establishment of the art of government" is the "introduction of economy into political practice."[57] The result is that the state for the first time takes an interest in "economy" and the economic well-being of its citizens.

Thus, this sixteenth-century development sets the stage for modern biopower, which concerns itself with questions of welfare on a grand scale; eighteenth-century developments, such as the emergence of the new sci-

ence of demographics, enable biopower to flourish. From that point on, "government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, and so on."[58] Disciplinary power plays a crucial role in this new art of government; with its myriad techniques for disciplining individual bodies, disciplinary power makes possible biopower's management of populations. As Foucault puts it, "discipline was never more important or more valorized than at the moment when it became important to manage a population: the managing of a population not only concerns the collective mass of phenomena, the level of its aggregate effects, but it also implies the management of population in its depths and its details."[59] The modern state both individualizes—through the use of disciplinary techniques—and totalizes—through the management and regulation of populations; Foucault refers to the historical process through which such a state emerges as a process of governmentalization.

Foucault's Tanner Lectures trace the individualizing side of this logic back to its roots in the ancient notion of pastoral power and show how this form of power came to be incorporated into modern centralized states. The paradigm of pastoral power is the shepherd who is responsible for caring for and improving the lives of each and every member of his flock; the task of pastoral power is "to constantly ensure, sustain, and improve the lives of each and every one."[60] Foucault suggests that pastoral power has its roots in ancient Hebraic texts; much later, Christianity picks up and radically transforms the themes laid out in these texts. One of these transformations stands out as particularly significant.[61] The Christian pastoral rests on the shepherd having knowledge of each and every one of his sheep, not only of their material needs and of their sins, but also of their souls. In order to gain this knowledge, Christianity takes over and transforms two Hellenistic practices of the self—self-examination and the guidance of conscience. For the Stoics, Epicureans, and Pythagoreans, self-examination is a practice of taking stock of one's daily activities as a way of measuring one's own progress toward self-mastery, and conscience guiding is a practice of receiving advice in particularly trying circumstances. In the Christian pastoral, by contrast, self-examination becomes a technique designed to open the depths of the sheep's soul to his shepherd, and conscience guiding a permanent rather than an occasional state. The result of this transformation, according to Foucault, is "the organization of a link between total obedience, knowledge of oneself, and confession to someone else."[62]

Although Foucault acknowledges that pastoral power as an ecclesiastical institution has been seriously weakened in the modern era, the

function of pastoral power has not. In fact, it has "spread and multiplied outside the ecclesiastical institution" in the modern state, which Foucault characterizes as "a modern matrix of individualization, or a new form of pastoral power."[63] With this change in institutional context, pastoral power has once again been transformed. Whereas the objective of Christian pastoral power is to lead the flock to its salvation in the next world, modern pastoral power has more mundane objectives. Its goal is to ensure "health, well-being (that is, sufficient wealth, standard of living), security, protection against accidents" for the citizens.[64] Pastoral power is also transformed by being incorporated into the globalizing and unified power of the state over its citizens; seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theories of the police (*Polizeiwissenschaft*) provide an example of this process. Whereas we might think of the police as "an institution or mechanism functioning within the state," in this discourse, the police is viewed as "a governmental technology peculiar to the state."[65] Like the shepherd, the police is said to concern itself with the welfare of the citizens of the state; religion, health, roads, public safety, and trade all fall within its purview. The object of the police, then, is life itself. "That people survive, live, and even do better than just that: this is what the police has to ensure."[66] In so doing, the police fosters the happiness of the citizens and, thus, the unity and strength of the state. Despite an apparent tension between the aim of improving the lives of individuals and that of fostering the unity of the state, "the aim of the modern art of government" is "to develop those elements constitutive of individuals' lives in such a way that their development also fosters the strength of the state."[67] According to Foucault, this analysis shows that "right from the start, the state is both individualizing and totalitarian."[68] And the lesson to be learned by anyone who wishes to critique or oppose the modern state is that "opposing the individual and his interests to it is just as hazardous as opposing it with the community and its requirements.... Liberation can come only from attacking not just one of these two effects but political rationality's very roots."[69]

If Foucault's diagnosis of the individualizing and totalizing logic of modern state power is compelling, then every demand for state recognition of our individuality only invites the state to extend its reach even further into our lives while simultaneously consolidating its strength and power. But if liberation is not to be won through an appeal to the individual and his interests, (how) is it to be won? What would an attack on the very roots of modern political rationality look like? And, given what Foucault says about the individualizing side of the logic, (how) is such an attack even possible? Foucault provides some answers to the first two questions in the essay "The Subject and Power," where he describes contemporary

social movements as "struggles against subjection"[70] and distinguishes them from struggles against religious or ethnic domination and economic exploitation. Although he acknowledges that struggles against domination and exploitation have not disappeared, Foucault maintains that in the contemporary world, struggles against subjection have taken center stage. The reason for this is that the incorporation of pastoral power into the modern Western states has resulted in a "government of individualization," a form of power that "applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects."[71] Struggles against subjection "are not exactly for or against the 'individual'"; instead, they are struggles against the logic of subjection and the government of individualization itself.[72]

But how are such struggles against subjection themselves possible, especially in light of Foucault's account of the individualizing side of modern power? In other words, if modern power functions through the very shaping of individuality, then how is resistance to such power possible at all, given that this resistance will of necessity be carried out by individuals who have been constituted by power? In the essay "What Is Critique?" Foucault provides the beginnings of an answer to this question and, at the same time, anticipates the direction of his later work on technologies of the self. Although the modern era is one of progressive governmentalization, it is also the age of the symmetrical but inverse notion of critique; despite—indeed because of—the explosion of discourse concerning the art of government in the modern period, there also emerges a discourse that asks how not to be governed, a discourse of critique. As Foucault puts it:

> If governmentalization is really this movement concerned with subjugating individuals in the very reality of a social practice by mechanisms of power that appeal to a truth, I will say that critique is the movement through which the subject gives itself the right to question truth concerning its power effects and to question power about its discourses of truth. Critique will be the art of voluntary inservitude, or reflective indocility. The essential function of critique would be that of desubjectification in the game of what one could call, in a word, the politics of truth.[73]

If subjection (*assujettissement*) is one of the principal mechanisms through which modern power operates, then to struggle for liberation will require us "to refuse what we are," to refuse to capitulate to the logic of subjection, to engage in a critical desubjectification.[74]

Does Foucault's call for a critical desubjectification imply a wholesale rejection of the concept of subjectivity? Is he then guilty of embracing the death of the subject after all? The answer to both of these questions, I think, is no. "Desubjectification," for Foucault, does not imply a wholesale rejection of the concept of subjectivity. Indeed, the word that is translated "desubjectification" in the passage quoted above is *désassujettissement*, a more consistent translation of which might be "desubjection."[75] With this notion, Foucault calls instead for breaking the link between subjectivity and subjection, disconnecting "the growth of capabilities" from "the intensification of power relations."[76] In other words, he calls for a radical reconceptualization of individuality and subjectivity. As he puts it, "we have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries."[77] Foucault's work on practices or technologies of the self constitutes his attempt to reconceptualize, not eradicate, subjectivity.[78] As Foucault says in response to an interviewer who asks, "But you have always 'forbidden' people to talk to you about the subject in general?":

> No, I have not "forbidden" them. Perhaps I did not explain myself adequately. What I rejected was the idea of starting out with a theory of the subject—as is done, for example, in phenomenology and existentialism—and, on the basis of this theory, asking how a given form of knowledge was possible.... I had to reject a priori theories of the subject in order to analyze the relationships that may exist between the constitution of the subject ... and games of truth, practices of power, and so on. [79]

In the sixteenth-century discourses that inspired Foucault's notion of governmentality, government "did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick.... To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others."[80] Governmentality in this broad sense thus provides a way of understanding power—which involves determining the conduct of others—while preserving a space for freedom—which is implicit in the idea of technologies of the self. As Foucault puts it, "those who try to control, determine, and limit the freedom of others are themselves free individuals who have at their disposal certain instruments they can use to govern others. Thus, the basis for all this is freedom, the relationship of the self to itself and the relationship to the other."[81]

Technologies of the Self

Foucault's aim in developing his account of technologies of the self, which consists of detailed explorations of the notions of practices and care of the self in ancient Greek and Greco-Roman ethical texts, is to provide some resources for challenging the government of individualization that holds sway in contemporary Western societies. But we must tread lightly here; Foucault is not suggesting that those engaged in contemporary struggles against subjection should live their lives by or organize their social movements around the precepts of ancient Greek ethics. As Foucault emphasizes in a late interview, "I am not looking for an alternative; you can't find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people."[82] However, as Veyne explains, Foucault "considered one of [Greek ethics'] elements, namely, the idea of a work of the self on the self, to be capable of reacquiring a contemporary meaning, in the manner of one of those pagan temple columns that one occasionally sees reutilized in more recent structures."[83] Greek ethics holds a particular appeal to Foucault because, unlike contemporary morality, it is not bound up with normalization. The emphasis in Greek ethics is on living a beautiful, noble, and memorable life; as a result, Greek ethics does not, indeed cannot, serve a normalizing function.[84] As Foucault puts it, "the idea of the *bios* as a material for an aesthetic piece of art is something that fascinates me. The idea also that ethics can be a very strong structure of existence, without any relation with the juridical per se, with an authoritarian system, with a disciplinary structure. All that is very interesting."[85]

Foucault begins his study of ancient ethics by distinguishing between moral codes, or rules for right action, and ethical forms of subjectivation, which concern "the manner in which one ought to form oneself as an ethical subject acting in reference to the prescriptive elements that make up the code."[86] Foucault maintains that every morality (in the broad sense of that term) consists of these two elements, either one of which might take precedence in a particular culture. Whereas moral experience in contemporary Western societies tends to be more juridified or code oriented, moral experience in ancient Greek and Rome tends to be oriented more toward forms of ethical subjectivation or practices of the self. Although the relative importance of moral codes has increased over time, Foucault claims that there is a striking continuity in the content of those codes. He identifies three moral codes related to sexuality common to Greek and Greco-Roman antiquity, the Christian Middle Ages, and modern Western societies: prohibitions against excessive sexual expenditure, extramarital sexual relations, and homosexual acts. Despite the continuity of these

moral codes, however, there are significant shifts from antiquity through Christianity up to the present in the forms of ethical subjectivation. Volumes 2 and 3 of *The History of Sexuality* chart these shifts, focusing on the "rich and complex field of historicity in the way the individual is summoned to recognize himself as an ethical subject of sexual conduct."[87]

Foucault identifies four aspects of these forms of ethical subjectivation. The first is the ethical substance, or "the part of ourselves, or of our behavior, which is relevant for ethical judgment."[88] During Greek and Greco-Roman antiquity, the ethical substance is aphrodisia, "the act linked with pleasure and desire";[89] thus, ethical judgment concerns what one does. This aspect of ethics undergoes a significant shift in the Christian era from aphrodisia to desire; ethical judgment comes to focus not on what one does but on what—or whom—one desires. The second aspect is the mode of subjection, or "the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the [moral] rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice."[90] For the Greeks, the mode of subjection is both aesthetic and political: one is obliged to follow the moral codes regarding sexuality if one wants to live a beautiful life, where living a beautiful life is necessary for those who want to rule over others. During the Hellenistic period, the mode of subjection shifts as the Stoics, for example, appeal to rationality as the source of moral obligation. And in the Christian period, the mode of subjection shifts again, from rationality to divine law. The third aspect is the ascetic practices, or practices of the self "that one performs on oneself, not only in order to bring one's conduct into compliance with a given rule, but to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one's behavior."[91] For the Greeks, this ascetic practice is bound up with the general goals of self-control and self-mastery. Greco-Roman antiquity introduces specific techniques such as self-examination and conscience guiding that are later taken up in the Christian era and transformed into self-deciphering techniques that strengthen pastoral power. The final aspect is the telos of ethics, or "the kind of being to which we aspire when we behave in a moral way."[92] For Greek and Greco-Roman antiquity, the telos of ethics is self-mastery, though for the Greeks this is associated with mastery of others, whereas for later antiquity it is associated with reciprocity. For Christianity, the telos of ethics is moral purity and immortality.

What does this account of the transformations of forms of ethical subjectivation in the ancient world and the Middle Ages have to do with Foucault's analysis of contemporary power relations? Foucault notes that the emphasis in ancient ethics on creating the self as a work of art makes the ancients' conception of the self very different from our own.[93] Christianity replaces self-creation with a self-renunciation designed to enable one to

attain spiritual purity and immortality. Thus, "the problem of ethics as an aesthetics of existence is covered over by the problem of purification. This new Christian self had to be constantly examined because in this self were lodged concupiscence and desires of the flesh. From that moment on, the self was no longer something to be made but something to be renounced and deciphered."[94] After the Enlightenment, despite the relative decline in the influence of Christianity, these themes of self-renunciation and self-deciphering do not disappear; instead, they are incorporated into the expanding juridical and disciplinary apparatus of the human sciences and the modern secular state. As a result, our own practices of the self remain markedly different from ancient aesthetics of existence.

These practices are different but not unrelated. Indeed, Foucault does not think that "the [classical] culture of the self disappeared or was covered up. You find many elements that have simply been integrated, displaced, reutilized in Christianity."[95] For example, Christianity takes up the notion of care of the self and puts it to work in pastoral power, which centers on the care of others. Similarly, as I discussed above, the Christian pastoral adopts techniques of self-examination and conscience guiding from the Stoics, Epicureans, and Pythagoreans, and it transforms these into techniques for deciphering the souls of its flock and ensuring their obedience. Something akin to these self-examination techniques survives in our own confessional practices, for example, in contemporary psychotherapy.[96] These techniques or practices are neither liberatory nor oppressive in themselves; what matters is how they are used, to what ends, and in what sorts of circumstances. Thus, they can be turned against themselves, taken up in a transformative way. Indeed, if, as Foucault argues, there is no outside to power, then resistance has to take the form of taking up existing relations of power and subjection in a transformative way. As Foucault puts this point, "we cannot jump *outside* the situation, and there is no point where you are free from all power relations. But you can always change it."[97] Thus, resistance to the government of individualization has to take the form of transforming the mechanisms of subjection from within, for example, by turning self-examination from a practice of subjection into a practice of self-mastery and freedom. On Foucault's view, the Greeks provide a model for this sort of practice, and the continuity between their techniques for attaining self-mastery and modern techniques of subjection suggests another reason that he turns to Greek ethics for resources theorizing resistance. It is not just that Greek ethics is nonnormalizing; it is also that our own modes of subjection are related, however distantly, to ancient technologies of the self. It is this continuity that makes it possible for us to recover certain elements of ancient practices of the self. Because

of this continuity, modern techniques of subjection contain the resources for their own overcoming.

Now, it would seem that in order for individuals to be capable of deliberately transforming practices of subjectivation in more emancipatory or, if you prefer, less normalizing directions, they have to be autonomous in some sense. Minimally, resistance as Foucault understands it seems to require both the capacity to reflect critically on existing technologies of the self and the capacity to transform deliberately such technologies. Indeed, in his late work, Foucault frequently invokes the capacity for critical reflection, in the context of his understanding of thought. For example, he defines "thought" as "freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem."[98] Moreover, Foucault also invokes the concept of autonomy in his late work, though how precisely he understands autonomy and how this notion fits with his analysis of power and subjection is not made explicit. For example, in "What Is Enlightenment?" Foucault characterizes his own work as "oriented toward the 'contemporary limits of the necessary,' that is, toward what is not or is no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects."[99] Here, the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects is taken as a desideratum; archaeological and genealogical work aims to identify the arbitrary constraints that we falsely take to be necessary to achieve that goal. Foucault goes on to articulate the principle that is "at the heart of the historical consciousness that the Enlightenment has of itself": "the principle of a critique and a permanent creation of ourselves in our autonomy."[100] Autonomy thus plays a double role in this essay: it is both the precondition for and the goal of critique. The permanent critique of ourselves that is characteristic of what Foucault calls the "attitude of modernity" presupposes autonomy in the sense that, following Kant, one must be mature enough to use one's own reason in order to engage in such a critique; but critique also aims toward autonomy in the sense that critique opens up the space for what Foucault calls the "permanent creation of ourselves in our autonomy." It is this latter point that connects Foucault's reflections on autonomy, critique, and the Enlightenment with his ethics. The practices of the self that Foucault uncovered in ancient Greece and Rome were practices of freedom, and this is precisely why Foucault was interested in them.

It is worth noting that many of Foucault's references to autonomy occur in the context of his discussions of Kant, which suggests that Foucault is deliberately invoking the Kantian conception of autonomy while simultaneously transforming it. Indeed, just as it was for Kant's, autonomy is central to Foucault's conception of critique and to his ethics.[101] Of course there

are obvious differences between Foucault's and Kant's uses of the notion of autonomy, the most obvious being that, for Kant, autonomy is equivalent to conformity to the categorical imperative, whereas, for Foucault, "the search for a form of morality acceptable to everybody in the sense that everybody should submit to it" is "catastrophic."[102] However, placing too much emphasis on this and other obvious differences might lead us to overlook the peculiarly Kantian flavor of autonomy in Foucault's work and thus to misunderstand Foucault's ethics. Indeed, I contend that Foucault's conception of autonomy should be understood—in much the same way as I interpreted his conception of subjectivity in the previous chapter—as a transformation from within, an inversion of the Kantian conception. Kant defines "autonomy" as "the property the will has of being a law to itself."[103] Central to Kant's understanding of autonomy is the interplay of necessity and freedom. This is evident both in the *First Critique*, in which Kant argues that the idea of freedom is compatible with the causal necessity that governs the phenomenal world, and in the *Groundwork* and the *Second Critique*, in which autonomy is defined in terms of the will's freely binding itself to universal laws. The interplay of necessity and freedom is likewise central to Foucault's conception of autonomy, but Foucault turns this relationship on its head. For Foucault, autonomy does not consist in freely binding oneself to a necessity in the form of the moral law; instead, it consists in freely calling into question that which is presented to us as necessary, thus opening up the space for a possible transgression of those limits that turn out to be both contingent and linked to objectionable forms of constraint. This critique is practical in the sense that it is oriented toward possible action, action that goes beyond the limits of the arbitrary constraints imposed upon us by the power/knowledge regimes that structure our social world.

But there is another, more radical, sense in which this reconceptualization of autonomy is tied to the idea of a practical critique, as it contains an implicit critique of Kant's very notion of pure practical reason. Once autonomy is understood as the calling into question of those limits and constraints that we have previously taken to be necessary, the impurity of practical reason, its embeddedness in contingent, historically specific practices, and its rootedness in relations of power, come to the fore. The question then becomes: "For what excesses of power … is this reason itself historically responsible?"[104] Foucault, echoing his earlier argument about Kant's pragmatic anthropology, hints that Kant himself opens the door for this move in his own reflections on the Enlightenment, for these reflections are located "at the crossroads of critical reflection and reflection on history."[105] Foucault even goes so far as to suggest that Kant's text

represents the first time a philosopher has articulated the connections between his philosophical work and what is going on in his contemporary historical moment. In so doing, Foucault suggests, Kant made possible the kind of historicophilosophical method of inquiry into the historically emergent, contingent conditions of possibility for knowledge and action that Foucault later perfected.[106]

What are the implications of the impurity of practical reason, its embeddedness in contingent, historically and culturally specific relations of power? Does this impurity mean that we should reject reason, even supposing that to be possible? Foucault's Habermasian critics have accused him of drawing precisely this conclusion. For example, although McCarthy acknowledges that Habermas is also committed to the intrinsic impurity of reason, he argues that Foucault and Habermas draw crucially different inferences from this fact:

> While both approaches seek to transform the critique of reason through shifting the level of analysis to social practice, Foucault, like Nietzsche, sees this as leading to a critique that is radical in the etymological sense of that term, one that attacks rationalism at its very roots, whereas critical social theorists, following Hegel and Marx, understand critique rather in the sense of a determinate negation that aims at a more adequate conception of reason.[107]

Foucault, by contrast, denies that his critique of reason is radical in this sense. He considers three possible reactions to the entanglement of reason with power. The first response is to reject reason, but Foucault rejects this possibility out of hand, saying that "nothing would be more sterile."[108] The second option is to investigate the link between rationalization and the growth of domination in modernity; this, according to Foucault, is the approach taken by the Frankfurt School. Foucault expresses sympathy with this approach, but worries that "the word rationalization is dangerous. What we have to do is analyze specific rationalities rather than always invoking the progress of rationalization in general."[109] Foucault favors the third response, which involves examining the specific modes of rationalization and forms of resistance that have taken shape in specific experiences, for example, madness, death, crime, or sexuality. Recognizing the impurity of practical reason, then, does not commit us to rejecting reason altogether; instead, it commits us to an interrogation of specific forms of rationality and the ways in which they are connected to relations of power and modes of subjection.

Accordingly, Foucault casts the difference between himself and Habermas in somewhat different terms. Since Kant and perhaps because of

him, the question of Enlightenment has typically been posed as one of knowledge; the crucial question is, "what false idea did knowledge make of itself, and to what excessive use was it found exposed, to what domination consequently was it found tied?"[110] Foucault understands Habermas's conception of Enlightenment in this way. Foucault, by contrast, wants to "envision a different procedure. It could take as an entry into the question of Aufklärung, not the problem of knowledge, but that of power."[111] This does not entail reducing all forms of knowledge or rationality to relations of domination, though it does entail being attentive to the complex relationships between knowledge and power. If we follow this shift, the critical question is no longer that of how to determine, through either a transcendental or a quasi-transcendental argument, the legitimate limits of reason. Instead, the critical question is this:

> How can the inseparability of knowledge and power in the game of multiple interactions and strategies induce at once singularities that fix themselves on the basis of their conditions of acceptability and a field of possibilities, of openings, of indecisions, of reversals, and of eventual dislocations that make them fragile, that make them impermanent, that make of these effects events—nothing more, nothing less than events?[112]

How, in other words, do relations of knowledge and power both structure our experience of ourselves and of the world while providing resources for their own overcoming? Asking this question involves taking what Foucault calls an "inverse path" to the one taken by Kant and post-Kantian critical theorists, though it preserves what Foucault calls the "critical attitude": "if it is necessary to pose the question of knowledge in its relation to domination, it would be first and foremost on the basis of a certain decisive will not to be governed, this decisive will, an attitude at once individual and collective of emerging, as Kant said, from one's immaturity. A question of attitude."[113]

If practical reason is impure, then it follows that autonomy in both of the senses that I delineated above—the capacity for critical reflection or what Foucault calls simply "thought" and the capacity for deliberate self-transformation—is necessarily linked to power relations. Critical reflection, as a function of practical reason itself, is always inflected with power. Thus, we have to give up hope of acceding to a point of view outside of power from which we can critique power. But from this it does not follow that critique is futile, even though it is "always limited and determined; thus, we are always in the position of beginning again."[114] Similarly, deliberate self-transformation is guided by the faculty of practical reason

and informed by critique; as such, although Foucault understands this as a practice of freedom, such practices are always connected to relations of power in at least two ways. First of all, power presupposes freedom. As Foucault puts it, "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free."[115] Moreover, since there is no outside to power, freedom always involves strategically reworking the power relations to which we are subjected. Thus, Foucault speaks of an "agonism" between power and freedom, "of a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle; less of a face-to-face confrontation which paralyzes both sides than a permanent provocation."[116]

Foucault's reconceptualization of autonomy, in light of its emphasis on the relationships between critique, freedom, and power, does not contradict his analysis of power; instead, it complements and extends it. As a result, however, his conception of autonomy is admittedly less robust and more ambivalent than Kant's and, as we shall see, Habermas's. Foucault understands critique as always internal to power relations, but it is not for this reason doomed to failure, especially if we emphasize the openness and suppleness of power/knowledge regimes, the ways in which they contain the resources for their own transformation. As for freedom, it always operates within the horizon of power relationships. As a result, deliberate self-transformation in Foucault's sense necessarily involves taking up in a transformative way the relations of subjection that have made us who we are.[117]

Resistance, Strategy, and Reciprocity

Although the preceding discussion does show that Foucault's account of autonomy is compatible with his analyses of power and subjection, it nevertheless leaves unanswered the question of what it is that enables us to take up relations of subjection in a transformative way. How can selves who have been constituted by relations of power and subjection take up a self-constituting relation to themselves that is empowering and transformative? How can resistance to prevailing modes of subjection be accomplished in a context of subjection? In other words, as Jean Grimshaw put this point, the crucial question is "when forms of self-discipline or self-surveillance can with any justification be seen as exercises of autonomy or self-creation, or when they should be seen, rather, as forms of discipline to which the self is subjected, and by which autonomy is constrained."[118] For example, Grimshaw wonders, "when should we see a concern for one's body, a programme of monitoring of one's fitness or concern for one's ap-

pearance, as an exercise of creative self-mastery rather than as a result of the internalisation of norms of bodily appearance which serve to undermine other norms of autonomy?"[119] Does Foucault offer us the resources for distinguishing disciplinary practices or technologies of the self that reproduce and reinforce existing relations of power from those that resist and transform such relations?

Here we run up against the limits of Foucault's account of the politics of our selves. As I discussed above, Foucault consistently defines power in terms of strategic relations, and he suggests that the exercise of freedom always involves engaging with power in this sense. As a result, he seems committed to a rather narrow and impoverished conception of social interaction, according to which all such interaction is strategic. If this is the case, then, his conception of the self will necessarily overlook the role played by nonstrategic social relations, relations based on communication, reciprocity, and mutual recognition, in the development of autonomy and the self. Indeed, many of Foucault's Habermasian and feminist critics have criticized his account of the self on just this point. For example, McCarthy argues that Foucault's "one-dimensional view of social interaction as strategic interaction displaces autonomy outside of the social network.... Foucault's aesthetic individualism is no more adequate to [the] social dimension of autonomy than was the possessive individualism of early modern political theory."[120] Lois McNay identifies a similar problem with Foucault's account of the self and argues that Foucault's account of resistance to the government of individualization is unsatisfactory for this reason. As she puts it, "without an interactional notion of the self ... the individual cannot distinguish between what constitutes a radical exploration of identity and what is simply an arbitrary stylization of life."[121] Absent some understanding of social interaction in nonstrategic terms, Foucault cannot make sense of how individuals cooperate with one another in collective social and political action to agitate for progressive change, nor can he make sense of how the resulting collective social and political movements generate the conceptual and normative resources on which individuals draw in their own efforts to transform subjection into liberation.

In other words, a broader view of social relations than that offered by Foucault—one that envisions social relations as not just strategic but also as (potentially) communicative and reciprocal—is needed if we are to be able to distinguish capitulation to the logic of subjection from subversive self-transformation.[122] This limitation of Foucault's work provides a motivation for turning to Habermas, whose intersubjective account of subjectivity and autonomy is grounded in his conception of communicative interaction. However, such a turn will only make sense if it is the case that Foucault's

work does not preclude the possibility of nonstrategic interaction. After all, if Foucault's conception of power undermines any possible account of nonstrategic social interaction, then the project of integrating his insights into power, autonomy, and the self with those of Habermas will be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. There is certainly a plausible strong reading of some of Foucault's remarks about power according to which any talk of nonstrategic, reciprocal interactions is strictly ruled out. Undergraduates who are in the grip of this interpretation are particularly adept at redescribing any candidate for a nonstrategic interaction in strategic terms (for example, the baby's smile is actually her way of manipulating her mother into giving her more juice). Fortunately, Foucault himself did not seem to hold such a reductive view of social relations. In fact, in several late interviews and essays, he gestures, albeit tentatively, toward what seems like a normative conception of reciprocity. For example, he distinguishes between friendship and sexual relations by pointing out that "friendship is reciprocal, and sexual relations are not reciprocal: in sexual relations, you can penetrate or you are penetrated."[123] His criticisms of Greek sexual ethics appeal implicitly to a normative conception of reciprocity: "The Greek ethics of pleasure is linked to a virile society, to dissymmetry, exclusion of the other, an obsession with penetration, and a kind of threat of being dispossessed of your own energy, and so on. All that is quite disgusting!"[124] And he wonders out loud whether it is possible to develop an ethics of sexual pleasure that is governed by this implicit norm of reciprocity: "Are we able to have an ethics of acts and their pleasures which would be able to take into account the pleasure of the other? Is the pleasure of the other something that can be integrated in our pleasure, without reference to law, to marriage, to I don't know what?"[125]

To be sure, Foucault remains hesitant about embracing such a normative ideal of reciprocity. In a late interview, for example, in response to a question about whether he is willing to endorse the normative notion of consensus offered in the work of Habermas and Arendt, Foucault says: "The farthest I would go is to say that perhaps one must not be for consensuality, but one must be against nonconsensuality."[126] Still, comments such as this one indicate that although the ideal of reciprocity is far from sufficiently developed in Foucault's work, his strategic analysis of power is not meant to preclude such a notion. Perhaps this is why Foucault is willing to say, "I am interested in what Habermas is doing. I know that he does not agree with what I say—I am a little more in agreement with him."[127]

My overall aim has been to reconstruct the implicit conception of autonomy in Foucault's work on technologies of the self and to argue that

this conception is not only compatible with but also extends in interesting and important ways his analyses of power and subjection. As I argued with respect to subjectivity in the previous chapter, Kant provides the inspiration for Foucault's reconceptualization of autonomy. Not only does Foucault argue that Kant's writings on the Enlightenment open the door for the historicized version of critique that Foucault practices, his conception of autonomy also inverts the relationship between freedom and necessity that is at the heart of the Kantian conception. Given Foucault's commitment to the impurity of practical reason, his analysis focuses on the connections between autonomy—both in the sense of the capacity for thought or critical reflection and in the sense of the capacity for deliberate self-transformation—and power. However, in order to distinguish between the reinscription of modes of subjection and their transformation, Foucault needs some nonstrategic account of social interaction. Although there are gestures toward such a notion in some of Foucault's late interviews, they are tentative and undeveloped. For a fully developed account of reciprocal, communicative interaction and the role that it plays in the constitution of autonomous selves, we will have to look beyond Foucault to Habermas. Before turning to a consideration of Habermas, however, I will first consider Butler's recent analysis of subjection; as we shall see in the next chapter, although this analysis extends Foucault's account in important and productive ways, it ultimately suffers from a similar lack of an account of the intersubjective dimension of subjectivity.

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