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## Foucault, Affect, History: On the Art of Feeling

Austin Chisholm, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Faflak, Joel, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in  
Theory and Criticism

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## Abstract

While the work of Michel Foucault has not generally been thought to engage in questions of affect, I argue that his work entails a meaningful engagement with such questions but in a way that challenges how we tend to think about affect. Drawing from Foucault's oeuvre, I enter a series of dialogues with thinkers of affect, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Brian Massumi, in order to understand to what extent the turn to affect—especially for Sedgwick and Massumi—represents an attempt to work through a number of difficulties and tensions in Foucault's thought and writing. I argue that Foucault is an insightful yet challenging interlocutor for affect theorists because of his understanding of the ethical dimensions of affect, and his historicization of separate modalities of relating to those areas of life and experience that belong to affect, emotion, and feeling. In this thesis, I aim to tease out that historicization in the form of two key historical modalities belonging to modern and ancient technologies of the self: the *scientia affectus*, which endeavours to *decipher* truth in emotion or affect, and the *ars pathetica*, which *derives* truth from feeling itself.

## Keywords

Foucault, affect theory, genealogy, archaeology, ethics, philosophy of emotion, Sedgwick, Massumi.

## Summary for Lay Audience

For the past two centuries, the philosophy and science of emotion has been divided by two dominant approaches. The first approach argues that emotions are rooted in physiological responses and biological mechanisms of the body. This is the physicalist approach. The second attempts to show how emotions are involved in cognitive processes, as expressions of conscious or unconscious intentions, judgements, and evaluations. This is the cognitivist approach. Both approaches tend to imply separate assumptions about differences between individuals and cultures across time and geography. The first approach has often been committed to universalist theories of emotion, which argues that emotions are comprised by a handful of basic emotional registers or affects, such as sadness, joy, fear, or anger, believed to be essentially the same experiences across all human cultures throughout history. The second approach tends to entail a social constructionist view, which argues that both the experience and expression of emotion varies between cultures and through history. While there have been more recent efforts to synthesize these different approaches and sets of assumptions, I argue that there are indeed two ways of experiencing and relating to one's emotions that have been predominant in the history of Western civilization. One, which I call the *scientia affectus* (or the science of affect/emotion), views emotions as substances or objects that can be known, measured, disciplined, and optimized. This generally includes all of the previously mentioned approaches (i.e., physicalist, universalist, cognitivist, and social constructionist approaches), and has represented the dominant way of thinking about emotion for the past two centuries. The second, which I call the *ars pathetica* (or the art of feeling), instead views emotions as practices that give truth, meaning, and style to one's existence. This *ars pathetica* was dominant in the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome but today mostly exists as a memory. In this thesis I draw from the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault to show the ethical, political, and historical importance of these two ways of relating to feelings, and to try to understand the large mutation in Western civilization that has led to this transformation of an *ars pathetica* into a *scientia affectus*.

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## Abbreviations

Some of Foucault's major books and lectures have been abbreviated as follows:

- BC *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- CS *The Care of the Self*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1986.
- CT *The Courage of the Truth (Government of the Self and Others II): Lectures at the Collège de France 1983-1984*. Edited by Frédéric Gros. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave, 2011.
- DP *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1995.
- GL *On the Government of the Living: Lecture at the Collège de France 1979-1980*. Edited by Michel Senellart. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave, 2014.
- HM *History of Madness*. Edited by Jean Khalifa. Translated by Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalifa. London: Routledge, 2006.
- HS *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*. Edited by Frédéric Gros. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave, 2005.
- OT *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- STP *Security, Territory, Population Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*. Edited by Michel Senellart. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave, 2009.
- UP *The Use of Pleasure*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York, Vintage, 1990.

WK *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990

# Introduction

Michel Foucault is not generally thought of as a thinker of affect. For example, Nigel Thrift has commented on Foucault's "seeming aversion to discussing affect explicitly" and his neglect of the "affective relays in the precognitive realm."<sup>1</sup> Additionally, Foucault featured as what Lauren Guilmette has called a "paranoid foil"<sup>2</sup> in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's original take-up of questions of affect,<sup>3</sup> in which Sedgwick cast Foucault as a thinker too immured in the binary logic of subversion and hegemony to think what the editors of *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010) call the "in-betweenness" of affect<sup>4</sup> or, to use Sedgwick's own phrase, the "middle ranges of agency" that characterize queer subjectivity as well as the possibility of change and creativity.<sup>5</sup> Sedgwick and her partial critique of Foucault has come to represent

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<sup>1</sup> Nigel Thrift, "Overcome by Space: Reworking Foucault," in *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, ed. Jeremy W. Crampton and Stuart Elden (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 54.

<sup>2</sup> Lauren Guilmette, "In What We Tend to Feel Is Without History: Foucault, Affect, and the Ethics of Curiosity," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 28.3 (2014), 285.

<sup>3</sup> For Sedgwick's critique of Foucault and Foucaudian theorists (specifically D. A. Miller in *The Novel and the Police* (1988) and Ann Cvetkovich in *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism* (1992)) see the "Introduction," "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins," and "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or. You're So Paranoid You Probably Think This Essay Is About You" in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, "An Inventory of Shimmers," *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 12-13.



one pole of affect theory, influenced by the American psychologist Silvan Tomkins. Influenced by the works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Brian Massumi, who represents the alternative pole of affect theory, is seemingly more circumspect about Foucault's status as a thinker of affect. But even though Massumi borrows Foucault's concept of "incorporeal materialism"<sup>6</sup> in thinking the potentiality (or virtuality) of the body on the level of the material, his insistence on the transhistoricity of the physical, sensory, and bodily "field of immanence" is in stark contrast to Foucault's claim that every feeling and sentiment, from the most bodily and instinctual to the "noblest and most disinterested, has a history."<sup>7</sup>

There are a couple possible reasons for this distance between affect theory and the Foucauldian project. The first is related to a commonly perceived problem of agency and resistance in Foucault's work. The translator's introduction to Alain Badiou's *Infinite Thought* (2003) articulates this criticism:

Foucault argued that networks of disciplinary power not only reach into the most intimate spaces of the subject, but actually produce what we call subjects. However, Foucault also said that power produces resistance. His problem then became that of accounting for the source of such resistance. If the subject—right down to its most intimate desires, actions and thoughts—is constituted by power, then how can it be the source of independent resistance? For such a point of agency to exist, Foucault needs some space which has not been completely constituted by power, or a complex doctrine on the relationship between resistance and independence. However, he has neither.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, without a theory of the complex relationship between agency, resistance, and independence, Foucault also cannot account for the autonomy or independence of the body itself. When he was interested in the body it was only as the mute plaything of power and

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<sup>6</sup> See Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 5; Massumi, *Ontopower: War, Powers, and the State of Perception* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 49; and Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," in *Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 69.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 87.

<sup>8</sup> Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens, "An Introduction to Alain Badiou's Philosopher," in *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens (London: Continuum, 2004), 5.

discourse, too confined in the routines of discipline to be itself invested with its own material force of agency.<sup>9</sup> And when he tried to think the agency of the body (as a site of resistance to power, for instance) it was compromised by an inability to think outside the overly intellectualist framework of the “intentional and voluntary actions” that comprise the “technologies of the self” inherent in any ethics of self-constitution.<sup>10</sup> Nowhere in Foucault’s *oeuvre*, it would seem, does one find rich descriptions of those parts of ourselves called affects, those “visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing,” those “vital forces insisting beyond emotion” that “drive us toward movement, ... or ... leave us overwhelmed by the world’s apparent intractability.”<sup>11</sup> If affect is a “gradient of bodily capacity,” then Foucault would appear to fail to address it explicitly, opting for an account of such capacity as either mired in power and discourse or subsumed within voluntarist and self-conscious action.

While this criticism of Foucault is simplistic, and I’m certainly not attributing it to affect theorists like Sedgwick and Massumi, it does retain some element of truth. Indeed, Foucault’s work does avoid such explicit descriptions of “visceral” and “vital forces” beyond conscious cognition and on the level of “bodily capacity.” This avoidance, however, is not because of neglect, but because of a suspicion of the kind of vitalism at play in a deep “subject of sensation” lurking beyond “conscious knowing” and in the physiological capacities of bodies, their forces and intensities. This kind of vitalist positivity would be incompatible with the negativity that Foucault attributes to discourse analysis at the end of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969): “discourse is not life: its time is not your time; in it,

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Kate Soper has argued that Foucault’s theorization of the body as “discursively constructed” is dangerously “anti-naturalist” and thus risks undermining “the feminist demand for a ‘reclamation’ of the body and the expression of an ‘authentic’ desire”; see Soper, “Productive Contradictions” in *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of Some Tensions Between Foucault and Feminism*, ed. by Caroline Ramazanoglu (Routledge: London, 1993), 32-33. While this is a perfectly valid criticism for many scholars influenced by Foucault, it is more complicated when it comes to Foucault himself. For while Soper stresses the danger of an absent reference to a pre-discursive reality of the body in Foucault’s work, Judith Butler charged Foucault with having an incoherent account of the social construction of the body because his vocabulary of “inscription” implied that there is an ontologically prior and pre-discursive reality of the body; see Butler, “Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 86, no. 11 (1989): 601-607. In any case, Foucault’s claim that the body itself “constructs resistances” to such discursive inscriptions suggests that his historicism, while anti-naturalist to an extent, is not a simple social constructionism; see Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 87.

<sup>10</sup> See Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 10. Hereafter abbreviated as UP.

<sup>11</sup> Seigworth and Gregg, “An Inventory of Shimmers,” 1.

you will not be reconciled to death; you may have killed God beneath the weight of all that you have said; but don't imagine that with all that you are saying, you will make a man that will live longer than he."<sup>12</sup> Those shimmers of life—those visceral and vital forces—can only find meaning in the void and nothingness of language that Foucault liked to call “the outside.”<sup>13</sup> Even more, the profound imbrication that Foucault recognizes between the body, discourse, and power makes it difficult to see how an authentic agency and independent autonomy of bodily affect might arise.

One thing that I have come to appreciate in the course of my research is that Sedgwick and Massumi, in their respective turns toward affect, are in part attempting to work through the Foucauldian tension between agency and power. This may have much to do with Foucault, but perhaps more or less indirectly with the way Foucault had been read and taken up by a generation of theorists and scholars in the Anglo-American tradition of critical theory during the 1970s and 1980s. In 1995, when Massumi published “The Autonomy of Affect” and Sedgwick and Adam Frank published “Shame in the Cybernetic Fold” (to be included as the introduction to a selection of writings by Silvan Tomkins), what is clear is that they had become dissatisfied with the dominant assumptions of what had loosely been defined as “poststructuralism.” Sedgwick and Frank excoriate the antiessentialism underlying the poststructuralist approach, characterizing it at one point variously as “psychoanalytic, Marxist, Foucauldian.”<sup>14</sup> According to the kind of poststructuralist antiessentialism that they criticize, any attempts to specify affects (as Tomkins does, with his eight or nine core affects

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<sup>12</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: And The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> See Michel Foucault, “The Thought of the Outside,” in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 147-169. A renaming of his 1966 reflection on the works of Maurice Blanchot, “The Thought from Outside,” here Foucault is explicit in the movements of feeling involved in a thought that witnesses the undoing of the subject, leaving him or her bereft of any psychological interiority accessible to by words. One's love for an other is borne to “a sweet and violent movement [that] intrudes on interiority, drawing it out of itself. . . . The instant that interiority is lured out of itself, an outside empties the place into which interiority customarily retreats and deprives it of the possibility of retreat: a form arises—less than a form, a kind of stubborn, amorphous anonymity—that divests interiority of its identity, hollows it out, divides it into noncoincident twin figures, divests it of its unmediated right to say *I*, and pits against its discourse a speech that is indissociably echo and denial” (163).

<sup>14</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, “Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins,” in *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, ed. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 15.

including fear, anger, joy, and shame)<sup>15</sup> are considered morally suspect forms of biologism, and the whole question of *particular* affects is disallowed in favour of an undifferentiated mass of affects, what they describe as simply another form of essentialism.<sup>16</sup> Massumi, for his part, laments critical theory's reluctance to think outside signification and structure and its consequent inability to conceive of affect as a truly autonomous source of change and becoming, at one point quipping, "divorce proceedings of poststructuralism: terminable or interminable?"<sup>17</sup> Both Sedgwick and Massumi evoke the Foucauldian problem of resistance and agency by identifying affect as a source of resistance, creativity, and change, distinct from subjectivity and cognition and thus discourse, power, signification and all those familiar objects of poststructuralist analysis. What remains for them is to break with the poststructuralist creed in developing vocabularies (albeit divergent ones) for articulating the independence of affect. Before long, critics would consider Foucault a thinker who neglected the topic of affect, as if the whole turn to affect in the 1990s and early 2000s was not in part an attempt to work through a perceived tension in the Foucauldian playbook.

This encounter rests on the premise that Foucault is unable to think the agency of the body in relation to discourse and power and thus is unable to provide a suitable vocabulary for understanding the actual life of affect. But the question of why Foucault might have a problem with this *particular* account of affect is left unaddressed. Even more, the assumption that Foucault is unable to carve a space out for agency does not hold up to careful scrutiny of

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<sup>15</sup> According to Tomkins, there are eight (and later nine) primary affects, which can be combined with a variety of psychological functions, images, and objects to create the wealth of human affective experience. While admitting that "there is today no consensus on what the primary affects are," he suggests a set of affects that are distinguished by facial expressions, positive or negative experiences, and belonging to ranges of intensity: interest-excitement, enjoyment-joy, surprise-startle, distress-anguish, fear-terror, shame-humiliation, contempt-disgust, anger-rage, eventually adding "dis smell," distinct from disgust, with the publications of volume 2 and 3 of *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness (Shame and Its Sisters, 73-74)*. Paul Ekman will later expand this model with his research on universal emotions tied to distinct facial expressions; see his 1975 summarization of his research with Wallace V. Friesen, *Unmasking the Face: A Guide to Recognizing Emotions from Facial Clues* (Cambridge, MA: Malor Books, 2003). While much of the criticisms of Ekman are related to his 2007 SPOT airport security program for recognizing terrorists through behavioural and facial observation, there have been more trenchant critiques of his model as inherited from Tomkins; see Ruth Leys, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 37 (Spring 2011): 434-472, and her critical response, "Facts and Moods: A Reply to My Critics," *Critical Inquiry* 38.4 (2012): 882-891; as well as Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> Sedgwick and Frank, "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins," 19.

<sup>17</sup> Brian Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique* 31 (1995), 88.

his works, and it presumes that the conflict Foucault recognizes between power and agency or freedom is a theoretical problem and not a productive tension.

Lynne Huffer has been one critic to argue against the consensus that Foucault is not a thinker of affect.<sup>18</sup> For Huffer, Foucault's historical methodology of genealogy represents an ethical practice of freedom and *eros*, what she calls a "thinking-feeling," which endeavours to make the present strange by undoing the modern subject.<sup>19</sup> Contrary to critics who see Foucault as a non-affective thinker, Huffer suggests that Foucault can indeed be read as engaging in questions of affect, but in a way that binds thinking with a form of action and feeling (of which affect is an integral element) in the discursive division of truth and falsity, the play of power and resistance, and the relationship with oneself and others. For Foucault, Huffer argues,

Thought cannot be separated from the life of feeling, eros, and the body. Ethics for him is about transformation—the transformation of the relation between subjectivity and truth, the transformation of the subject through practices of freedom in relation to others. Affect has a major role to play in this transformative, desubjectivating process. We do not tend to think of Foucault as a thinker who also engages with affect, but *History of Madness* gives us a lens through which to see how that happens—not only in *Madness* but in other places in his work.<sup>20</sup>

How, then, might we read Foucault as a perceptive and insightful thinker of affect, despite what has become a general inability for many theorists to see him as such? If Foucault was always trying to push thought to the point where we are able to take account of what we are and endeavour to become otherwise, then what role does affect play in that "transformative"

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<sup>18</sup> For the past decade Lynne Huffer has been engaged in one of the most creative and original projects in Foucauldian scholarship (and critical discourse more broadly). Her recent Foucault trilogy is nothing short of triumphant: a renewal for *thinking* and *feeling* about sex and ethics. See Huffer, *Mad For Foucault: Rethinking the Foundations of Queer Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), *Are The Lips A Grave? A Queer Feminist on the Ethics of Sex* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), and *Foucault's Strange Eros* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> "As one of the many strands of Foucault's postmoral, Nietzschean critique of morality, eros names a thinking-feeling suspension of biopolitical sexuality. The strange eros we find in Foucault allows us to experience the sexual dispositif of our historical a priori in terms of its conditions for other possibilities, as biopower's dissolution or rupture." Lynne Huffer, "Strange Eros: Foucault, Ethics, and the Historical A Priori," *Continental Philosophy Review* 49 (2016), 107.

<sup>20</sup> Lynne Huffer and Elizabeth Wilson, "Mad for Foucault: A Conversation," *Theory, Culture & Society* 27 (2010), 331.

and “desubjectivating process”? Even more, how might that lead us to reevaluate how we think about ourselves and our feelings, whether of an affective or an emotional register? After broaching these questions, Huffer quotes a resonant passage from Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Daybreak* (1881): “we have to *learn to think differently*—in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more! to *feel differently*.”<sup>21</sup>

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My argument is that Foucault, far from the way he is frequently read and taught, is a thinker of affect, but in a way that challenges how we tend to understand affect. I would contend that Foucault, instead of questioning the biological, social, and psychological dimensions of affect, is principally interested in its ethical dimension. In an interview from 1983, on the subject of his upcoming work on antiquity and the ethics of self-constitution, Foucault offers a breakdown of his analysis of ethics (borrowing roughly from Aristotle’s doctrine of the four causes<sup>22</sup>) that guides his subsequent studies in *The Use of Pleasure* (1984) and *The Care of the Self* (1984). This ethics of self-constitution is divided as follows: (1) *ethical substances*, or the parts of ourselves most relevant for moral conduct such as pleasure or desire; (2) *modes of subjectivation*, or the way people see themselves as moral agents, i.e. *via* a cosmological, rational, or social order; (3) *ascesis*, or the actual practices we undertake in order to be moral, such as spiritual and moral practices like meditation, self-examination, monogamy, or confession; (4) *telos*, or the ultimate goal ascribed to moral behaviour, i.e. perfection, salvation, liberation, or self-mastery. Regarding ethical substances he remarks briefly that while in antiquity the substance of moral behaviour was pleasure (for Hellenistic cultures) and desire (for Christian cultures), for modern cultures of the West “the part of ourselves which is most relevant for morality is our feelings.”<sup>23</sup> For our morality, he is saying, what matters less is how we experience pleasure or what or whom we desire, but how we actually *feel* towards others and towards ourselves. The way we understand ourselves as moral subjects, the actions we take, and the ethical goals we pursue, are undertaken with

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. See also Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudice of Morality*, ed. Maudmarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 103.

<sup>22</sup> As outlined in Aristotle’s *Physics* (194b 16-195b28) and *Metaphysics* (983a22-b7).

<sup>23</sup> Michel Foucault, “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of a Work in Progress,” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 352.

reference to a substantive foundation of feeling as the life or *bios* we construct. This proximity of ethics and feeling is the starting point and guiding thread for this thesis in conducting an “ontology of ourselves”<sup>24</sup> and a “history of the present” (DP 31).

In Chapter One, I argue that while Foucault understands feeling as the ethical *substance* of modernity, part of what interests him about practices of the self in Greco-Roman antiquity is that feeling plays a more integral role for ethical *practice* or *ascesis*. In the examples, *eros*, *epimeleia*, and *parrhēsia* (which I characterize as comprised of feelings of love, care, and courage), I demonstrate how they integrate thinking and feeling as a *way* of giving style and art to life and existence. I characterize these as forms of feeling-practices or an *ars pathetica*. In Chapter Two, I track Foucault’s genealogies of the modern State and governmentality as they pertain to the shift from feeling-practices to the feeling-substances that Foucault believes belong to our morality. Unlike feeling-practices, feeling-substances represent the objectification and instrumentalization of feeling that creates the disciplined or self-disciplining subject. What emerges is a discussion of how the figuration of feeling as an ethical substance is accompanied by a growing anxiety and preoccupation in the modern age with the government of feeling, whether through disciplinary or biopolitical means. Finally, in Chapter Three, I unpack Foucault’s engagement with questions of affect in *History of Madness* (1961)<sup>25</sup> and his other archaeological analyses of modern medicine and the human sciences, *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963) and *The Order of Things* (1966). Here I endeavour to describe a *scientia affectus* that represents the knowledge side of the power-knowledge nexus of the government of feeling. This *scientia affectus* eclipses and transplants the earlier *ars pathetica*, transforming the way the truth of feeling is produced, from the way the *ars pathetica* derives spiritual, ethical, or philosophical truth from feeling itself to the way the *scientia affectus* deploys scientific and governmental discourses in order to decipher in feeling a psychological or biological truth. I conclude by speculating what the role of a

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<sup>24</sup> See Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” In *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 32-50.

<sup>25</sup> Originally submitted as Foucault’s PhD dissertation, it was published in France in 1961 with the title *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique* (Madness and Unreason: History of Madness in the Classical Age). A heavily abridged version was published in English in 1964, with the title *Madness & Civilization*. The full 1961 text was not available in English until 2006 with the title *History of Madness*, which is the version I cite.

memory of an *ars pathetica*<sup>26</sup> might mean for theorists today. Ultimately, my aim is to show that Foucault's concept of the subject is not a subject of feeling but a subject of *technê*, and that the ethical task of his critical histories is set on turning feelings into various *ways*: styles, arts. In turn, the point is to derive a truth and aesthetic of existence from feelings themselves rather than to decipher in them a moral, psychological, or biological truth.

In these three chapters I also open by staging an interlocutor on the topic of affect as a way of setting up a dialogue between Foucault and affect studies. Chapter One opens with a brief discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), specifically the sublation of their idiosyncratic distinction between affect and feeling in the figure of the martial artist. Chapter Two begins by discussing Sedgwick and her use of Tomkins' affect theory as a supplement for understanding the complex degrees of freedom that she calls the "middle ranges of agency," which she argues are not accounted for by Foucault. Instead I argue that Foucault did have a nuanced understanding of such "middle ranges of agency," specifically in regard to questions of refusal and resistance, making the Tomkins supplement a problematic detour for a Foucauldian critique. Chapter Three turns to Massumi's discussion of the relation between the individual and society in his extended metaphor of the soccer game in order to contest his exclusion of questions of the subject, art, style, and history. In staging these three dialogues, I hope to stress how contemporary affect theory, specifically in the case of Sedgwick and Massumi, is indebted to an attempt to think through a number of difficulties in Foucault's work. While Sedgwick and Massumi initiate brilliant openings for thought in their own right, they have not worked through the tensions they intuit in Foucault, and instead open up further problems that Foucault had sought to avoid. Through staging these dialogues, my intention is not to show how Foucault offers a more coherent or less problematic vision of affect, but to preserve as much as possible the ambiguities at play in the

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<sup>26</sup> I adopt *ars pathetica* and its contrasting term, *scientia affectus*, directly from Foucault's distinction between *ars erotica* and *scientia sexualis* in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990). In my understanding, the formal distinction between these terms is a distinction between productions of truth; while for the *ars erotica* truth is *derived* from pleasure itself (WK 57), the *scientia sexualis* endeavours to *decipher* truth in pleasure, whether in the deep meaning of desire, obsession, or phantasy (WK 69). The truth of the *ars erotica* becomes a secret truth because of the high esteem it is given, and the knowledge of pleasure entrusted to a master. On the contrary, the secret for a *scientia sexualis* is buried within pleasure and requires the subject to seek his or her own truth in pleasure, to decipher and speak that truth endlessly. Similarly, I distinguish *ars pathetica* and *scientia affectus* on the basis of a distinction between truth production: between ethical practices which derive truth from feeling and scientific discourses which decipher truth in the psychological or physiological substance of feeling.



dialogue between Foucauldian thought and affect theory. In any case, Foucault's understanding of the subject—not as a subject of deep and unconscious feeling but as a subject of *technê* who *uses* or *cares*<sup>27</sup> for feelings in order to give sense, meaning, or truth to the world and to oneself—makes him an insightful yet challenging interlocutor for affect theory.

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A word about how I distinguish and categorize feeling from affect, emotion, and the passions is already overdue. Rei Terada offers a workable breakdown along the lines of a distinction between the physiological and the psychological:

By emotion we usually mean a psychological, at least minimally interpretive experience whose physiological aspect is affect. Feeling is a capacious term that connotes both physiological sensations (affects) and psychological states (emotions). Although philosophers reserve "feeling" for bodily conditions, I use it when it seems fruitful to emphasize the common ground of the physiological and the psychological. Passion highlights an interesting phenomenon, the difficulty of classifying emotion as passive or active.<sup>28</sup>

From a Foucauldian perspective the problem with such distinctions is that these terms fluctuate remarkably across history. While the association of affect with the physiological, or at least non-cognitive, seems sound, emotion is less than consistently associated with the purely psychological in modern philosophy and science of emotion. As Thomas Dixon has

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<sup>27</sup> I use the verbs "use" and "care" here with reference to Foucault's understanding of the Greek words *chresis* and *epimeleia*. While I discuss the latter and its role as an *ars pathetica* at length in the first chapter, *chresis* or *khresis* represents a form of use that is not purely instrumental but can be ethical as well. See Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005), 56: "The French word I employ here, 'se servir' ['use' in English-G.B.], is actually the translation of a very important Greek verb with many meanings. This is the verb *khresthai*, with the substantive *khresis*. These two words are difficult and have had a lengthy and very important historical destiny. *Khresthai* (*khraōmai*: 'I use') actually designates several kinds of relationships one can have with something or with oneself. Of course, *khraōmai* means: I use, I utilize (an instrument, a tool), etcetera. But equally *khraōmai* may designate my behavior or my attitude.... *Khresthai* also designates a certain type of relationship with other people. When one says, for example, *theoīs khresthai* (using the gods), this does not mean that one utilizes the gods for any end whatever. It means having appropriate and legitimate relationships with the gods. It means honoring the gods, worshipping them, and doing what one should with them. The expression *hippo khresthai* (using a horse) does not mean doing what one likes with a horse. It means handling it properly and using it in accordance with the rules of the art entailed by the yoked team or the cavalry. *Khraōmai*: *khresthai* also designate a certain attitude towards oneself."

<sup>28</sup> Rei Terada, *Feeling In Theory: Emotion After the "Death of the Subject"* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 4-5.

shown in *From Passions to Emotions* (2003), the concept of emotion emerged in the eighteenth century, mainly in the work of Scottish empiricists like David Hume and Thomas Brown (1778-1820), through the influence of René Descartes's use of "émotion" (translated today not as "emotion" but "excitation") in *The Passions of the Soul* (*Les Passions de l'âme*) (1649). In this work Descartes argues that the passions of the soul are rooted in the animal spirits' excitations (or "émotions") of the soul. Dixon argues that later empiricists follow Descartes in transforming the basically theological concept of the passions into a secular concept of emotion as the body's "excitation" of the soul. Characterizing the more spiritual concept of the passions, Dixon writes, "theories of appetites, passions and affections ... conceived of them as movements or acts of the will and intellect of a substantial soul. The passions were signs and symptoms of a disobedient fallen soul, and the affections were enlightened movements of the rational will. Gracious affections were the movements of a soul indwelt by the Holy Spirit."<sup>29</sup> In contrast, eighteenth-century philosophers of emotion began to use more physicalist terms: "'emotions,' from the outset, were involuntary: they were miniagents in their own right, rather than movements or actions of a will or self. They were, furthermore, non-cognitive states: they were to be contrasted with intellectual judgments and thoughts. They were, finally, aggregates reducible to physical feelings: they were 'worked up from' bodily sensations."<sup>30</sup> If so, this would mean that the turn to affect in critical theory is a late twentieth-century return to the concept of emotion in the eighteenth century.

When emotions became thought-based rather than sensation-based is somewhat difficult to discern. When affect theorists contrast affect to emotion in this way, they are likely, intentionally or not, responding to the wave of cognitivist theories of emotion that became prominent in the mid-twentieth century, as represented by philosophers like C.D. Broad<sup>31</sup> and Robert C. Solomon,<sup>32</sup> who see emotions as intentional or evaluative states or

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 233.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>31</sup> See C. D. Broad, "Emotion and Sentiment," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 13.2 (1954): 203-214.

<sup>32</sup> See Robert C. Solomon, *The Passions* (New York: Doubleday, 1976).

judgments; that is, emotions have an “aboutness” irreducible to unconscious or physiological instincts. The Foucauldian approach, however, aims to historicize and contextualize this split between physiology and psychology in our understanding of emotions as either rooted in sensation and affect (determined by physiological mechanisms) or in thought and cognition (determined by psychological states). Indeed, this historicization is a dominant thread running through *History of Madness* in particular, and this is what I take Huffer to mean when she says that that book is a rich engagement with questions of affect, as long as we take affect to entail a specific historical understanding of man<sup>33</sup> and his relation to his own “unreason,” a term which had long been understood as including the passions. Before the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and stretching as far back as Hippocratic and Galenic medicine, Foucault writes, the passions were “always the interface between body and the soul” and they insured the “reciprocal causality” of body and soul as mediated by the movements of the humours (HM 225-226). While Cartesian medicine shifted this relation in favour of a theory of the passions as determinate of any unity *or* disunity of body and soul, Foucault argues that Cartesian mind-body dualism had actually not yet been enough to apply it to anthropology or the concrete knowledge of man. On the contrary, Foucault gives a later date to the emergence of the split between the psychological and the physiological, for which it has become routine in critical theory to blame Cartesianism:

The heterogeneity of the physical and the moral in medical thought was not a result of the Cartesian distinction between thinking and extended substances: a century and a half of post-Cartesian medicine had not been sufficient to accept this separation fully, both at the level of the problems it set out to solve and at that of its methods, nor to consider the distinction between substances as an opposition between the organic and the psychological. Cartesian or anti-Cartesian, classical medicine never ventured so far as to apply his metaphysical dualism to anthropology. And when the separation was made, it was not on account of some renewed faithfulness to the *Meditations*, but

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<sup>33</sup> Throughout my thesis I occasionally use “man” when referring to Foucault’s thought and writing, rather than altering his term as the gender-inclusive “human.” For one, I do this because I am apprehensive about retroactively including other genders into a category that belongs to a largely male-centric worldview (in which Foucault himself was of course implicated) of what it means to be human. And second, I take Foucault’s reference to “man” specifically in *The Order of Things* (1966) to denote an eighteenth-/nineteenth-century discursive formation invented and brought into question by the human sciences.

rather owing to a renewed importance laid on the idea of the fault. Where the mad were concerned, only the practice of punishment separated the medicine of the body and the soul. A purely psychological medicine was only made possible when madness was alienated into guilt. (HM 326)

Thus, the psychology-physiology split has more to do with the changing methods and practices of treatments for madness and mental illness than with Cartesianism. At the end of the eighteenth century, “moral therapy” for the mad emerged under the influence of William Tuke (1732-1822) in England and Philippe Pinel (1745-1826) in France. For Foucault, Tuke and Pinel did not represent a “more humane” form of treatment, as they had marketed themselves, but represented rather a form of treatment that instilled in the mad a moral fault that required moral therapy.<sup>34</sup> Many of the treatments for madness that had been in practice since at least the sixteenth century remained unchanged but acquired different meanings. Treatments such as cold water immersion; the imbibing of certain salts, minerals, drugs, or natural remedies; purification of insalubrious vapours in the body or environment; or the regulations of bodily movements had long been believed to act on the body and soul as an integrated mixture, whether by affecting the balance of the humours that gave rise to passion or by simulating the natural movements and relations of reason. But by the beginning of the nineteenth century these same treatments, such as cold water immersion, became primarily used as forms of moral punishment,<sup>35</sup> or if not, treatments with a solely mechanical or physical effect (HM 321). The figure of modern man, in Foucault’s account, then becomes an awkward double of himself, split between a psychological and a physiological determinism, precipitating a whole subsequent debate and aporia about the proper causes of not just madness and its relation to the individual, but in the relationship between the passions, affects, emotions, and feelings.

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<sup>34</sup> Historian Roy Porter, while critical of Foucault on the topic of the “great confinement,” basically agreed with Foucault on the point that Tukean “moral therapy” did not represent a major break with previous, supposedly more repressive methods of interning the mad; see Roy Porter, “Foucault’s Great Confinement,” *History of the Human Sciences* 3.1 (1990), 50.

<sup>35</sup> In a 1981 inaugural lecture at the Catholic University of Louvain, Foucault discusses the therapeutic use of cold showers by the nineteenth-century psychiatrist François Leuret. Foucault recounts a chilling exchange between the doctor and his patient, in which Leuret repeatedly drenches an inmate at the Bicêtre Hospital with freezing cold water, commanding the patient to admit that he is mad; see *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice*, ed. Fabienne Brion and Bernard E. Harcourt, trans. Stephen W. Sawyer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 11-12.

Because of this historical mutability of categories of feeling, emotion, and affect, I employ the distinction between affect and emotion only as a reference to a specific historical situation. Like Terada, however, I often use “feeling” to refer to the grey-area middle ground between the physiological affect and the psychological emotion. My intention is to maintain the ambiguity between sensation and sentiment that, I hope, permits us to see past the historical split between psychology and physiology. The passions, then, represents a historical memory of this pre-split experience of body and soul and witnesses the ambiguity of subject and object, activity and passivity.

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One final word before beginning. Throughout this thesis I use a conventional periodization of Foucault’s early, middle, and late works. It is routine for Foucault scholars to divide his work between the early archaeological period, from *History of Madness* (1961) through to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969); his middle genealogical period, from his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, “The Order of Discourse” (1970), to the first volume of his history of sexuality, *The Will to Knowledge* (1976); and his late ethical period which includes the other two volumes *The Use of Pleasure* (1984) and *The Care of the Self* (1984) as well as the unpublished manuscripts of *Les aveux de la chair*.<sup>36</sup> The archaeological period is focused on the historical analysis of knowledge and the conditions of possible experience. Genealogy then extends the analysis of knowledge to include power and is interested in the political, institutional, and discursive effects of the division of truth and falsity. The ethical period is focused on the subject and the social, spiritual, and moral practices and methods of self-constitution. So, for this periodization there are three objects of analysis appropriate to each methodology: for archaeology, knowledge; for genealogy, power; for ethics, subjectivity.

One difficulty that any Foucault scholar encounters is how or if these three periods and their correlative methodologies and objects are reconcilable. The most common explanation is that they are in tension and contradiction with one another, and that Foucault’s movement from one to the next represents a series of attempts to work out an indelible problem with the earlier approach. This interpretation goes all the way back to Paul Rabinow

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<sup>36</sup> These manuscripts only saw the light of day in 2018. The English translation is set to be published in February of 2021 by Pantheon Books.

and Hubert Dreyfus's *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (1982) and has found alternative iterations in Béatrice Han's *Foucault's Critical Project* (1998), and Eric Paras's *Foucault 2.0* (2006). Other variations of this approach see the first two periods as basically complimentary but with the third ethical period in marked contrast with the previous two, representing a last-ditch retreat to some form of liberal humanism. This interpretation was memorably argued by biographer James Miller in *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (1993). The other dominant approach sees the three periods and methodologies as a unified project, dating back at least to Deleuze's 1986 tribute, *Foucault*, in which he attempts to open up a topology where knowledge, power, and subjectivation form a single core nexus of Foucault's project. Thomas Flynn, in his second volume of *Sartre, Foucault, and Historical Reason* (2005) is more explicit in terming this approach an "axial reading" of Foucault in which knowledge, power, and subjectivity form a principle analytic triangulation for all of Foucault's works, even if only one term may appear to be dominant at one time.

There is a third, somewhat less common, approach, which is basically in agreement with Foucault when he claims in 1982 that all along it was not power but the subject that was the "general theme" of his work.<sup>37</sup> This approach views Foucault as above all interested in questions of ethics and the constitution of the subject. For this approach, James Bernauer S.J.'s *Michel Foucault: Force of Flight* (1990) is essential, for Bernauer understands Foucault as an ethical thinker interested in escaping a series of philosophical, political, and moral confinements that trap the subject in particular constrictions and images of knowledge and meaning, individual and social utility, and forms of self-subjugation.<sup>38</sup> This more synthetic reading of Foucault has been advanced variously by Edward McGushin in *Foucault's Askesis* (2007) and Lynne Huffer's *Mad for Foucault* (2009). For my part, I am mostly following this third, synthetic approach. Admittedly, it runs the risk of eliding the tensions and ambiguities that pervade Foucault's work, his slow developments, and frequent corrections to previous ideas. While early works like *History of Madness* and *The Order of Things* scarcely have an explicit ethical dimension, it is not difficult to see how they are

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<sup>37</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (1982), 778.

<sup>38</sup> James Bernauer S.J., *Michel Foucault: Force of Flight*, (New Jersey: Humanities International Press, 1990), 9.

primarily interested in the historical developments of man's "relation to the self," as articulated in the 1961 preface to *History of Madness*.<sup>39</sup> While in the early archaeological books Foucault understands this relation to the self as determined and pervaded by the moral space opened up by such disciplines as psychology, medicine, and the human sciences, in his later works he sees this relation to the self as the fundamental space of ethics, where subjects learn to know themselves, recognize some truth of themselves, and endeavour to behave and conduct themselves accordingly.

*History of Madness* is woven with the constant refrain of an ethical space of madness that emerges in the seventeenth century, so that it is clear that Foucault was interested in, even if only incidentally, a massive mutation in the ethical experience of European culture around the beginning of the modern age. No less, the ethical dimension of Foucault's critical project is emphasized in his first published article in 1953, the introduction to the French translation of Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence* (1930). There he alludes to an unnamed future project that would be a necessary "ethical task" and would perform an ontological analysis of history.<sup>40</sup> Thirty years later, approaching his death, he would repeat the ethical necessity of this historical ontology in the 1984 article "What is Enlightenment?" in which he characterizes his project as a "philosophical ethos" that endeavours to conduct an "ontology of ourselves as a historico-practical test of the limits that we may go beyond, and thus as work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings."<sup>41</sup> He also makes clear that this ethical task of historical ontology is not just a way of thinking but also, importantly, *a way of feeling*:

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<sup>39</sup> Here, Foucault reflects on the transformation of madness from the inherent destiny and risk of all reason into a positive objectification of a human psychological truth; what is at stake is a mutation in the relationship with the self: "Another effect of that figure was to lead man into a powerful forgetting; he was to learn to dominate that great division, and bring it down to his own level; and make in himself the day and the night, and order the sun of the truth to the pale light of his truth. Having mastered his madness, and having freed it by capturing it in the goals of his gaze and his morality, having disarmed it by pushing it into a corner of himself finally allowed man to establish that sort of relation to the self that is known as 'psychology.' It had been necessary for Madness to cease being Night, and become a fleeting shadow within consciousness, for man to be able to pretend to grasp its truth and untangle it in knowledge" (HM xxxiv).

<sup>40</sup> Michel Foucault, "Dream, Imagination, Existence," in *Dream & Existence* by Ludwig Binswanger, ed. by Keith Hoeller, trans. by Jason Needleman (Seattle: Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry, 1986) 74.

<sup>41</sup> Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 47.

I wonder whether we may not envisage modernity rather as an attitude than as a period of history. And by ‘attitude,’ I mean a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, *a way of thinking and feeling*; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. A bit, no doubt, like what the Greeks called an *ethos*.<sup>42</sup>

Endeavouring to feel otherwise: this is how I understand Foucault’s ethics. In a 1980 interview Foucault presents three elements of his ethics: “(1) the refusal to accept as self-evident the things that are proposed to us; (2) the need to analyze and to know, since we can accomplish nothing without reflection and understanding—thus, the principle of curiosity; and (3) the principle of innovation: to seek out in our reflection those things that have never been thought or imagined. Thus: refusal, curiosity, innovation.”<sup>43</sup>

So, while I acknowledge the difficulties with the tripartite periodization of Foucault’s work belonging to archaeology, genealogy, and ethics, I employ it loosely for two reasons: (1) in starting with the later “ethical” work, I intend to foreground the ethical centrality of Foucault’s work; and (2) I aim to set up a historical chronology beginning with Classical Greece, following the Hellenistic and Roman periods, early Christianity, and then on to the modern periods. But while I have decided to divide this thesis between the late, middle, and early work, I have attempted to draw out the specifically ethical dimension in each period, according to each of the three ethical elements: curiosity, refusal, and innovation. These three elements comprise, in each chapter, an ethics and a *way of feeling* respective to each methodology: curiosity limns the boundaries of possible modes of subjectivation and agency, refusal underlines the possible sites of resistance to power and government, and innovation aims to undertake new aesthetics and truths of existence. These three ethics of feeling cohere to provide an understanding of agency and curiosity, refusal and resistance, and innovation and art.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>43</sup> Michel Foucault, “Power, Moral Values, and the Intellectual,” *History of the Present* 4 (1998), 1.



# Chapter One: Ars Pathetica and Ethics

Very little truth is indispensable for whoever wishes to live truly and very little life is needed  
when one truly holds to the truth.

— Foucault<sup>44</sup>

## 1.1: The Gravity of Feeling

In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari make a tenuous distinction between affect and feeling, divided between affect as an element of the “war machine” and feeling as the regime of work:

The work regime is inseparable from an organization and a development of Form, corresponding to which is the formation of the subject. This is the passional regime of feeling as ‘the form of the worker.’ Feeling implies an evaluation of matter and its resistances, a direction (*sens*, also “meaning”) to form and its developments, an economy of force and its displacements, an entire gravity. But the regime of the war machine is on the contrary that of *affects*, which relate only to the moving body [fr: “*au mobile*”] in itself, to speeds and compositions of speed among elements. Affect is

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<sup>44</sup> From the manuscripts to a Collège de France lecture delivered on 29 February 1984 (CT 190).

the active discharge of emotion, the counterattack, whereas feeling is an always displaced, retarded, resisting emotion. Affects are projectiles like weapons; feelings are introspective like tools.<sup>45</sup>

For Deleuze and Guattari, both affect and feeling have emotional and passionate bases, but move in opposite directions, feeling tending toward the formation of the subject and affect advancing in the direction of undoing the subject. Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between feelings and affects links up with a number of their distinctions between reterritorializing and deterritorializing potentialities (i.e. the State apparatus and the war machine, tools and weapons, sedentarism and nomadism, projection and introception). In their idiosyncratic schematic, affects are discharges of emotion (according to a centrifugal and asubjective force) and feelings are resistant emotions (according to a centripetal and subjectifying force). Affect theory would eventually take up the mantle of a theory of centrifugal and asubjective emotions, of desubjectifying intensities, and deterritorializing potentialities.<sup>46</sup> But what if we started from the other side? From a feeling theory instead of an affect theory, starting from the idea that feelings are centripetal emotions that involve a gravity of introception, self-relation, and formation of the subject? Seeing as though Foucault, as he himself admits, was always interested in processes of subjectivation,<sup>47</sup> elaborations of various historical "forms of reflexivity" that comprise the basis of subjectivity (HS 462), should we not then say that Foucault is interested in a theory of feeling involved in the formation of the subject? And what's more, if Foucault understood subjectivation, or the relation to the self, as the field of contest for making and unmaking who we are, then what follows is an alternative path for affect theory: a feeling theory based not on the discharged emotions of affect but the introceptive gravity of feeling. It is not, then, through the projectile-movement of affect that desubjectivation occurs, but through the displacements of feeling that we find the

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<sup>45</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 399-400.

<sup>46</sup> I am thinking mainly of the work and influence of Massumi, which I discuss at length in the third chapter. Additionally, the affect theory of William E. Connolly in *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002) is in a similar vein, but I do not take it up in this thesis. For a critique of these and similar non-subjective accounts of affect see Ruth Leys, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 37 (Spring 2011): 434-472; and, for her broader critique, *The Ascent of Affect: Genealogy and Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

<sup>47</sup> Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 778.

possibilities for subjectivation and desubjectivation. Not the deterritorialization of the subject always awaiting a reterritorialization, but an introceptive gravity and reflexivity of emotion within an economy of forces that involves both the possibility and means of resistance for subject-formation.

However, beginning with a theory of feeling, in the way Deleuze and Guattari understand it, actually throws into question their own distinction between feeling and affect. Directly following their discussion, they consider martial arts as a practice that involves an indiscernible mixture of feeling and affect. On the one hand, affect allows the martial artist to “‘unuse’ weapons as much as one learns to use them,” and in “learning to undo things,” “to undo oneself, ... the undoing of the subject.”<sup>48</sup> But on the other hand, “the martial arts continually invoke the center of gravity and the rules for its displacement” or in other words the “regime of feeling” and the consequent formation of the subject. But this formation is not that of the worker following a code (i.e. a moral or disciplinary code); rather, the martial arts “follow *ways*.”<sup>49</sup> While these “ways” are “subject to gravity,”<sup>50</sup> or to feeling, this gravity of feeling must be “transcended in the void,” meaning that these “ways” or arts of feeling transcend their own corporeal gravity by becoming related to the soul.<sup>51</sup> This is a gravity that appears now rather twisted, caught in a movement of reflexivity, and tending downward toward the body only to be apprehended by the soul and refashioned as a “way” or style. In this sense, the gravity of feeling is transcended by an art of feeling or what I call an *ars pathetica*. This *ars pathetica*, then, would neither entail affect nor feeling as an oppositional dualism, but rather a way or a practice in which any distinction between, say, strictly corporeal affects and purely subjective feelings is dissolved in favour of a form of relationality and reflexivity specific to an art. It is within this space of art and practice, that affect’s “undoing” of the subject becomes another kind of stylization of the subject, albeit in a more rarefied form; and conversely, feeling’s formation of the subject (which might exist in an alternative regime of the disciplined worker, soldier, or student) becomes itself a kind of

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<sup>48</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 400.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 561n80.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

undoing. The gravity of feeling thus gains a transcendental function with regard to the subject's possibility of giving the self a form, undoing the self, or rarefying the self, via the practice of *ars pathetica*. As we will see in the second and third chapters, the *scientia affectus* will then satisfy this transcendental function with the empirical contents of an objectifying discourse, in turn instrumentalizing feeling as an object of power and government.

So, rather than emphasize affect as an asubjective becoming, feeling emerges in this chapter as an inter- and intra-subjective field of self-practice or *ascesis*, dynamic ways of relating to oneself and to others in a way that can be described by what Foucault names "curiosity": "not the curiosity that seeks to assimilate what is proper for one to know, but which enables one to get free of oneself" (UP 8). It is a curiosity about whether it is not possible to think, perceive, and feel differently. Such a curiosity, I argue, is charged with feeling, but not in an abstract way that would be reducible to a psychology of cognition or physiology of the body. This curiosity to free oneself from what one thinks and perceives and feels is in fact the "living substance of philosophy," a mode of philosophy that Foucault finds in its original form in ancient Greece and Rome. What, then, is the relation between categories of feeling and philosophy as a form of "ascesis" or the "exercise of oneself in the activity of thought" (UP 9)? How does feeling as a practice for thought and an exercise of the self confer on the subject a sense of agency and freedom?

A Foucauldian theory of feeling begins with the nebulous concept of what I am calling feeling-practices<sup>52</sup> or various kinds of *ars pathetica*. The feeling-practices that I will talk about are *eros*, *epimeleia* and *parrhēsia*; or love, care, and courage. These are feelings

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<sup>52</sup> My concept of feeling-practices shares some resemblance with Monique Scheer's "emotional practices," specifically with regard to the historical dimensions Scheer attributes to such practices. See "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion," *History and Theory* Vol. 51 (May 2012): 193-220. But whereas her concept is rooted in Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus*, I take my concept from Foucault's discussion of ethical practices or *ascesis* in *The Use of Pleasure*. In any case, there is a rough agreement between these two concepts when Scheer gives three implications for "emotional practices": "the use of the term 'emotional practices' should imply 1) that emotions not only *follow* from things people do, but *are* themselves a form of practice, because they are an action of a mindful body; 2) that this feeling subject is not prior to but emerges in the doing of emotion; and 3) that a definition of emotion must include the body and its functions, not in the sense of a universal, pristine, biological base, but as a locus for innate and learned capacities deeply shaped by habitual practices" (220). My only emendation to this breakdown would be that, for Foucault, the body is not reducible to "innate and learned capacities" and "habitual practices" but is more accurately ascribed to a changing field of experience and locus of non-identity: "nothing in man—not even his body—is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men" ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 87-88).

that are tools for social cohesion and self-transformation rather than the feeling-substances that in the modernity become the objects of discipline, biopower, and governmental control in tandem with a *scientia affectus*. Feeling-practices involve a dynamic relationality of feeling that obtains in the auto-invention of the self, within complex social arrangements and relationships of affinity. This would include relationships of love and affection; spiritual and monastic forms of guidance and practices of self-mastery and salvation; and revolutionary or artistic pronouncements of transformative truths.<sup>53</sup> Unlike feeling-practices, feeling-substances represent the organization of emotional and affective material for particular social roles and functions that become increasingly more rigid, disciplined, and administered in modernity. Feeling-practices derive truth from feeling itself and endeavour to give existence style and art, whereas feeling-substances decipher truth in emotion and affect and entail efforts to manage and optimize feeling. While Foucault looks to antiquity as a source for understanding feeling-practices, he sees the subsequent lineage of feeling-practices like *parrhēsia* in Christian mystic traditions of late antiquity and the middle ages,<sup>54</sup> in modern revolutionary movements beginning in the nineteenth century,<sup>55</sup> and in the radicalism of modern art beginning at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>56</sup> In these three examples—mysticism, militantism, and modern art—*ways* of life are taken to be a courageous source for truth, and an ethical practice of feeling becomes the requirement for truth.

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<sup>53</sup> Lida Maxwell has recently developed Foucault's concept of *parrhēsia* to argue that modern-day whistleblowers, such as Chelsea Manning, employ a form of speech-practice called "transformative truth-telling." See Maxwell, "Truth in Public: Chelsea Manning, Gender Identity, and the Politics of Truth-Telling," *Theory & Event* Vol. 18, Iss. 1 (2015): N/A.

<sup>54</sup> Discussing the "parrhesiastic pole" of Christian mysticism, in contrast to the more austere forms of Christian asceticism, Foucault says, "*Parrhēsia* is also the confidence one has in God's love and in how one will be received by Him on the Day of Judgement. Around this conception of *parrhēsia* crystallized what could be called the parrhesiastic pole of Christianity, in which the relation to the truth is established in the form of a face-to-face relationship with God and in a human confidence which corresponds to the effusion of divine love. It seems to me that this parrhesiastic pole was a source of what could be called the great mystical tradition of Christianity" (CT 337).

<sup>55</sup> Speaking on the relationship of Cynic *parrhēsia* and the "revolutionary life," Foucault remarks, "Cynicism, the idea of a mode of life as the irruptive, violent, scandalous manifestation of the truth is and was part of revolutionary practice and of the forms taken by revolutionary movements throughout the nineteenth century" (CT 183).

<sup>56</sup> On the relationship of Cynic *parrhēsia* and modern art: "the idea that art itself, whether it is literature, painting, or music must establish a relation to reality which is no longer one of ornamentation, or imitation, but one of laying bare, exposure, stripping, excavation, and violent reduction of existence to its basics.... Art (Baudelaire, Flaubert, Manet) is constituted as the site of the irruption of what is underneath, below, of what in culture has no right, or at least no possibility of expression" (CT 188).

Despite these exceptions, the long genealogy reveals that feeling-practices have increasingly become more and more marginal, while feeling-substances have become the norm. While feeling-practices and feeling-substances both open up a space of relationality, change, and transformation, feeling-substances involve a completely different economy of forces than feeling-practices, different relations of power, related more to the disciplinary requirements of capitalism, to a self-asceticism geared more toward following a moral code or maximizing one's productivity and utility. While neoliberalism has entailed the relaxation of strict moral codes and much more flexible and covert ways of managing and normalizing feeling-substances, the invention of new ethical feeling-practices exists only as a fleeting memory haunting the margins of contemporary thought and literature. In the years before his death, Foucault began talking about the need, in the present, to invent new modes of ethics that do not require a strict adherence to a moral code, a form of ethics that he dated to a pre-Christian era and which he called an "aesthetics of existence": "if I was interested in Antiquity it was because, for a whole series of reasons, the idea of morality as obedience to a code of rules is now disappearing, has already disappeared. And to this absence of morality corresponds, must correspond, the search for an aesthetics of existence."<sup>57</sup> Elsewhere he gives this search a crucial ethical dimension that he sees as lacking in the activist and progressivist movements of his day: "recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics. They need an ethics, but they cannot find any other ethics than an ethics founded on so-called scientific knowledge of what the self is, what desire is, what the unconscious is, and so on."<sup>58</sup> I take this need to be all the more urgent since Foucault's death. For new ethics, aesthetics of existence, and transformations in the way we relate to ourselves are needed in order to develop the complex collective agency needed for addressing planetary crises such as anthropogenic climate change or, as made clear with the recent example of COVID-19, deadly pandemics.

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<sup>57</sup> Michel Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence" in *Politics, Philosophy Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988), 49.

<sup>58</sup> Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," 343.

And so the point at which I'd like to begin my discussion of feeling-practices in Foucault's account of ancient technologies of the self is agency. Feeling-practices represent a kind of ethical ascesis, and my first point is that the component of feeling involved in such practices confers a sense of agency onto the subject. Ethics for Foucault is comprised by the relationship with the self, the way the subject understands the truth of their existence and the potential to create their own values, ideals, and sense of truth. This is what is meant by the ancient Greek word "ethopoesis": the creation of one's own ethos or way of being (HS 237). Feeling-practices involve the self's introceptive reflexivity of emotion: a form of ascesis that "transforms oneself into the ethical subject of one's behaviour" (UP 27) through, for example, ethopoetic practices of *eros*, *epimeleia*, or *parrhēsia*. As opposed to the feeling-substances of modernity, the ethical substances of antiquity were comprised by pleasure, in the case of the classical age of Greece in the fourth century BCE, and desire, as seen in the first and second centuries CE in Hellenistic Rome and the early Christians beginning in the fourth century CE. For the Greeks of the classical age there was an anxiety textured into the ethical experience regarding the appropriate uses (*chrēsis*) of pleasure (*aphrodisia*), of what kinds or degrees of pleasure are proper for an ethical subject, and of how one ought to practice self-mastery or self-restraint (*enkrateia*) in order to attain the ideal of moderation (*sōphrosynē*) (UP 37). In contrast, the ethical experience of philosophers, physicians, and moralists of the Roman Empire, and more intensely for the early Christians and Church Fathers, sees a shift in substance from pleasure to desire, from considering the appropriate moderation of pleasure to a tightening code of acceptable and prohibited forms of desire (CS 41). For Foucault this shift means an intensification of the relationship to the self and a correlative rise in cultural practices of self-examination, individualism, and eventually for the Christians, confession.

While for the ancients ethical practices involved feelings and ethical substances concerned bodily pleasures and desires, modernity has totally reversed this order. For modernity ethical substances involve feelings,<sup>59</sup> feelings to be managed, regulated, disciplined, or conversely, liberated. And beginning in the nineteenth century, ethical practices begin to involve sexuality, the kinds of pleasures and desires engaged in that

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<sup>59</sup> Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," 352.

ostensibly constitute ethical behaviour and ethical subjectivity. This shift is correlative with a whole historical intensification, biopoliticization, and sexualization of the body as an integral composite of practices that determine the formation of the modern subject. This reversal in the long history of feelings from practices to substances reflects the historical developments of discourse, knowledge and truth; the growing power relations of the government of feeling; and the subject's exercise of agency. For Foucault, however, antiquity provides a rich source for understanding the ethical agency of the subject. Speaking on the philosophical theme of "the care of the self," or *epimeleia heautou*, Foucault asks, "what is ethics, if not the reflexive practice of freedom?"<sup>60</sup> The subject, which is nothing other than the form of the relationship with the self, is constituted through the ethical agency involved in reflexive subjectivation. While modern government and discipline function through exerting force on the subject's reflexivity so as to influence action and determine subjectivating effects, this always occurs through an agonistic interplay with the subject's ethical agency. In presupposing the freedom of the subject, the task of power and governmentality *par excellence* is not to effectuate forms of what Étienne de la Boétie famously dubbed "voluntary servitude," but to seek new ways of strategically apprehending the gravity of feeling, the "recalcitrance of the will," and the "intransigence of freedom."<sup>61</sup> The aim is to arrest the radical potential of subjectivation, to compel compliance.

The economy of force relations in antiquity, however, were markedly different. The asymmetry of freedom between land-owning men and women, slaves, and children ensured that only land-owning men could properly be ethical subjects, as agential subjects of their own behaviour and action. Where there is slavery, however, there is no power, only

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<sup>60</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom" in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 284.

<sup>61</sup> Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 790.



violence,<sup>62</sup> and consequently ethical agency was drastically restricted for non-citizens. The brutal patriarchal society of classical Greece guaranteed the ethical agency of land-owning male citizens on the basis of slavery and violence against women. As a slave society, with dissymmetrical social relations between men and women, and in which the other is often excluded from ethical consideration,<sup>63</sup> the Hellenistic model is far from an ideal, and Foucault made no pretensions of wanting to return to such a society. This should go without saying. But in elaborating an ethics as an aesthetic of the self, as a series of practices that take the individual as a work of art, of making ethics a *technê* of the self, Foucault's genealogy of ethics represents a historicization of the modern determination of feeling-substances as objects of discourse, discipline, and government. This is to say, ethical subjectivation can always be otherwise than the modern biopoliticization of the subject as a simple living organism, consequently throwing into question the modern centrality of sexuality in subject-formation via which sex is medicalized and the body is sexualized.<sup>64</sup> Because of the intensifications of the ethics of subjectivation that biopower aims to achieve, with that of the self-disciplining, self-optimizing individual, subjectivation is always going to be a point of struggle and contest, giving significance to ethical practices of freedom that fashion an other

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. While violence is generally considered a precondition or effect of power, Foucault maintains an analytic distinction between power and violence even while they often overlap. They are not, however, identical. Sometimes violence is directed against a relationship of power (i.e. revolution, coup, etc.), and sometimes violence is used in order to maintain a set of power relations that is giving way to open confrontation (i.e. violent State repression, police brutality, etc.). Foucault: "in effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future. A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities" ("Subject and Power" 789); power, however, endeavours to direct, conduct, and govern possibility.

<sup>63</sup> Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," 346.

<sup>64</sup> For Foucault, the biopolitical control of the individual occurs by way of the medicalization of sex and the sexualization of the body as a principle of its docility and objectivity. Medicine makes sex knowable, treatable, manageable as a natural phenomenon, while sexualization articulates a power now internal to the body and its mechanisms. By the nineteenth century, "medicine made a forceful entry into the pleasures of the couple: it created an entire organic, functional, or mental pathology arising out of 'incomplete' sexual practices; it carefully classified all forms of related pleasures; it incorporated them into the notions 'development' and instinctual 'disturbances'; and it undertook to manage them" (WK 41). Meanwhile, sexuality has become a principle of intensification of the body as an object of knowledge; "sexuality is tied to recent devices of power; it has been expanding at an increasing rate since the seventeenth century; the arrangement that has sustained it is not governed by reproduction; it has been linked from the outset with an intensification of the body—with its exploitation as an object of knowledge and an element in relations of power" (WK 107).

sort of relation to the self.<sup>65</sup> And feelings are central to the ethic of curiosity which endeavours to be, think, and feel otherwise: the obstinacy of the subject's efforts "to get free of oneself," for, Foucault asks, "what would be the value of the passion for knowledge if it resulted only in a certain amount of knowledgeableness and not, in one way or another and to the extent possible, in the knower's straying afield of himself?" (UP 8). It is a curiosity that takes "care ... of what exists and what might exist," "a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way," "a passion for seizing what is happening now and what is disappearing,"<sup>66</sup> a question, in other words, of the subject's relation to the self and to truth. In turn, the passions of care and curiosity for the present and past interrupt thought and make possible its renewal.

## 1.2: Ancient *Ars Pathetica*: *Eros*, *Epimeleia*, and *Parrhēsia*

In turning to feeling as an ethical practice, what better way to begin than with Plato? Both Plato and his fellow student of Socrates, Xenophon, take up a similar problematic of *eros* rooted in the asymmetries of pleasures between the *erastes* (the lover) and the *eromenos* (the beloved) and the potential shame brought about for the *eromenos*. How is the younger male to be shown respect and treated with honour and dignity within what was considered an asymmetrical economy of pleasure? Under what conditions, and with what aim, is *eros* to be honourable? And how is the honour and freedom of the other to be understood and respected? Xenophon's Socrates draws a strict line between the bad love of the body and the good love of the soul (UP 233). Plato, however, does not pose the question of *eros* in a way that transfigures *eros* as *philia*, the idea that good love, as opposed to bad love, is aimed at the bonds of friendship predicated on "a life in common, reciprocal attention, kindness to one another, and shared feelings" (234). On the contrary, Foucault argues that Plato refuses to

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<sup>65</sup> Jeffrey Nealon, in *Foucault Beyond Foucault* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008) argues a similar point: that Foucault's turn to the ethics of subjectivation is not a turn away from analyses of power and knowledge, but an attempt to understand modes of resistance to biopower and neoliberalism's intensifications of the self. In interpreting ancient technologies of the self, the point is not to return to a previous relation to the self but to overcome the present one.

<sup>66</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Masked Philosopher," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 325.

trace a clear line between a bad love of the body and a good love of the soul (UP 238); for as Pausanias says in the *Symposium*, love, “considered in itself,” is neither “good or bad, honorable or shameful.”<sup>67</sup> Instead, Plato asks “what it means to love” (236). Plato’s interest is then not the inferiority of the body, or good or bad acts of love, but the nature and form of love and its relation to truth, thus displacing the problems of the asymmetries of pleasure. Love’s relation to truth comprises a searching ethics of *eros* that recognizes the freedom of the other and “an *ascesis* of the subject and a common access to truth” (244). Love as a form of ethical *ascesis* becomes a restless questioning of the true nature of love and the truth to which the soul of the lover is related. *Eros* is a feeling-practice or *ars pathetica* that does not renounce the love of the body or disqualify love between men, but gives style, form, and a certain value to love as a relation to truth (245).

In this way, Foucault’s discussion of Platonic *eros* poses the question regarding the relation between the subject and truth. *Eros* as an ethical *ascesis* or work upon the self opens a series of questions regarding the reciprocity between love and pleasure, the essential struggle with oneself as a subject of inquiry, and the slow and “gradual purification of a love that is addressed only to being per se” (UP 245). Given this Platonic series of questions, the subject of love becomes a possible site of inquiry into the truth of one’s desires. And while for Plato this has the effect of establishing a link between the subject and truth and thus of opening up *eros* as an ethical domain of *ascesis* and self-transformation, Foucault argues that this also opens the way for a new ethical problematization of love that would make possible a more Christian *ascesis* and skepticism regarding *eros* in itself, as we shall see with early Christian mechanisms of fear and shame in Chapter Two. But in its original Platonic iteration, this erotic *ascesis* can be viewed as posing a question regarding the relation of the subject to the truth of being, time, and death. Platonic *eros*, Foucault argues, is linked to a “perception of time” as a hastening approach toward death and the correlative finitude of the subject (UP 252). This perception of fleeting time is what allows the freedom of the other to be posed in love’s relation to truth (Ibid). If *eros* desires immortality, as Diotima famously

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<sup>67</sup> Plato, *Symposium*, in *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997), 181a.

says in the *Symposium*,<sup>68</sup> then this is only because love represents a fleeting passage in the space “in between” immortality and mortality, a space of movement, relationality, and transition that stages the subject’s struggles with truth and the activity of an *ars pathetica* that aims to give birth to new modes of subjectivation and new feelings. This represents above all a way of questioning more directly the truth of the finite and mortal subject and the freedom of the other. Truth is derived from the passional movement of *eros* between the self and other, life and death, time and immortality; here, *eros* is a transcendental condition of truth about existence.

The next key feeling-practice that Foucault discusses in his late work is *epimeleia heautou* or the care of the self. Foucault’s discussion of the care of the self follows two lines: one focused on the forms of ethical and spiritual subjectivation that proliferated in Hellenistic Greece and Imperial Rome under the influence of Pythagoreanism, Neo-Platonism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism; and the other relating more directly to an earlier Socratic iteration of the care of the self and the care of life as the basis for self-knowledge and primary directive of philosophy. After Plato’s questioning of the truth of *eros* throws into relief the question of the subject, the care of the self in the first and second centuries CE represents an intensification of the subject as a domain of ethical *ascesis*. Against the background of a series of political transformations in Rome during the first two centuries relating to the dissolution of the Roman Republic and the establishment of the Roman Empire, Foucault observes widespread intensification of the personal as site of social and ethical practice: “whereas formerly ethics implied a close connection between power over oneself and power over others, and therefore

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<sup>68</sup> “‘You see, Socrates,’ [Diotima] said, ‘what Love wants is not beauty, as you think it is.’

‘Well, what is it, then?’

‘Reproduction and birth in beauty.’

‘Maybe,’ I said.

‘Certainly,’ she said. ‘Now, why reproduction? It’s because reproduction goes on forever; it is what mortals have in place of immortality. A lover must desire immortality along with the good, if what we agreed earlier was right, that Love wants to possess the good forever. It follows from our argument that Love must desire immortality’ (*Symposium*, 207a). Of course, Plato does not wish to discount homosexual love or any love that does not have copulation or actual reproduction as its goal, instead opting for reproduction in immortality as a metaphor for the soul’s relational activity of self-begetting: “‘reproduction ... always leaves behind a new young one in place of the old. Even while each living thing is said to be alive and to be the same—as a person is said to be the same from childhood till he turns into an old man—even then he never consists of the same things, though he is called the same, but he is always being renewed and in other respects passing away, in his hair and flesh and bones and blood and his entire body’” (207d-e). Here Diotima makes explicit the connection between this love for immortality and the mutability of feeling, or an *ars pathetica* that gives birth to feeling in beauty: “‘And it’s not just in his body, but in his soul, too, for none of his manners, customs, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains, or fears ever remains the same, but some are coming to be in him while others are passing away’” (Ibid).

had to refer to an aesthetics of life that accorded with one's status, the new rules of the political game made it more difficult to define the relations between what one was, what one could do, and what one was expected to accomplish" (CS 84). This sociopolitical transformation is reflected in the more personal regions of the lives, truths, and conduct of individuals as a "crisis of the subject" or a "crisis of subjectivation" (95). Accompanying this curtailment of the political horizons and directives of individuals is a correlative swell in the social esteem of philosophy as a set of discourses and practices related to the spiritual development of the individual and the cultivation of the self as an ethical practice. This period saw the proliferations of schools, lectures, and new professional classes devoted to the spiritual direction of individuals, in addition to a more diffuse extension of social relations of "kinship, friendship, and obligation" (52-53). This is all to say, not that the care of the self entails an isolated subject working on herself in a purely personal zone, but instead that the care of the self represents a form of ethical *ascesis* and individual cultivation that is integrated within a complex field of social relations. The care of the self is thus as much a collective care as an individual care.

Foucault traces the historical developments of the care of the self in the first two centuries CE as a form of ethical subjectivation that prefigures later moral developments in Christianity, insofar as the care of the self entails a more intensified vigilance and problematization of pleasure and desire. But while the care of the self becomes the central theme of philosophy and spiritual exercise in Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Cynicism, Foucault remarks that it had originally been "consecrated by Socrates" (CS 44). Foucault finds this earlier iteration of the care of the self in the Platonic dialogues, the *Alcibiades I*, the *Laches*, and the *Phaedo*. In the *Alcibiades I*, Socrates relates the care of the self to the much more canonical maxim of *gnothi seauton* or "know thyself": in order to lead and govern well, Socrates tells the eponymous Athenian statesman, you must first know yourself and take care of yourself. In Foucault's reading, the *Alcibiades I* makes self-knowledge and the care of the self mutually dependent, meaning that rationality and knowledge are deeply entangled with a spiritual ethos of care. In contrast, later philosophical traditions will separate more cleanly the spiritual exercise of care from the epistemological activity of knowledge (HS 76-77). Similarly, while in the *Alcibiades I* a certain love between the master and the disciple is a

requirement for care and knowledge, the erotics, love, and pleasure of care will gradually disappear from the philosophical practice of care (76). But there are multiple valences of the care of the self even in Plato's oeuvre. While the *Alcibiades I* stresses the care of the self as a care of the soul, the soul as what we call today the subject of action, behaviour, and reflexivity,<sup>69</sup> and that leads to the contemplation of the divine element of human existence, the *Laches* presents a care of the self which would be a care of life (*bios*) as a practice and art of existence (CT 127). In any case, what interests Foucault is how care, in its Platonic articulation, is profoundly linked to love and knowledge and poses the question of the truth of the subject, the soul, and life.

Foucault takes the example of Socrates in the *Phaedo* to think at length about how care, like *eros*, relates to the other and to mortality. Influenced by his mentor Georges Dumézil's discussion of the *Phaedo* in his book on Plato, *Le Moyne noir en gris dedans Varenne* (1984) Foucault interprets Socrates' last words as an implicit evocation of the care of the self. Moments after drinking the hemlock, his body slowly going cold from his feet up, Socrates mutters to his followers at his bedside, "Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius. Pay the debt, don't forget." Enigmatic to be sure. Ancient commentators surmised that Socrates was simply delirious and babbling nonsense, perhaps the greatest irony for the wisest man of Athens.<sup>70</sup> Modern scholars in contrast have given more weight to these words. Nietzsche argued for one of the more common modern interpretations: "This ridiculous and terrible 'last word' means for those who have ears: 'O Crito, *life is a disease*.'" <sup>71</sup> Asclepius is the god of medicine and it was customary to make an offering to him as thanks for being cured of a disease; so of what disease was Socrates being cured in his dying moments? Nietzsche's answer: "Socrates *suffered life!*" <sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Foucault argues that the discussion of the soul in the *Alcibiades I* is not a substance but a subject; "It is only the soul as such which is the subject of the action; the soul as such uses the body, its organs and its tools etcetera"; "it is not at all the soul-substance [Plato] discovers, but rather the soul-subject" (HS 56-57).

<sup>70</sup> Emily Wilson, *The Death of Socrates* (London: Profile Books, 2007), 116-117.

<sup>71</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), 340.

<sup>72</sup> But as Foucault remarks, this is actually a very traditional reading; it had been echoed earlier by the poet Lamartine (1790-1869) and included as a note in the French edition of the *Phaedo* by classicist Léon Robin (CT 97). But Nietzsche himself even observed that Socrates was not as pessimistic as to say that life is a disease and death is the cure. And Foucault follows Dumézil in sharing this scepticism.

Against the pessimistic reading that life is a disease, Foucault argues that Socrates' disease is error and the cure is care. Given the common analogy in classical Greece between the philosophical activity of *epimeleisthai* and medical care and concern (CT 110), this is not an unlikely possibility. This analogical relation is what Foucault might have called a "discursive dispersion"<sup>73</sup> that finds care evoked in a temporal connection with medicine, health, philosophy, and knowledge. In addition Foucault reads an element of piety, for *epimeleisthai* was also used to refer to the way the gods cared for humans and the care humans gave to themselves and their relations with the gods (110). Care draws a diagonal between the medical care of life that leads to health, the philosophical care of the soul that leads to self-knowledge, and the divine care that transpires between humans and the gods. And just as *eros* was linked to a question of death and finitude, *epimeleia* registers an inevitable death, the need to take care even in death, and a transcendence of finitude in the way care, like *eros*, desires a certain immortality. While Nietzsche interprets Socrates' last moments as exposing the secret of his teachings—that his idealism and his doctrine of the soul concealed only a deep hatred of life—Foucault reads the last words against the grain as a summarization of Socrates' teachings as advice to his friends: "his final wish is: What I have always said, 'take care of yourselves'" (112). While *eros* was linked to the freedom of the other and the perception of mortality, *epimeleia* obtains in a relation of care with the other and transcends individual mortality in a community of collective care. Like *eros*, *epimeleia* represents a transcendental condition of truth, which unbinds the subject from the self and delivers it to a certain immortality and life of the other.

The last words of Socrates bring us to the third feeling-practice in Foucault's journey to antiquity, which is courage or *parrhēsia*, translated literally as "frank speech." While *eros* related the subject to truth as the truth of one's being (a being in relation) and *epimeleia* circumscribes truth as a practice between oneself and the other, *parrhēsia* represents the courage to speak the truth for the other in a way that entails the transformation of the subject. Foucault's exemplary figure of *parrhēsia* is once again Socrates, and his last words are in fact his final moment of *parrhēsia*; for he was executed because of his incessant questioning

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<sup>73</sup> "We must be ready to receive every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption; in that punctuality in which it appears, and in that temporal dispersion that enables it to be repeated, known, forgotten, transformed, utterly erased, and hidden, far from all view, in the dust of books"; see Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 25.

of received truths and dogma of Athens. In Foucault's genealogy of *parrhēsia*, Socrates represents a transition from *parrhēsia* in the political arena (as in a speech given to a public assembly or democratic council) to an ethical *parrhēsia* that has *epimeleia* as its goal (CT 157-158). While political *parrhēsia* incurred a great risk of persecution or death for the speaker in Socrates' time, ethical or philosophical *parrhēsia* took a different set of strategies and aims. Foucault summarizes the difference between political and ethical *parrhēsia*: “[a]bove all do not engage in politics, for you will die. The aim of the mission is, of course, to watch over the others continuously, to care for them as if he were their father or brother. But to what end? To encourage them to take care, not of their wealth, reputation, honors, and offices, but of themselves, that is to say, of their reason, of truth, and of their soul” (86). In addition, Socratic *parrhēsia* aims to embody and engender the care for life (127-130). In this way, *parrhēsia* is an ethopoetic practice whereby the subject, as either speaker or auditor, is transformed as a subject of care. Truth and the courage to speak the truth becomes the occasion for the transformation of the subject, even at the risk of ignominy or death.

Foucault's history of ethical *parrhēsia* draws a direct link between Socrates and the later Cynics of the first two centuries CE, for whom *parrhēsia* comprised the core of their philosophical and spiritual practices. Foucault reads the Cynics as radicalizing the Platonist doctrine of the true life or *aléthēs bios* by taking it to its most extreme conclusions. Specifically, the Cynics radicalize the four key aspects of Plato's definition of the true life as (1) unconcealed or without deception; (2) unalloyed or without mixture of good and evil, vice and virtue; (3) straight (*euthos*) or perfectly in line with the *logos* or with principles, rules, and the *nomos*; and (4) steadfast, incorruptible, and sovereign (CT 221-225). The Cynics interpret the first aspect in the most literal way as a life lived in complete public, eating, sleeping, and speaking always in the streets, often clothed with nothing but an old cloak (253-254). They radicalize the unconcealed life as a naked life: shameless and brazen (255). The Cynics also accept without reservation the most unalloyed, unlimited and indefinite poverty, eschewing all and any “pointless wealth” such as even a small dish to drink water (258). So too, the true life as the straight life configures nature as the only principle and *logos* to live by, life without convention or prescription (262-263). And finally the Cynics understand sovereign self-possession as a life lived solely for the other, offering



assistance and encouragement to others, going door to door giving counsel to strangers, exercising self-mastery for the sole purpose of providing care (270-272). The true life for the Cynic is thus naked, impoverished, bestial, and caring in the most scandalous way possible for the ancient world.

Contrary to Giorgio Agamben's famous distinction, found in Aristotle, between the true life (*bios*) of the polis and the excluded life of animality (*zoē*),<sup>74</sup> the Cynics dramatize *aléthēs bios* as an absolute embrace of *zoē* or animality. *Parrhēsia* as the courage to speak the truth becomes for the Cynics the courage to live the true life as an animal life in the service of others. In the last few lectures Foucault gave in his life he argues that while Neo-Platonism posited the true life as a metaphysics of *the other life* and *the other world*—which would later become an integral element of Christian metaphysics—the Cynics posited the true life as a spiritual practice of *an other life* that makes possible *an other world* (CT 246-247). An other life is the most true and philosophical life, which serves as the condition of access to an other world beyond the present epistemological, political, and ethical configuration of this world. It is for this reason that Foucault traces this Cynic radicalization of philosophy through early Christian mystic traditions (337), revolutionary “militantism” that posits a revolutionary life and a possible new world (183-184), and art movements beginning at the end of the eighteenth century that aim to give art and form to an *other* life.<sup>75</sup> In Foucault's hands, *parrhēsia* becomes a practice with a long history of speaking, thinking, and living otherwise, a tradition with which he no doubt would have liked to align himself in his goal of inventing a way of doing philosophy and thinking history that opens “the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think.”<sup>76</sup> If Foucault ever intended to make this link

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<sup>74</sup> In light of Foucault's statement in *The Will to Knowledge* that “[f]or millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence” (WK 143), Agamben reads Aristotle's famous claim in the *Politics* that while the *polis* “comes into existence for the sake of life, it exists for the good life” (1252b, 30), to argue that Aristotle excludes “the simple fact of living” from the “politically qualified life.” See *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 2. For a critique of Agamben's appropriation of Foucault see Jeffrey Nealon, *Plant Theory: Biopower and Vegetable Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015); and Paul Allen Miller, “Against Agamben: Or Living Your Life, *Zōē* Versus *Bios* in the Late Foucault,” in *Biotheory: Life and Death Under Capitalism*, ed. by Jeffrey R. Di Leo and Peter Hitchcock (New York: Routledge, 2020), 23-41.

<sup>75</sup> Foucault's examples of “Cynical” figures of modern art and literature range from Baudelaire, Flaubert, and Manet to Francis Bacon, Samuel Beckett, and William Burroughs (CT 187-188).

<sup>76</sup> Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” 46.

explicit between his own philosophical aspirations and Cynic *parrhēsia*, he was cut short by his own death. He ends his final lecture with this: “There you are, listen, I had things to say to you about the general framework of these analyses. But, well, it is too late. So, thank you” (338).

In Foucault’s discussion, these three feeling-practices—*eros*, *epimeleia*, and *parrhēsia*—have an affective register in the way they involve feelings of pleasure and desire, care and responsibility, and courage and imperilment. Moreover, they all share the commonality of refusing a separation between truth as an object of knowledge and life as it is lived in practice and experience. As Foucault remarks in the first few lectures of *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (1982), part of his interest in ancient technologies of the self is in the way they understand knowledge and truth in its relation to the subject, the costs or risks of truth for the subject, and the spiritual practices that make truth possible for the subject.<sup>77</sup> In terms of Foucault’s long genealogy of governmental rationality and its relationship with feeling, which I will take up at length in the next chapter, ancient technologies of the self represent a moment where spirituality and rationality, the subject and truth, had not yet been separated. For Foucault, “spirituality and philosophy were identical or nearly identical in ancient spirituality.”<sup>78</sup> And yet the Socratic entanglement of *gnōthi seauton* (self-knowledge) and *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) would gradually become untangled (HS 68). The “pastoral power” of the Christian church would eventually take up the mantle of the power of care (STP 127) in a way that subsumed more explicit questions of truth and knowledge, while the “Cartesian moment” in the seventeenth century, concomitant with the scientific revolution, would signify a more radical break in the link between spirituality and rationality (HS 14). This break between rationality and spirituality will then enable the objectification and instrumentalization of feeling as an object of a rational *scientia affectus* without the requirement of a spiritual or artful self-overcoming that belongs to an *ars*

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<sup>77</sup> By “spiritual” Foucault does not mean a metaphysical belief in the soul-substance or a spirit world, but the various practices belonging to forms of spirituality ranging from Hellenistic philosophy to Zen Buddhism that take up the self as a subject of *technē* and endeavour to transform or overcome the self: “the subject’s attainment of a certain mode of being and the transformations that the subject must carry out on itself to attain this mode of being” (“The Ethics of the Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” 294). In this way, questions of truth and the subject are posed as mutually dependent. In Chapter Two I will extend this to Foucault’s discussions of “political spirituality.”

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

*pathetica*. More and more over the course of modernity questions of knowledge and truth would be posed as separate from questions of the transformation of the subject (17-19). The notable exceptions to this de-spiritualization of rationality are, however, Marxism and psychoanalysis, for they both pose the question of the link between knowledge and the transformation of the subject (29).<sup>79</sup> This is because the critique of political economy and the theorization of the unconscious have as a necessary correlative the transformation of the relations of production on the basis of proletarian knowledge and the transformation of psychic economies on the basis of therapeutic examination.

*Eros*, *epimeleia*, and *parrhēsia*, then, are forms of ethical *ascesis* that do not adhere to a separation between truth and existence, and it is specifically their affective character that allows them to straddle the modern division between life as it is lived and embodied and truth as it is a subject of discourse and object of knowledge. In this affective “in between” that passes across the subject, experience, truth, and knowledge, there is a rich philosophical and spiritual questioning of the truth of being and becoming, of the self and other, and of time and death. *Eros* links the subject with the relation to truth and throws into relief a perception of fleeting time, mortality, and the freedom of the other. *Epimeleia* draws a diagonal between medicine and health, philosophy and self-knowledge, and the gods and piety; and it posits death as the occasion for care and care as the transcendence of finitude in relation with the other. *Parrhēsia* situates truth as the transformation of the subject in the service of the other, the risk and cost of truth for the subject even at the point of dishonour and death, and the courage to live otherwise in order to potentiate a new or radical order of existence—“a different economy of bodies and pleasures” (WK 159)—beyond the present world. In short, these three feeling-practices reveal a deep questioning of the relation between truth and the subject, of the essential link between *ascesis* or self-practice and knowledge, and a certain

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<sup>79</sup> “We should not forget that in those forms of knowledge that are not exactly sciences, and which we should not seek to assimilate to the structure of science, there is again the strong and clear presence of at least certain elements, certain requirements of spirituality. Obviously, I don’t need to draw you a picture: you will have immediately identified forms of knowledge like Marxism or psychoanalysis. It goes without saying that it would be completely wrong to identify these with religion. This is meaningless and contributes nothing. However, if you take each of them, you know that in both Marxism and psychoanalysis, for completely different reasons but with relatively homologous effects, the problem of what is at stake in the subject’s being (of what the subject’s being must be for the subject to have access to the truth) and, in return, the question of what aspects of the subject may be transformed by virtue of his access to the truth, well, these two questions, which are once again absolutely typical of spirituality, are found again at the very heart of, or anyway, at the source and outcome of both of these knowledges” (HS, 29).

use of feeling as a hinge between existence and knowledge, spirituality and rationality. *Eros*, *epimeleia*, and *parrhēsia* figure time as fleeting and finite, transcended and dispersed, and, in posing different possible orders of time, eschatological. In this way, feeling-practices entail the possibility of linking multiple structures, temporalities, and collectivities in a movement that, as Foucault puts it in a 1982 article about the photographer Duane Michals, “moves the soul and spreads spontaneously from soul to soul.”<sup>80</sup> In this same article he contemplates the connection between time and what he calls “thought-emotion”: “while time can very well bring about its changes, its aging and death, thought-emotion is stronger than time; thought-emotion alone, can see, and can make seen, time’s invisible wrinkles.”<sup>81</sup>

### 1.3: Feeling, Freedom, Power

“My role ... is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed.”<sup>82</sup> Foucault’s journey through antiquity can be understood, at least in part, as fulfilling this function of showing that other ways of relating to the self are possible besides those adopted from either an entrenched Christian mode of ethics or a more recent history of scientific knowledge and the *scientia affectus*. The point is to show that the way we relate to ourselves, the way we conceptualize the distinction between the intellect and affectivity, is much more open and variable than we take it to be. Foucault’s research on Greco-Roman technologies of the self are thus a correlative critical endeavour to articulate a new ethics in the present. Rather than grounding a theory of the subject on scientific, psychological, and medical discourses inherited from the nineteenth century, Foucault argues that antiquity provides a different problematic for thinking about the subject and its relation to truth as an aesthetics of existence, which would not be constrained to a strict moral code. Of course, there are no solutions to present

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<sup>80</sup> Michel Foucault, “La Pensée, l’Émotion,” in *Dits et Écrits IV 1980-1984*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 249.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 250.

<sup>82</sup> Michel Foucault, “Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault,” in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin et al. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 10.

problems in the solutions to past problems,<sup>83</sup> but the point is to critique what appears necessary and inevitable: “the object was to learn to what extent the effort to think one’s own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently” (UP 9).

What I have tried to show in this chapter is the degree to which Foucault’s attempt to think history in a way that enables a different way of thinking about ourselves in the present also involves thinking about feeling in a different way. Feeling-practices make apparent an entangled relationship between truth and existence, and in this way, categories of feeling, emotion, and affect are not posited as abstract qualities of cognition or physiology, effectively sidestepping current debates in the sciences and philosophy of emotion which seek to relate emotions either to the mind or to the body.<sup>84</sup> Rather, Foucault’s history of ethics in antiquity reveals that there are different ways to think about the truth of feeling, that is, as lived ethical practices within inter- and intra-subjective relations, and that transcendently conditions truth in the subject’s relations to life, death, time, and the other. The relationality and reflexivity of feeling-practices, how they reflect ways of relating to the self and to others, serves as the basis for how Foucault understands the condition of freedom. The space and distance in the relationship with the self, or modes of reflexivity, the introceptive gravity of feeling that leads back to the self, is precisely where Foucault situates freedom. It is a space that permits truth to be spoken about the self, a space open to relations of love and care, a space for decision, critique, and transformation. This is why for Foucault ethics and freedom are necessary corollaries of one another: “freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection.”<sup>85</sup> Foucault’s interest in *ars pathetica* in antiquity shows that the distance obtaining in the relation to the self is a space in which feeling circulates, differentiating and dehiscing the subject in a way that enables reflexive practices of freedom. In other words, feeling

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<sup>83</sup> Foucault, “On the Genealogy of Ethics,” 343.

<sup>84</sup> Known also as physicalist versus cognitive theories of emotions. For a broad historical overview of these debates, ranging from universalism to social constructivism, see Jan Plamper’s *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, trans. Keith Tribe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); as well as Barbara Rosenwein and Riccardo Cristiani, *What Is The History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017).

<sup>85</sup> Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” 284.

comprises the basic non-identity of the self that is a necessary condition for freedom, ethics, and agency. Indeed, if Foucault's *parrhēsia* reflects a unity between critique and ethical practices of freedom, then critique represents the endeavour to transform the subject, not by uncovering a deeper, more authentic, or repressed self, but by transforming the relationship with the self, as well as relationships with others and with truth, thereby renewing the possibilities for thought.

This question of the relation between feeling-practices, ethics, and freedom entails also an important political question. For during antiquity the possibility of freedom, ethics, and an aesthetics of existence is imbricated in the fact, as I have already mentioned, that the Greco-Roman world was a slave society: "insofar as freedom for the Greeks signifies nonslavery—which is quite a different definition of freedom from our own—the problem is already entirely political. It is political in that nonslavery to others is a condition: a slave has no ethics. Freedom is thus inherently political."<sup>86</sup> So too, power and domination are both enabling and restricting forces for freedom and ethics. Critiquing power and domination in the name of freedom also represents the possibility of the assertion of a new ethics, a new relation to truth and the self. Moreover, Foucault sees philosophy, in its "critical aspect," as precisely such an endeavour to call into question power and domination "at every level," a critical attitude that derives from *epimeleia* just as much as *gnosis*.<sup>87</sup> And just as ethical practices of freedom require ways of relating to ourselves as feeling subjects, in *eros* or *epimeleia*, power and domination also entail ways of addressing the emotional constitutions of individuals and the "affective intensities" that run through collectives and institutions.<sup>88</sup> This is where Greco-Roman ethics differs from Christian ethics, specifically in the way pastoral power evokes a different conceptualization of care, a different way of relating the subject to truth, and a different way of configuring the relation to the self. Care becomes

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 286.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 300-301.

<sup>88</sup> "The institution is caught in a contradiction; affective intensities traverse it which at one and the same time keep it going and shake it up. Look at the army, where love between men is ceaselessly provoked [appete] and shamed. Institutional codes can't validate these relations with multiple intensities, variable colors, imperceptible movements and changing forms. These relations short-circuit it and introduce love where there's supposed to be only law, rule, or habit" (Michel Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 137.)

likened to the care of a shepherd over his flock, the subject relates to the truth of *the other world* and *the other life*, and the relation to the self becomes a suspicious hermeneutics of desire. In much of his work on governmentality, Foucault argues that eventually this mode of pastoral power will become integrated into the state-form, beginning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as a way of governing the conduct of social functions, relations of exchange, and disciplinary institutions. This emergence of a governmental rationality unique to the State initiates the occlusion of the *ars pathetica* in favour of the objectification and instrumentalization of feeling through a *scientia affectus*. If the State wishes to govern a population through freedom, as liberalism endeavours to do beginning in the eighteenth century, and if there is a demand to know the nature of populations, individuals, and social formations in order to better govern them, then the problem of knowing, anticipating, and even apprehending feelings, emotions, and affects becomes a necessary question. And now, neoliberalism's social austerity and atomistic individual demands its own variant of the care of the self, requiring subjects to be emotionally flexible, able to transform themselves and adapt to any number of situations and work environments.

These political problems of categories of feeling in Foucault's middle period are taken up in the next chapter, in which I move from a discussion of feeling-practices as forms of *ascesis* or work upon the self to feeling-substances or ways of disciplining and controlling the self. In this historical shift from feeling-practices to feeling-substances my intention is to track in Foucault's work neither the lines of a transformation of the nature of feelings nor the simple mutations of power relations in the ways they discipline, control, or harness the subject's emotional constitution. Instead, I argue that the historical passage from feeling-practices to feeling-substances, from an *ars pathetica* to a *scientia affectus*, relates more precisely to a transformation in the way humans relate to themselves, as subjects of ethical action and reflection, as agents able to speak a certain truth about themselves, as subjects of relations of power and government, and as objects of knowledge and science. While my focus will narrow to the specific problematic of Foucault's genealogies of discipline, biopower, and governmentality, my aim is to show how power has compelled modes of reflexivity that position affectivity as something to be managed, in one way or another, in a position of subordination to the intellect, or liberated in a way that shores up more dynamic

forms of control and normalization. How do relations of power or forms of domination enable the conditions of emergence for possible ways of relating to the self? How do categories of feeling figure into the historical fluctuations of what Foucault calls the conduct of conduct?<sup>89</sup> What will emerge in the subsequent discussion is a political theory of feeling as a primary object of attempts to manage or conduct the behaviour of subjects, but also as one of the principal means of resistance that the subject has for refusing power. If this chapter has shown the ways in which feeling-practices affect a sort of “curiosity” in the subject that “enables one to get free of oneself” (UP 8), then the discussion of feeling-substances in the next chapter aims to identify categories of feeling as conditioning the possibility for both power and refusal, government and resistance.

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<sup>89</sup> For Foucault’s original discussion of the conduct of conduct, see the *Security, Territory, Population* lecture from 1 March, 1978. While I am stressing the double order of conducting the conduct of individuals, in Foucault’s discussion there is actually a triple order: the conducting of the (self-)conduction of individuals’ conduct, which gives rise to a cascade of historical “counter-conducts,” the lines of which Foucault identifies, for example, in various heresies that precipitated the Reformation.



## Chapter Two: Power and the Government of Feeling

And when the time for the breaking  
of the law is here, be sure it is to take place in the matrix  
of our everyday thoughts and fantasies, our wonderment  
at how we got from there to here. In the unlashd eye of noon  
these and other terrible things are written, yet it seems  
at the time as mild as soughing of wavelets in a reservoir.

— John Ashbery<sup>90</sup>

### 2.1: Affect, Power, Refusal

In turning to Foucault's work on relations of power and governmentality, this discussion of the relation between feeling and power drifts into familiar territory for affect studies, for which the connection between affect, power, and politics has long been a central question.<sup>91</sup> And yet Foucault's critics often consider him an incisive and influential thinker of power who unfortunately neglected to reflect explicitly on affect. One of the more prominent critiques comes from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's classic 1997 essay "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading" and the introduction to her 2002 book, *Touching Feeling*. Sedgwick, while strongly influenced by Foucault and the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, *The Will to Knowledge [La volonté de savior]* notes the tension in Foucault's (or Foucauldian

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<sup>90</sup> John Ashbery, *Flow Chart* (New York: Open Road, 2014), 15.

<sup>91</sup> The editors of *The Affect Theory Reader* named theorizations of the relations between power and affect as one of the major streams of affect theory; see Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, 7.

scholars’) attempts to move away from the repressive hypothesis while refuelling a more “abstract” version of the repressive hypothesis that pits hegemony against subversion.<sup>92</sup> The problem for Sedgwick is how Foucault’s critique of the repressive hypothesis fails to open up the space for a more complex account of freedom and the creative ability of the subject to find motivation and satisfaction in a complex and sometimes hostile environment. The “analysis of the pseudodichotomy between repression and liberation has led, in many cases, to its conceptual reimposition in the even more abstractly reified form of the hegemonic and the subversive,”<sup>93</sup> in which the freedom of the subject becomes once again pitted between two opposing forces wherein the more nuanced creativity of freedom is occluded. To counter this dichotomy between hegemony and subversion, Sedgwick argues that the affect theory of Silvan Tomkins accounts for what she calls the “middle ranges of agency” that are for her missing in Foucault’s work.<sup>94</sup> Sedgwick’s concept of the “middle ranges of agency” denotes the ranges of agency between pure acceptance or refusal within a limiting and/or enabling situation, relating less to *what* decisions the subject makes (or even their ability to make them) then *how* they author themselves as ethical actors of even the most limited decisions. This conception of the more grey-areas of agency is heavily influenced by Tomkins’ discussion of the freedom of the affect system as a freedom relative to one’s ability to understand and satisfy one’s own wishes or aims within a complex and changing environment; “a human being thus becomes freer as his wants grow and as his capacities to satisfy them grow.”<sup>95</sup> Freedom, then, is neither an absolute, nor merely a question of external (i.e., political) limitations. Rather, enhancing freedom involves creatively learning how to develop and satisfy one’s wants even in an environment that is hostile to the satisfaction of those wants, such as a violently homophobic social environment or a politically oppressive regime. The dichotomy of repression and liberation, however, which Foucault criticizes, fails

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<sup>92</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 12.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>95</sup> Silvan Tomkins, *Shame and Its Sisters*, 36.

to account for the more nuanced processes involved in learning how one feels and what one wants and consequently developing forms of nourishment and satisfaction.

Before tackling Sedgwick's critique, it is worth briefly reviewing Foucault's original critique of the repressive hypothesis which, by running against the conventional story of sexual moralities from pagan antiquity through Christianity and into modernity, opens up a novel account of power. Foucault's analysis strays away from instances of power that function through the law, such as prohibition, and moves to less visible (and so potentially more effective) instances of the way power produces or incites, rather than represses, sexual practices, standards of thought, feelings, speech, behaviour, and modes of subjectivity. Foucault's critique is not exactly targeted at a psychoanalytic theory of repression so much as a Freudo-Marxian theory of power that gained a large degree of influence and popularity in France during the 1960s and 70s and that had its peak in discussions around the "sexual revolution" occurring at the time. Rather than seeing sexuality as an immutable reservoir of human subjectivity that required liberation in the face of repressive forces of desire in the family, in schools and churches, and civil society more generally, Foucault was interested in how sexuality had become a historically contingent way of relating to ourselves, of turning the feelings, pleasures, and desires related to sex into so much talk, transforming sex into an object of discourse. Since the sixteenth century, Foucault argues that "the 'putting into discourse of sex,' far from undergoing a process of restriction, on the contrary has been subjected to a mechanism of increasing incitement; ... the techniques of power exercised over sex have not obeyed a principle of rigorous selection, but rather one of dissemination and implantation of polymorphous sexualities" (WK 12). In other words, what can be observed between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries around the emergence of the concept of sexuality is not a liberation of sex following its restriction, but a growing investment in sex as an object of knowledge, as the secret locus of the truth of the subject, and as a science of sex and the sexed individual or "scientia sexualis."

Through this intervention in the received wisdom of sexuality and repression Foucault advances his concept of biopower. He had previously spoken about biopower in his lectures at the Collège de France in 1976 in relation to how the concept of human life and the population became an object of governance for modern States beginning in the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries. In contrast to the way power had become figured as repressive, the theory of biopower aims to understand how the standardization of life and the normalization of thought, feeling, and behaviour is achieved through power's Yes more than its No. Foucault makes a number of propositions that were meant to amend a more commonplace idea of how power functioned at the time: (1) *power is not a substance* or anything that can be simply "acquire, seized, or shared," but is "exercised from innumerable points" within society and discourse; (2) *power is not external* to types of relations belonging to economy, knowledge, or sex, and does not maintain the role of prohibition but is directly productive in heterogeneous forms of relations; (3) "*power comes from below*" in a diffuse manner of wide-ranging social forces, from economic production, familial relations, and institutions, capable of being redistributed or homogenized to serve aims of domination; (4) "*power is intentional yet nonsubjective,*" with any number of intelligible aims, objectives, and functions but which are not reducible to individual consciousness, choices, or decisions on the part of members of the ruling class or State; and (5) "*where there is power, there is resistance,*" insofar as resistance is not external to power but forms part of its internal logic, with power and resistance constantly attempting to outmaneuver each other, adapting to one another in a vast network of power relations, initiating the dance and drama of subjectivation (WK 94-95). Biopower then comes to represent an ensemble of forces that endeavour to produce, manage, and maintain life, whether through discourses on sexuality, economic policies that advance means of population management, or more overtly violent forms of State racism that privilege the protection of certain lives at the expense of others.

Sedgwick argues that scholars' receptions of the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, whether through a misreading of Foucault's text or through accurate reproductions of a tension already present in the text, tend to reinscribe the repressive hypothesis rather than do away with it. Either way, the "implicit promise" of *The Will to Knowledge*—"that there might be ways of stepping outside the repressive hypothesis"<sup>96</sup>—is left unfulfilled, both by Foucault himself and his readers. Because the common take away is not only that power as prohibition is a modern ruse of biopower but that some form of prohibition is still at work in a more diffuse manner, such interpretations tend to reify a more abstract dichotomy

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<sup>96</sup> Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 10.

between hegemony and subversion. In Gramscian fashion, hegemony would then represent the functioning of power at a deeper level, calling for more intimate forms of subversion and individual resistance that would contradict the whole of the total order of power. Sedgwick's issue here is with identifying power *qua* hegemony with the status quo. The consequence, as she writes, is that "one's relation to *what is* risks becoming reactive and bifurcated, that of a consumer: one's choices narrow to accepting or refusing (buying, not buying) this or that manifestation of it, dramatizing only the extremes of compulsion and voluntariness. Yet it is only the middle ranges of agency that offer space for effectual creativity and change."<sup>97</sup> The Foucauldian image of power's productive Yes would then merely conceal a belief in a deeper prohibitive No that extends across the totality of what is, occluding those "middle ranges of agency" that Sedgwick finds so important. The critique of the repressive hypothesis would thus represent a vain attempt to disavow the centrality of repression: a failure to observe the nuances of the father's No. What emerges would then be a sort of Foucauldian version of Herbert Marcuse's "repressive desublimation": an account of how apparent experiences of liberation and freedom, such as acceptable expressions of sexuality in work environments, function as covert forms of repression on another, deeper level of the production and reproduction of the social apparatus.<sup>98</sup>

One of the strengths of Sedgwick's analysis, however, is her suspicion that there is more to Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis, even if she is more critical of the ambiguities, tensions, and unfulfilled promises of his critique. For the general momentum of Foucault's critique is not that the father's Yes is also a No, but that relations of power extend beyond the dualistic distinctions between the ruler and the ruled, Yes and No, or freedom and

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>98</sup> Foucault refers to Marcuse's concept in *History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 114. For Marcuse's discussion of "repressive desublimation" see *One-Dimensional Man* (London: Routledge, 2006), specifically ch. 3. Marcuse's analysis of "repressive desublimation" seems on the face to have much in common with Foucault's understanding of biopolitical control and the relationship between power and sexuality. Both Foucault and Marcuse analyze the relations of power and domination involved in the liberalization of sexuality in advanced capitalist societies. But while Marcuse argues that this domination through liberalization occurs by means of a rerouting of the libido toward finding satisfaction in—and in turn accepting—the world of late capitalism, for Foucault, the modern production of sexuality is not correlative with Marcuse's repressive de-eroticization of libidinous cathexis. In any case, Foucault observes a similar de-eroticization of pleasure, but ultimately this is more a question of the truth of the subject than sexual and libidinal energetics. For a recent take-up of Foucault's and Marcuse's overlapping and divergent understanding of repression, see Jeffrey Renaud, "Rethinking the Repressive Hypothesis: Foucault's Critique of Marcuse," *Symposium* 17 no. 2 (2013): 76-93. See also Lynne Huffer, *Foucault's Strange Eros* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 21-30.

domination. And what Foucault actually says is irreducible to the bifurcation of agency Sedgwick finds in the scholarly reception of Foucault's critique. Alluding to Marcuse's "Great Refusal,"<sup>99</sup> Foucault writes:

There is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. (WK 95-96)

Because there is no single, monolithic totality of power, there is also no single site of resistance or refusal. If power is diffuse, then so is resistance. Even as a multiplicity of forces homogenize and form ensembles of sites of domination, there are still only multiple points of resistance, requiring different strategies, intensities, and objectives. This also means resistance can never be total; its efficacy is not in its contradiction with a totality of forces but in its specific insertion in a field of forces.

In a 1977 interview with the editors of the journal, *Les révoltes logiques*, Foucault distinguishes this plurality of resistances from reformism. While reformism is a political practice that tends to be non-critical of more entrenched forms of power, Foucault rebukes a common left-wing critique of local resistances "on the grounds that they may give rise to reform."<sup>100</sup> According to this familiar argument, local resistance can never rise to the challenge of having a wider effect on more global systems of power because it will always be assimilated, recuperated, or ignored to the point of non-relevance; even if it does have a notable local effect it will only alert power to possible points of tension or transformation. Foucault's problem with this line of thinking is that it subordinates political struggle to the "meagre logic of contradiction": "the problem is precisely as to whether the logic of contradiction can actually serve as a principle of intelligibility and rule of action in political

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<sup>99</sup> See Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974); *One-Dimensional Man* (London: Routledge, 2006); and *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971). For a discussion of Foucault's critical reference to Marcuse here, see Jonathan Dollimore, *Death, Desire, and Loss in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 346n6.

<sup>100</sup> Michel Foucault, "Power and Strategies," in *Power/Knowledge*, 143.

struggle.”<sup>101</sup> Moreover, whereas this logic of contradiction served as a historically contingent point of resistance in the nineteenth century as a refusal of the bourgeois idea of the social contract,<sup>102</sup> now it has the effect of paralyzing political and ethical agency. For political struggle is not a zero-sum game, agency is not bifurcated between acceptance and refusal, as in Sedgwick’s consumer. On the contrary, there is a plurality of refusals—even at the “middle ranges of agency”—according to different exertions and formations of power.

While Sedgwick turns to the work of Tomkins to supplement an account of these “middle ranges of agency,” my argument is that there is already something akin to this more nuanced account of freedom in Foucault’s thinking. And just as Sedgwick finds an understanding of complex agency in Tomkins’ affect theory, I think that it is precisely the affective dimension of Foucault’s thinking that allows him to reach similar theoretical conclusions. The problem is twofold: (1) despite how Foucault has often been read, he does offer an account, in the *History of Sexuality* and elsewhere, of the complex or “middle” ranges of agency and freedom and an avoidance of the bifurcation of freedom into acceptance of hegemony and refusal in subversion; and (2) there are a number of incompatibilities and difficulties that arise between Foucault and Tomkins, specifically in the way Tomkins and Foucault think about the relation between freedom and affect and feeling. While Tomkins’ work is certainly edifying in its own right, the aforementioned problems make Sedgwick’s use of Tomkins to mount a critique of Foucault problematic.

According to Tomkins, the freedom of the affect system is first a question of degree, of degrees of freedom and constraint; second of all, this freedom of degree is constituted by the capacity of the affect system to combine with cognition in a feedback loop, allowing the affect system to take a variety of objects; and third, this autonomy of affect comprises a motivational system for subjective agency.<sup>103</sup> Apart from Tomkins’ systems theory language, there is a similar “feedback loop” in the way Foucault understands the relation to the self. However, there is no clean separation between cognition and affect, between thought and the

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>103</sup> Silvan Tomkins, *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Reader*, edited by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Durham: Duke, 1995), 35-49.

body, or between reason and unreason, that is external to power, discourse, or history. Second, while Tomkins distinguishes complex emotions from the eight or nine basic affects that comprise the complexity of emotion,<sup>104</sup> such a discursive construction would always be open to a Foucauldian archaeological analysis, which would aim to understand the historical conditions of possibility that permit a meaningful distinction of affect and emotion on the basis of a systems theory metaphor. A number of questions thus arise from a confrontation between Foucault and Tomkins, making them hard to reconcile. How is it that feeling has become a particular object of knowledge in this way, reduced to less than a dozen universal core affects? What historical conditions of emergence have been at play in making the body visible as a machinic system of feedback loops and general assemblies? What relation would this machinic assemblage of systems of affect, drive, and cognition have to the way developments in disciplinary power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries achieved a mechanization of the human body as docile cogs and vectors of labour and production?<sup>105</sup> Even more, what are the ethical consequences for this particular way of relating to the self?

These questions lead back to a central inquiry into how feeling and power relate to one another, and how relations of power beginning in the seventeenth century have enabled the discursive production of the categories of feeling, emotion, and affect. While this question of power and feeling is similar to concerns raised by Deleuzian affect theorist Massumi, albeit without an explicit historical dimension, it is a question whose genealogical register has not yet been well-explored in affect studies. While Massumi's work has often minimized the role of history in modulating and shaping the circulations of affect,<sup>106</sup> my discussion of the genealogical relation between feeling and power dovetails with Sedgwick's account of the sometimes blurry distinction between paranoid readings and reparative readings. Allow me to explain. Sedgwick appropriates the vocabulary of psychoanalyst Melanie Klein's paranoid and depressive positions, denoting opposite positions or relations with an object; the paranoid ego fixates on an external "bad" part-object anxiously and

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<sup>104</sup> Silvan Tomkins, *Affect Imagery Consciousness: The Complete Edition* (New York: Springer, 2008), 76.

<sup>105</sup> For Foucault's discussions of the "man-as-machine" metaphor in philosophy and science, see *Discipline and Punish*, 136, 242.

<sup>106</sup> See Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual* and *Ontopower*, specifically the afterword, "A Retrospective Introduction to the History of the Present."



suspects malevolent intent, while the depressive position works toward *repairing* the wholeness of the object as neither purely good nor bad.<sup>107</sup> Sedgwick argues that paranoia had become the default position of critical theory due to the influence of what Paul Ricoeur called the “masters of suspicion”: Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud.<sup>108</sup> Paranoid readings (dominant in New Historicist, Marxist, deconstructionist, feminist, queer, and psychoanalytic criticism) tend to privilege demystification and the stony-eyed dissolution of meaning around motifs such as false consciousness, the will to power, or the unconscious. Reparative readings, on the contrary, represent the critical endeavour to restore meaning, to repair one’s relation to the object of criticism. And while Sedgwick argues that paranoia has become the dominant mode of criticism for the many leftist academics and intellectuals, reparation and paranoia are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Mentioning a number of writers and artists, including Ronald Firbank, Djuna Barnes, and Joseph Cornell, she remarks that “sometimes [it is] the most paranoid-tending people who are able to, and need to, develop and disseminate the richest reparative practices.”<sup>109</sup> To this theme of the creative and critical symbiosis of paranoia and reparation, Sedgwick is able to write that Foucauldian genealogy represents a paranoid way of reading history that is not separable from reparative practices of love.<sup>110</sup> Accordingly, the ethical possibilities of reparation move in the direction of Foucault’s care of the self: “the often very fragile concern to provide the self with pleasure and nourishment in an environment that is perceived as not particularly offering them.”<sup>111</sup>

Yet, reparative readings often require some level of paranoia in order to avoid giving uncritical assent to an ensemble of relations of power. This is why Foucault characterizes

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<sup>107</sup> See Melanie Klein, *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946-1963*, ed. M. Masud R. Khan, *The International Psycho-Analytical Library* 104 (1975): 1-346. For a critique of Sedgwick’s appropriation of Kleinian terminology see Carolyn Laubender, “Beyond Repair: Interpretation, Reparation, and Melanie Klein’s Clinical Play-Technique,” *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 20, no. 1 (2019): 51-67.

<sup>108</sup> Also known as the “hermeneutics of suspicion.” Opposed to the understanding of interpretation as the reparation and recollection of meaning, the “masters of suspicion” endeavour to reduce meaning to “the illusions and lies of consciousness”; see *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 32-36.

<sup>109</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You,” in *Touching Feeling*, 150.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 132.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 137.

love as a radically fluid form of power, which is enabled by ethical practices of care and persistent contestations of frozen relations of power. In relations of love, passion, and pleasure, there is a fluid reversibility of power “where one wields power over the other in an open-ended strategic game.”<sup>112</sup> In love, I exert power over the other just as much as I am overcome by the power of the other. Power here is influence, or as Deleuze writes in *Foucault* (1986), it is the power “to affect or to be affected.”<sup>113</sup> Affection, care, and the fluidity of pleasure represent power’s true indifference to subject and object, a sublation of wielding power and being overpowered. Such power inherent in love represents both a paranoid skepticism of power in all its forms and a care and affection toward repairing one’s relationship with oneself and with others. Power is always contestable, conferring an agency of pleasure and affection on the subject which makes possible ethical practices of love, not an empty and general love for all, but a local and contingent love engaged in passion, pleasure, care, and affection for and with oneself and others. Unfortunately, this account of power as affection is no simple solution. All we need is not simply love. For it is in a society where relationships between groups and individuals permit more freedom and agency, and so more ethical possibilities of love, care, and affection, that governmentality becomes more and more crucial as a way of managing the conduct and behaviour of individuals. Importantly, Foucault understands governmentality, specifically in modern capitalist societies, as intervening in relations of affect, whether sexual, familial, or otherwise.<sup>114</sup> If relations of power permit more levels of freedom, and more ethical possibilities of affection, of love, care, or courage, then government responds precisely to intervene at the level of affect.

In the remainder of the chapter I will try to advance a textual reconstruction of Foucault’s genealogy of governmentality from the view of this government of feeling. Far from entailing a strictly paranoid view of affective practices fully within the capture of power, Foucault’s genealogy encourages both paranoid and reparative readings of history. My intention is to show how the government of feeling, while reflecting all the dangers

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<sup>112</sup> Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” 298.

<sup>113</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 71. Also, interestingly, the editors of *The Affect Theory Reader* write that the power of affect is “a body’s *capacity* to affect and be affected” (2).

<sup>114</sup> Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” 300.

inherent in relations of power, also entails creative possibilities for affective resistance and refusal, entailing new reparative ways of relating to the self and novel ethical and political possibilities for the subject. The strength of Foucault's thinking on power allows the analysis to shift from the descriptions of power to possible forces of flight, points of weakness and contention, openings for refusal and resistance. And so the modern age has witnessed power's objectification of feelings in tandem with a *scientia affectus*, with the discursive formation of feeling-substances as an epistemological flag post. Meanwhile, widespread attempts to apprehend or appeal to the emotional and affective constitutions of individuals, and endeavours to govern and standardize emotions and behaviours, results not in the nullification of feeling but the intensification of feeling as a domain of struggle. In other words, alongside the strategies, tactics, and micro-physics involved in the government of feeling, there is also a series of sites for a plurality of refusals.

## 2.2: On the Government of Feeling

Foucault's genealogy of governmentality begins in two places. First, as Foucault outlines in the 1978 lectures at the Collège de France, *Security, Territory, Population*, the emergence of governmentality as a *raison d'État* ranges between the middle of the sixteenth century through the eighteenth century, when the State begins to take on the role of the art of government. What occurs during this time, through political reflections on liberal economic policy and the burgeoning field and utilization of statistics, is that the State becomes concerned with domains of social life that had traditionally not belonged to relations of sovereignty: "to improve the condition of the population, to increase its wealth, its longevity, and its health" (STP 105). While the sovereign State had traditionally been interested in maintaining, protecting, or expanding a territory or principality in a relationship of singularity, externality, and transcendence to its subjects (a position defended most famously by Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince* (STP 91)), the art of government attests to a more direct relationship with the population, with the capacities of social and civil institutions, and with the maintenance of health. During this time, the meaning of the word economy begins to shift from defining the appropriate "government" of the family and the household (a meaning

derived from the Greek word, *oikonomia*) to the more political domain of the government of “things”: the circulation of goods; the relations of wealth, resources, and property; and the relationships between men and “things” like “customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking” (STP 96). This is the more idiosyncratic designation of economy proposed by Guillaume de La Perrière (c. 1499-1565) in a treatise from 1555 (92). But what had been a more idiosyncratic definition of economic government in the sixteenth century then slowly begins to influence State policy, most notably in the eighteenth century by the physiocrats, like François Quesnay (1694-1774) and Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1727-1781), and later by economists like Adam Smith (1723-1790). Similarly, government begins to circumscribe the State’s endeavour to know and direct a population, its individuals, its institutions; the circulations of things, goods, and wealth; and markers of health such as birth and death rates.

The second origin of Foucault’s genealogy of governmentality begins in the prehistory of the State’s seizure of government from a domain that had previously belonged to the family and to religion, and before that in Greco-Roman reflections on spiritual *kubernou*, or counsel, direction, and guidance. In the 1978 lectures, Foucault delves into this government of souls by way of the theme of the Christian pastorate or pastoral power, a form of power that aims to care for and guide a group of individuals in the way that a shepherd cares for a flock of sheep. Originating in the West via Hebraic culture and religion, but also present in Egyptian, Assyrian, and Mesopotamian literatures (STP 123), pastoral power is exercised not on a territory but on a multiplicity of individuals. Its aim is to benefit (morally, politically, and spiritually) the flock by providing subsistence and salvation, which represents an individualizing power that cares for the individual insofar as they are part of the multiplicity (125-129). These components would become relevant for modern techniques of population management that Foucault identifies in liberal economic policy, police and law enforcement, statistics, and biopolitical intervention in the health of the population. While the pastorate and its ideal of the king-shepherd and the god-shepherd was not widely accepted in Greco-Roman thought before Christianity introduced it to the West, Foucault argues that it circumscribes a set of relations of power that have come to define the subjectivity of “Western man,” his relation to himself, to others, and to truth. Speaking on the “paradoxical”

power of the pastorate and its role in the development of Christendom and the history of Western civilization and subjectivity, Foucault makes clear the stakes in this form of government:

Of all civilization, the Christian West has undoubtedly been, at the same time, the most creative, the most conquering, the most arrogant, and doubtless the most bloody. At any rate, it has certainly been one of the civilizations that has deployed the greatest violence. But, at the same time, and this is the paradox I would like to stress, over millennia Western man has learned to see himself as a sheep in a flock, something that assuredly no Greek would have been prepared to accept. Over millennia he has learned to ask for his salvation from a shepherd who sacrifices himself for him. (130)

Despite Foucault's insistence on the importance of the pastorate for the development of governmentality and Western subjectivity, when he returns to these questions two years later in his 1980 Paris lectures, *On the Government of the Living*, he argues that the pastorate is important but not isomorphic with early Christian techniques of spiritual direction or the government of souls (GL 255). Instead, Christian spiritual direction develops from a number of forms of *ascesis* from Classical Greece and Imperial Rome, ranging from Platonism to Stoicism, but emends and diverges from Greco-Roman spirituality as well, from the elaboration of *metanoia* as an essential break with the self, to reflections on the proper form and nature of penance, baptism, and, a bit later beginning in the fourth century, confession. The institutionalization of confession by the seventh and eighth centuries would come to represent for Foucault a major turning point in ancient spirituality and ethics and a watershed moment in the history of the Western subject. On the one hand, confession appears to extend the Pythian principle of *gnothi seauton* or self-knowledge, but on the other hand, it would irrevocably alter the subject's relation to the truth as a truth that is hidden deep within the self and that requires putting that truth into speech in order to know it and to distinguish true from false. This interest in the institutionalization of confession would link up with a central question that Foucault addresses in *The Will to Knowledge* regarding the way in which the modern construction of the relation between subjectivity and sexuality has entailed various ways of putting sex into discourse. In addition, the theme of confession picks up a number of questions that pervade his work on madness, confinement, and psychiatry in the *History of*

*Madness*, in which confession plays a key role in diagnosis and treatment (as it still does in today's therapeutic interventions). Similarly, confession is also related to a whole ensemble of penal, disciplinary, and juridical techniques that permeate the criminal-punishment system from law enforcement to modern prisons and the construction of the discursive object of criminal subjectivity. The central question Foucault then asks, in relation to the extreme ends of violence and creativity that Christian civilization has embodied, is why has confession become this fundamental bedrock not just of spirituality but also of psychology and justice? Why has "Western man" persisted in identifying and manifesting the truth of himself by speaking it? And why has this confessional subjectivity become an essential object of government?

Like most of Foucault's more pressing questions, there are no clear answers to this question, only a series of efforts to limn the contours of the confessional subject, to find points of contest and weakness, openings for new questions. In terms of the government of feeling, this institutionalization of confession utilizes two key affective registers: fear and shame. If Christianity introduces a novel form of the relation to the self in the Greco-Roman world, it is *metus* or the fear of the self that enables this shift in subjectivity:

Fear, for the first time in history—well, fear in the sense of fear about oneself, of what one is, of [what may happen], and not fear of destiny, not fear of the gods' decrees—this fear is, I think, anchored in Christianity from the turn of the second and third century and will obviously be of absolutely decisive importance in the whole history of what we may call subjectivity, that is to say the relationship of self to self, the exercise of self on self, and the truth that the individual may discover deep within himself (GL 127-128).

This *metus* or anxiety is predicated on the fear of the other that is within oneself, Satan, or the evil spirit that resides alongside the soul. In its very early stages, Christianity wrestles with competing notions of a divine or pure element of the soul, inherited from Platonic and Stoic traditions and advanced by the Gnostics, a soul that would be at odds with the world of falsity, shadow, and ignorance. Instead, the early Christians figure a soul that is constantly at battle with the evil within itself, and that alone the soul does not have the resources or the reason to differentiate good from bad, truth from falsity.

Early on, in the first three centuries during and following the Apostolic period, the consequences of the fear of the self lead to articulations of baptism and the “discipline of repentance” or penance (*paenitentia*, the Latin translation of the Greek word *metanoia*) (GL 128). Because the self is an object of fear, then what is needed is the transformation or conversion of the self. If the presence of the other within oneself (Satan) is the source and origin of sin, then baptism and penance aim to correct this relation between the other and sin by linking death with the relationship to the self. Discussing the works of Tertullian (c. 155-c. 225) and Origen of Alexandria (c. 185-c. 253), Foucault observes that the early Church Fathers understood baptism as a preparation for death and a mortification of the self (156). In preparing for death, baptism was supposed to signify a crossing of thresholds, a struggle with the other and its expulsion from oneself, whereby death represents the truth of life (157). Penance, both the accompaniment to baptism and its renewal, then, conveys the impossibility of the perfection of the soul, the tendency to relapse or to relive the original fall, and the need to find salvation despite and even *in* imperfection. Early penance, however, before the institutionalization of confession, took somewhat different, sometimes conflicting, forms. One of these is *exomologesis*, which while it is often translated as confession, played a different role in the early stages of the Christianity. *Exomologesis* was the manifestation of the self and the manifestation of one’s sins, but generally in a more or less non-verbal function (212): a public dramaturgy and display of oneself as a sinner, accompanied by fasting, prayers, vigils, and supplications, as well as “the rites of ashes, entreaties, the hair, shirt, cries, tears, kneeling” (212-213). It thus functions as a manifestation of the self, not in the sins one has committed, but as the sinner that one is. In showing oneself to be a sinner, the penitent identifies herself as belonging to the world of death and flesh, to be, as Foucault puts it, “dying to death”; and in this identification of oneself with death the penitent looks toward rebirth through death (213): “it is a matter of manifesting what one is and, at the same time, erasing what one is” (213-214).

The fear of the other within oneself, and consequently the identification with death and the renunciation of the self, comprise the basis of early Christian technologies of the self. And while the common view of Foucault’s later work sees him as advocating a more Greek sensibility of an aestheticization of existence through an ethics of pleasure, his own

comments on desubjectification and the refusal to be what one is echo more exactly these early Christian forms of *ascesis*, *metanoia*, and the mortification of self, prior to the institutionalization of confession. Echoing the Christian metanoic break with the self and ego, he writes in 1982: “Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are.”<sup>115</sup> Foucault’s partial ambivalence toward the Church Fathers is thus not due to the fear and metanoic renunciation of the self but with the introduction of the mechanism of shame. Fear of the self had already instilled an ethic of obedience to, effectively, anyone but the self. Because the self can always be deceived it is necessary to obey in everything, even the most absurd orders, a common feature of early monastic communities.<sup>116</sup> But it is the mechanism of shame that marries obedience to a power relation of speaking the truth. In opposition to effectively non-verbal forms of *exomologesis*, the institutionalization of confession is precipitated by the binding of the manifestation of self (which had characterized confession) and the explicit verbalization of sin. Rather than examining one’s actions, and manifesting oneself as a sinner, confession beginning in monastic communities in the fourth and fifth centuries becomes wedded to a deep exploration, divulgence, and interiorization of the self through speech, exemplified by the early proponent of monasticism, John Cassian (CE 360-436). In order to know if one’s thoughts are good or bad, to know what parts of the self have their source in evil and which are rooted in good, one must speak. The good things, as Cassian’s argument goes, will have no difficulty or resistance being spoken. But the evil things will be accompanied by shame (GL 305). This mechanism of shame will serve as a tool for recognizing the truth of oneself and differentiating it from falsity, an essential element in the form of confession that is to replace *exomologesis* and link up with a whole ensemble of sciences of the individual in the modern age: *exagoreusis*, or “the perpetual putting oneself into discourse” (307). But while shame for Tomkins or Sedgwick is caught in the energetics of affect, as the partial inhibition

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<sup>115</sup> Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” 785. Importantly, however, it is not exactly the fear of the self and the evil within it that conveys the metanoic break with the self that Foucault is interested in, but the aesthetics of pleasure: “The intensities of pleasure are indeed linked to the fact that you desubjugate yourself, that you cease being a subject, an identity. It is like an affirmation of nonidentity”; see Foucault, “The Gay Science,” trans. Nicholae Morar and Daniel W. Smith, *Critical Inquiry* 37.2 (2011), 400.

<sup>116</sup> In stories of obedience through absurdity related in the *Lausiac History* in the fifth century, a monk is ordered to water a stick every day, another to throw his eight year old son in a river (GL 269-270).



of positive affect,<sup>117</sup> and the positive objectivity of consciousness and subjective interiority,<sup>118</sup> the Christian coupling of shame and *metus* precedes and precludes the possibility of a positive self as object of knowledge that the Tomkins model—as well as the *scientia affectus*—assumes.

For it will take over a millennium before sex, feeling, and subjectivity would be put into a scientific discourse in the form of Foucault’s “*scientia sexualis*” and with what I am calling a *scientia affectus*. What was first needed, however, for the emergence of a *scientia affectus* was the elaboration of a positivity of the subject and an ontological foundation of the self, which early Christianity had warded off through the fear of the self. For the positive cohesion of Christian subjectivity is always threatened by the presence of the other within the self, either in the form of Satan or the Holy Spirit. One of the openings or weaknesses in the construction of the confessional subject and the *scientia affectus* that Foucault’s discussion of the Church Fathers reveals is in the negativity of the self to which early Christianity attests. In effect, this absence of an ontological foundation of the subject would remain an obstacle for any science of the individual until the seventeenth century. Foucault scholar James Bernauer S.J. describes this distinction between positive and negative subjectivity as such:

For the Christian, the truths of the self were always precarious, for they always related to the soul’s continual conflict with the evil within itself. There could be no firm allegiance to a positive self, for there was no truth about the self that could not be utilized by the False One as a device for misleading and ensnaring the soul... The aim of modern knowledge and technologies of the self, however, is to foster the emergence of the positive self; one recognizes and attaches oneself to the self made

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<sup>117</sup> Tomkins, *Shame and Its Sisters*, 134.

<sup>118</sup> In the opening of his four-volume masterpiece, *Affect Imagery Consciousness*, Tomkins distinguishes his “empirical analysis of consciousness” with both Behaviourism and Psychoanalysis, which in his reading sought various ways of submerging the positivity of consciousness with their respective concepts of “behaviour” and the “unconscious.” He also associates his project with what Foucault calls “anthropology” when he understands his empirical study of consciousness as enabling an essential understanding of man. See *Affect Imagery Consciousness*, 3: “We must determine, empirically, the conditions under which messages become conscious, and the role of consciousness as part of a feedback mechanism. This is a critical problem for any theory of the human being.”

available through the categories of psychological and psychoanalytic science, and through the normative disciplines consistent with them.<sup>119</sup>

But Foucault places this modern elaboration of positive subjectivity in a way that is in agreement with the development of Christianity rather than against it. Just as Foucault identifies the “Cartesian moment” as the definitive break between spirituality and rationality in the classical *episteme*, he discusses Descartes’s role in formulating an ontological positivity that is fully consistent with Christianity’s confessional interiorization of the self. As Foucault points out, Descartes’s malicious demon reflects the traditional role of Satan in deceiving the self and triggering a sweeping doubt of the self. But rather than this precipitating the plumbing of one’s deepest interiority and the infinite skepticism of the soul, Descartes finds the one solid bedrock of subjectivity in the simple fact of one’s existence. Satan may deceive you in all your thoughts, perceptions, and feelings, but he cannot trick you into thinking you do not exist. Despite this new foundation of self-knowledge, the essential structure of confession, of deep self-suspicion and self-examination, remains intact, especially the forms of obedience that it engenders. Since you can still always be deceived, obedience to God and to anyone but oneself is still necessary to prevent one’s will from deceiving itself. But with Descartes, knowledge of the individual is now possible, beginning with the ontological fact of one’s existence as a thinking subject. Obedience is no longer a social recourse due to the impossibility of self-knowledge, but now it is the accompaniment of knowledge. Eventually, this knowledge of the individual will enable the emergence of a *scientia affectus* and the formation of feeling-substances and their disciplinary optimization; correlatively, the relation to the self and to one’s feelings becomes suffused with relations of obedience.

This shift in the function of obedience and its relationship to knowledge echoes a set of concerns that Foucault raises in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). How did confession become a technique of discipline and an object of power in the modern age? How did obedience change from its existence in monastic communities in the first millennium to the forms of obedience required in a prison or factory in the nineteenth century? Even more, if the emergence of governmentality in the eighteenth century entailed a shift from a negative

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<sup>119</sup> Bernauer, *Michel Foucault: Force of Flight*, 174.

sovereign power to a more productive and positive administrative power, then how did this modify already existing mechanisms of discipline, of which confession played a key role? Foucault broaches this question in *Discipline and Punish*, a question that would arguably absorb him for the rest of his life. If discipline had come to be a principal technology of domination and the exercise of power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in schools, barracks, prisons, and factories, then how was it to be distinguished from earlier monastic and spiritual forms of discipline that existed in philosophical and religious contexts for millennia, those forms of self-discipline that he would come to umbrella under the terms *ascesis* and the care of the self? Foucault's answer in 1975, however provisional and speculative at the time, was that the function of monastic discipline "was to obtain renunciations rather than increases of utility ... which, although they involved obedience to others, had as their principal aim an increase of the mastery of each individual over his own body" (DP 137). Whereas monastic discipline aimed at self-mastery, the freedom of oneself in relation to one's body, disciplinary power in the modern age makes obedience coextensive with utility; rather than liberating the self and the body, discipline then represents the human body's entrance into "a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it" (138). In making obedience utterly correlative with utility, discipline achieves a dissociation of the body and power whereby the body is turned into a vector of political and economic forces, obedience and utility; the body becomes an pure "aptitude" and "capacity" (138).

This transformation of the body into a capacity correlates with the invention of what I have been calling feeling-substances. While the Christian mechanisms of fear and shame functioned as feeling-practices for the interiorization of the self and the religious ethic of obedience, the transformation of the body into a vector of capacity parallels the much later invention of the psychological category of emotion.<sup>120</sup> This new truth of the subject and of the body would be distinct from earlier understandings of the passions of the soul in antiquity and the medieval period; emotions, in contrast, are mental states rooted in physiological dynamics of the body. From Descartes' use of "*émotions*" in *Les Passions de l'âme* through David Hume and other Scottish Empiricists like David Hartley (1705-1757) and Thomas

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<sup>120</sup> For a discussion of the invention of emotion as a psychological category, see Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Brown, the word “emotion” would transform from denoting social and civil unrest and the violent stirrings of nature witnessed in phenomena like earthquakes to a psychological category of mental states related to physiological expressions of the brain and body.<sup>121</sup> This shift in the understanding of feelings and the invention of a science of emotion corresponds to a shift in the way feelings interacted with sovereign power and disciplinary power in the eighteenth century. In sovereign forms of punishment such as execution and torture that Foucault describes at the outset of *Discipline and Punish*, power interacts with feeling briefly and spectacularly as the manifestation of the truth and power of the sovereign. Feeling, felt as the excruciating pain and agony of the criminal—the affected body—, briefly becomes the spectacle and occasion for the legibility of power. In contrast, disciplinary power’s interaction with feeling shifts from being brief, occasional, and spectacular, to being durational, intentional, and quotidian. Feeling-substances become mobilized as legible marks of the soldier’s discipline, as Foucault describes at the beginning of the chapter “Docile Bodies,” demonstrating courage, pride, and valour (DP 135). Power no longer interacts with feeling as the spectacular inscription of the sovereign on the body of the juridical subject; rather, discipline represents power’s investment in the body and feeling as a pure capacity, spread over a duration of time and extension of space, enabling the work of shaping individuals and subjectivities: the soldier who is courageous, the student eager, the prisoner contrite. Here alongside docile bodies we find docile emotions. In becoming correlated with bodily capacity, feelings and emotions, as docile and objectified physiological substances, are inserted into a vast machinery of disciplinary power.

While the body becomes transformed as a vector of capacity and feeling is transformed as a physiological substance, “Western man’s” relation to himself becomes drilled by a relation to one’s feelings as a relation to the body. Feelings are now bodily capacities and substances, rather than practices through which a truth of the self and existence may be derived. Similarly, the emergence of governmentality as the modern *raison d’État* for the management of the capacities of the population is accompanied by new articulations of the nation. For seventeenth century political theorists like Thomas Hobbes (as well as his Leveller and Digger rivals like John Warr) and historians like Henri de

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<sup>121</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. “emotion.”

Boulainvilliers (1658-1722), the nation is founded on relations of conquest and war,<sup>122</sup> an account that would later influence French historians François Guizot (1787-1847) and Augustin Thierry (1795-1856) and eventually Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' concept of class war.<sup>123</sup> But alongside these politico-historical discourses there emerges a more dominant account of the nation that would influence the French Revolution. Rather than the nation comprising an encrustation of relations of hierarchies between victor and vanquished classes or races, Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (1748-1836), Catholic priest and theorist of the Revolution, argues in the influential pamphlet *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-Etat* (1789), that nationhood is constituted by the social functions and institutions that give it the capacity to govern itself: agriculture, commerce, education, the army, the church, the magistrature, industry, laws and legislature, etc. all of which belong by and large to the bourgeois classes that make up the Third Estate.<sup>124</sup> Governmentality emerges during this period in tandem with changing understandings of the nation as comprised by social capacities rather than sovereign rights of conquest. Now, the State's relationship to the nation is no longer simply predicated on the maintenance and protection of the rights of conquest, but on the social capacities that are the condition of nationhood. The State's role, then, is to manage, improve, and optimize these social capacities. Rather than defending or expanding the sovereign's territory, as in

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<sup>122</sup> See Foucault's discussion of relations of war in Hobbes in *Society Must Be Defended*, 89-94; also see Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 84-86; "Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man" (84). For Foucault's discussion of the Levellers, Diggers, and John Warr see *Society Must Be Defended*, 107-109; also see John Warr, *The Corruption and Deficiency of the Laws of England* (London, 1649), 1: "The laws of England are full of tricks, doubts, and contrary to themselves; for they were invented and established by the Normans, which were of all nations the most quarrelsome and most fallacious in contriving of controversies and suits." For Foucault's discussion of relations of war in Boulainvilliers's "political historicism" see *Society Must Be Defended*, 155-160; for Boulainvilliers's historical works that Foucault references see also p. 140n22.

<sup>123</sup> For Foucault's discussion of "national duality" and the role of relations of war, power, and struggle in the histories of political and social institutions by Guizot and Thierry see *Society Must Be Defended*, 226. Foucault quotes Guizot summarizing this thinking in the latter's *Du Gouvernement de la France depuis la Restauration et du ministre actuel* (Paris, 1820), 1: "For more than thirteen centuries, France contained two peoples: a victorious people and a vanquished people." Foucault also cites a letter that Marx wrote to J. Weydemeyer on 5 March 1852, in which he remarks that Thierry and Guizot were engaged in a "history of classes"; and in another letter to Engels on 27 July 1854 Marx claimed that Thierry was "the father of the 'class struggle'"; see p. 85n6.

<sup>124</sup> Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 218-222. See also Joseph Sieyès, "What Is the Third Estate?" In *Political Writings*, ed. Michael Sonenscher (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2003) 92-162; "What is a nation? It is a body of associates living under a common law, represented by the same legislature, etc." (97); "The Third Estate thus encompasses everything pertaining to the Nation, and everyone outside the Third Estate cannot be considered to be a member of the Nation" (98).

earlier centuries, for example, modern States begin to wage wars on the basis of improving the conditions of commerce or industry or for the purposes of racist nationalisms promoting the superiority of the race or “national interests.” Once biopolitics begins to permeate Western societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, sovereign rights of violence and war collide with governmental efforts to optimize the social capacities of the nation, with horrific consequences. Racism, eugenics, and genocide develop as biopolitical means of improving social capacities and imposing population norms at the expense of perceived enemies, intruders, or degeneracies.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the rise of neoliberalism deepens this managerial governmentality through the discursive framework provided by the *scientia affectus*, extending the management of bodily capacity to the affective relations that run through the social fabric. As Foucault remarks in a 1981 interview, “we live in a relational world that institutions have considerably impoverished. Society and the institutions which frame it have limited the possibility of relationships because a rich relational world would be very complex to manage.”<sup>125</sup> Discipline becomes automatized, and its dual aims of obedience and utility become the apparently voluntary projects of willing subjects. In turn, affective relations are restricted, as much as possible, to relations of economy. The governmental rationality of optimizing obedience and utility becomes integrated as the subject’s relation to herself: *homo oeconomicus*, “entrepreneur of the self.” What’s more, the intensification of the body as a vector of capacity reaches new levels with neoliberalism’s governing principle of “human capital,” which Foucault talks about at length in *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures of 1979. Formulated by Chicago school economists T. W. Schultz and Gary Becker, human capital designates a rationality for measuring the economic value of human capacities, skills, and abilities.<sup>126</sup> Foucault, following Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), calls human capital an ability-machine that renders indissociable income and all aspects of the human life

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<sup>125</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Social Triumph of the Sexual Will,” in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, 158.

<sup>126</sup> See Theodore W. Schultz, “Investment in Human Capital,” *The American Economic Review* 51.1 (1961): 1-17; and Gary Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education*, third edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

that bears it.<sup>127</sup> So when *homo oeconomicus*, the “eminently governable” subject of neoliberalism, learns a skill or trade, she invests in her human capital; when she exercises her body and improves her health, she invests in her human capital; and when she marries and has children and teaches them how to lead happy, healthy, and productive lives, she invests in the human capital of her offspring and the genetic human capital of the population. All areas of human life become understood through an economic “grid of intelligibility,” of investment, growth, and return on profit; even the affection that one shows to one’s children becomes a form of economic investment.<sup>128</sup> It is within this context, of a rationality that reduces all areas of human life and feeling to an economic *ratio*, a logic of expenses and profits, that business and managerial discourses like “emotional intelligence” emerge, as popularized by science writer and business guru Daniel Goleman.<sup>129</sup> Simultaneously, concepts like Arlie Hochschild’s “emotional labour” represent attempts to grapple with the massive shift taking place in the way power relates to feeling, how the government of feeling has come to condition modern subjectivity and the relationship with the self.<sup>130</sup>

For reasons that are not independent of power, economy, and government, “Western man” now works on his feelings as he does his body. Feeling enters that “machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it” (DP 138). That is to say, feeling has become an object of government, a space of power and its contest. Refusal of the government of feeling, then, does not occur through a simple refusal of feeling *tout court*, but contesting and refusing *particular* relations of power and government on the basis of feeling and the relationship with one’s feelings. Refusal is diffused and entails a particular way of reinventing how one might relate to one’s feelings, how one might derive truth from

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<sup>127</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 226.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>129</sup> See Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995); and *Working With Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1998). For a discussion of Foucault and the concept of “emotional intelligence” see Jason Hughes, “Emotional Intelligence: Elias, Foucault, and the Reflexive Emotional Self,” *Foucault Studies* 8 (2010): 28-52.

<sup>130</sup> See Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). On the relation between “emotional labour” and Foucault’s concept of governmentality see Merete Monrad, “Emotional Labour and Governmentality: Productive Power in Childcare,” *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 18.3 (2017): 281-293.

one's feelings. The bifurcated extremes of accepting or refusing feeling are not an option; instead, feeling inheres in Sedgwick's "middle ranges of agency" and denotes all those partial, local, and middle registers of refusal.

## 2.3: Iran, 1978

In the previous section I alluded to a slight shift in Foucault's interest in governmentality and Christianity between the 1978 lectures and the 1980 lectures, a shift from emphasizing governmental relations of pastoral power to more general themes of spiritual direction. His growing interest in spirituality could be attributed to his journey to Japan, practicing Zen Buddhism with renowned Rinzai Rōshi, Omori Sogen (1904-1944).<sup>131</sup> Foucault also became dissatisfied with the crowded and busy lineups at his usual Bibliothèque Nationale and began conducting his research at the Bibliothèque du Saulchoir, a Dominican Order library whose extensive collection of works from antiquity and the Church Fathers sustained his interest in early Christianity.<sup>132</sup> But this shift was partly also accompanied by the rather tumultuous personal and professional years in Foucault's life between *Security, Territory, Population* (1978) and *On the Government of the Living* (1980). His relationship with many friends and colleagues had become strained. In part, this was due to his refusal to endorse the actions of the West German Red Army Faction (known by the media as the Baader-Meinhof Group), a far-left militant organization that engaged in terrorist activity until its dissolution in the 90s after the fall of the Soviet Union. While he participated in protests against the extradition of one of their defence lawyers, Klaus Croissant, his unwillingness to endorse the group's actions led to a falling out with friends who had voiced support for the group itself, notably Deleuze, Guattari, and Jean Genet.<sup>133</sup> Even more, Foucault's series of visits to Iran and his articles in support of the revolution taking place earned considerable rebuke from the Parisian press and many of his friends, an event that would ultimately discourage him from pursuing similar forms of journalism in the future. In particular, his optimism for what he

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<sup>131</sup> Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 310.

<sup>132</sup> David Macey, *Michel Foucault*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 129-130.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, 111-112.



called a “political spirituality” fuelling the revolution would prove to be remarkably naive in the wake of the reactionary theocratic regime that took power precisely because of the religious fervour that Foucault had admired. Had his trenchant critiques of modernity led him to an unwitting support for reactionary and regressive politics?<sup>134</sup>

I will conclude this chapter with a few remarks. First, while the notion of “political spirituality” in relation to “Islamic government” in Iran reflects a naive understanding of the currents and socio-political contexts of Islamism that had been taking place in the decades preceding the Iranian Revolution, for Foucault it represents a more general political will for discovering new ways of governing oneself and new practices of dividing the true from the false. What fascinated Foucault about the Iranian Revolution was how a basically non-violent collective political will could topple a brutal and authoritarian State. Fuelling that collective political will in Foucault’s eyes was a refusal of forms of government and ways of relating to the self and others that were prescribed by the liberal democracies and secular humanisms of the West. The history of the Christian West, on the other hand, has achieved a progressive separation of questions of the subjectivity and truth, and with it, spirituality from political knowledge. The whole question of how the subject can transform him or herself has become separate from the question of how truth can be known, to the degree that this separation is synonymous with historical progress and its telos, rather than itself being the product of history. In that sense, the “political spirituality” of the Iranian Revolution can be understood as a refusal of teleological history.<sup>135</sup> Yet Foucault overestimated the power of that refusal to sustain the invention of genuinely new politics and new ways of relating to the self and others. But in any case, in Foucault’s final article on Iran he argues passionately that such refusals are irreducible to the laws of history. “Uprisings belong to history, but in a certain way, they escape it”<sup>136</sup>:

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<sup>134</sup> This is the argument advanced by Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson in *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>135</sup> This interpretation has been argued by Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi in *Foucault in Iran: Islamic Revolution after the Enlightenment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

<sup>136</sup> Michel Foucault, “Useless to Revolt?” In *Power*; ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2001), 263.

A delinquent puts his life on the line against abusive punishment, a madman cannot stand anymore being closed in and pushed down, or a people rejects a regime that oppresses it. This does not make the first one innocent, does not cure the second, and does not guarantee to the third the results that were promised. No one, by the way, is required to stand in solidarity with them. No one is required to think that these confused voices sing better than others and speak the truth in its ultimate depth. It is enough that they exist and that they have against them all that strives to silence them, to make it meaningful to listen to them and to search for what they want to say. A question of morality? Perhaps. A question of reality, certainly. All the disillusionments of history will not change this. It is precisely because there are such voices that human time does not take the form of evolution, but that of “history.”<sup>137</sup>

The refusal to obey is powerful: a feeling; but it does not need to be a clear and sophisticated refusal of a totality of forces. Political refusal disappoints often and rarely fulfils its promises. But the feelings that accompany and determine refusal, and its times of crises, make history elude the logic of any teleological arc. History is time punctured by singularity, refusal, and feeling.

Refusal, then, is the occasion for a new “political spirituality,” which represents a search for new foundations of truth practices. In a discussion that does not involve the Iranian Revolution but is contemporary with it, Foucault defines this “political spirituality” fourfold as a set of questions according to an analytics of historicism, epistemology, history, and ethics or politics:

First, in what sense is the production and transformation of the true/false division characteristic and decisive for our historicity? Second, in what specific ways has this relation operated in Western societies, which produce scientific knowledge whose forms are perpetually changing and whose values are posited as universal? Third, what historical knowledge is possible of a history that itself produces the true/false distinction on which such knowledge depends? Fourth, isn't the most general of

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 266.

political problems the problem of truth? How can one analyze the connection between ways of distinguishing true and false and ways of governing oneself and others?<sup>138</sup> “Political spirituality,” then, consists in following these four lines of analysis and asks a more practical and “spiritual” question (“spiritual” insofar as it involves the transformation of truth, consciousness, and the field of experience): How can one endeavour “to discover a different way of governing oneself through a different way of dividing up true and false”?<sup>139</sup>

While I have attempted to show in this chapter how a government of feeling emerges in the modern age that is predicated on an understanding of the subject as a subject of feeling, what remains to be shown is how this government of feeling, and the regimes of power it entails, interact with a field of truth and knowledge of the individual. For “there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (DP 27). How, then, has it occurred that the government of feeling, this “specific mode of subjection,” “was able to give birth to man as an object of knowledge for a discourse with a ‘scientific status’” (24). The scientific objectification that subtends the government of feeling would thus entail a *scientia affectus*, distinct from the feeling-practices or *ars pathetica* of antiquity. Undertaking an analysis of a *scientia affectus* would primarily involve the first three questions leading to “political spirituality”: how divisions of truth and falsity inhere in our own historicity, in what conditions of possibility of knowledge are available for history, and what we can know about history given its own divisions of the true and the false. This is the task I will take up in the third chapter. But in tackling the first three questions of “political spirituality” the goal is to keep an eye trained to the “will to discover a different way of governing oneself,” a different way of relating to one’s feelings, and, hence, a shift from refusal to innovation.

To begin, I will discuss Massumi’s argument for the transhistoricity of affect and his recourse to the naivety of sensation. In contrast, I suggest that Foucault’s archaeological analyses represent methods for understanding the historicity of feeling that maintain no pretensions of evading the question of the subject, and thus, demonstrating the historicity of the subject without admitting to any determinism of the subject or history. From then, I

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<sup>138</sup> Michel Foucault, “Questions of Method,” in *Power*, 233.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

discuss the historical emergence of the consciousness of feeling as an immanent truth of the subject, which is an emergence bound up with the history of madness, the passions, and the elusive category of unreason, as well as the developments of psychology and psychiatry. I give brief sketches of two key feelings (guilt and melancholy) that play a unique role in opening the interiority and space for the truth of modern man, as well as the precarious foundations upon which modern man is born and is destined to fade. This destiny, in my reading, is precisely the memory of an *ars pathetica* that has been superseded and mutated by a *scientia affectus*. The question of “political spirituality” then would entail that this deafening memory of an *ars pathetica* itself be overcome in favour of an ethics and politics of innovation. How, and to what end, can one endeavour to relate to one’s feelings and those of others, as, once more, a relation of art and style rather than as a psychological determination of personality or mental illness?

## Chapter Three: History and *Scientia Affectus*

“You have a history,” she said, “that you are responsible to.”

“What do you mean by responsible to?”

“You’re responsible to it. You’re answerable. You’re required to try to make sense of it. You owe it your complete attention.”

— *Underworld*<sup>140</sup>

### 3.1: Innovation, Style, and the Historical Mutability of Feeling

Brian Massumi’s 2002 book, *Parables for the Virtual*, which has since become a staple for affect theory, attempts to unravel the problem of how the individual and society relate to each other in the vein of a chicken-and-the-egg paradox: “Which came first? The individual or society?”<sup>141</sup> Massumi’s schematic and cursory breakdown of this problem suggests three dominant approaches to this question in philosophy and the social sciences. The first is associated with a classical liberal theory and claims that the individual represents the antecessor and foundation of society, “conjur[ing] away society with the fiction of an atomistic flock of individuals who forge a relation with one another on the basis of a

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<sup>140</sup> Don DeLillo, *Underworld* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 512.

<sup>141</sup> Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 68.

normative recognition of shared needs and common goods.”<sup>142</sup> Society is the manifestation and expression of relations between individuals. The second approach emerges, for Massumi, from deconstructionist critiques of the first approach, and claims that society comes before the individual: “the inaugural gesture in this case is to conjure away the individual in order for it to return as determined by society rather than determining of it. The individual is defined by its ‘positioning’ within the intersubjective frame.”<sup>143</sup> The individual, then, represents an object-position within a larger social structure or framework. But given these two approaches, how are we to understand how society changes over time or how individuals can change themselves in relation to the society around them? Are we determined to be mere functions of our society and our history with no ability to turn around and objectively critique the society around us? Or if society is merely the projection of willing individuals, then how do we explain social phenomena that appear to function independent of the voluntary consent of individuals, phenomena such as systemic racism or heteronormativity? Anticipating these problems between the two approaches, Massumi hypothesizes a “mutant” position (he does not say when, except that its emergence is recent) that conceives the relation between society and the individual as a sort of you’re-in-or-you’re-out situation, albeit with ample room for the fringes, the margins, “border culture,” and hybridity. “The ultimate aim,” Massumi writes, “is to find a place for change again, for social innovation, which had been squeezed out of the nest by the pincer movement of the needful or reasonable determination of a legislative norm on one side and topographical determination by a constitutive positionality on the other.”<sup>144</sup> The problem with this approach, which Massumi seems to identify with queer and feminist theory, is that it defines hybridity and marginality only in relation to a dominant centre or determining progenitor. Innovation, then, is not understood in itself and without foundation or determinism, but simply as deviance, negation, and subversion. Determination reemerges as a central reference point for change.

Here we are in similar territory to Sedgwick’s “middle ranges of agency,” which raises the question of how change and creativity can be understood outside of a simple

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 69.

negation or subversion of a totalized and hegemonic status quo. While they construct somewhat different vocabularies, both Sedgwick and Massumi look to affect to articulate the regions of ambiguity and “in-betweenness” in the relations of the individual and society. Massumi’s intervention aims to give an account of change while avoiding all recourse to determination.<sup>145</sup> How do we understand change in itself, without determination, for if change were determined would it then not merely be causality? His solution is to provide a “logical consistency” and “ontological status” of the “in-between,” similar to how Sedgwick sought the “middle ranges of agency” in Tomkins’ affect theory. This means accounting for the being of relation in a way that does not subordinate either the relation to the relata (as in the first approach) or the relata to the relation (as in the second approach). Furthermore, it means avoiding the pitfalls of the third approach by understanding relata as something other than merely a position relative to the relation. On the contrary, Massumi argues, “it is only by asserting the exteriority of the relation to its terms that chicken and egg absurdities can be avoided and the discussion diverted from an addiction to foundation and its negation to an engagement with change as such, with the unfounded and unmediated in-between of becoming.”<sup>146</sup> What comes first is neither the chicken nor the egg, but the ontological fact of their relation and belonging to one another. Evolution ensues not from the egg or the chicken but in their relation and in their belonging, as “differential emergences from the shared realm of relationality that is one with becoming.”<sup>147</sup> And it is via this account of the in-between and relational belonging as extrinsic to relata, that Massumi attempts to underscore an ontology of becoming and change. Massumi then attempts to grant ontological status to becoming-in-relationality through another extended metaphor: soccer.<sup>148</sup> What follows is a rich discussion of the ontology of games, rules, and the relations between actors, space, sensation, and movement—a discussion that incidentally wanders into some familiar territory for Foucault,

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 70-71.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>148</sup> Massumi’s discussion of the ontology of relationality through the metaphor of the soccer game is appropriated from Michel Serres’s account of the “quasi-object” in *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 224-234; as well as Bruno Latour’s own discussion of the Serres passage in *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 50-55.

for whom the games and rules of truth had long been an important analytic tool for his understanding of power and knowledge.<sup>149</sup> However, for Massumi, the sensory and affective space of the “in-between” has a very different relation to history than the *ars pathetica* envisioned by Foucault.

To begin, Massumi makes it clear that rules do not precede the game but instead emerge from it and continue to evolve as the game evolves, even while the rules attempt to contain and regulate the proper form of the game.<sup>150</sup> If not the rules, then the condition for the game and its play is the field, with its boundaries and goal-posts, which act as “inductive signs” that produce the “the polar attraction,” driving the game.<sup>151</sup> Massumi: “put two teams on a grassy field with goals at either end and you have an immediate, palpable tension.”<sup>152</sup> The field, goal-posts, and the players form a sort of inductive force field for play. What “catalyzes” the play, however, is the ball.<sup>153</sup> While “the ball is the focus of every player and the object of every gesture,” this is only a superficial appearance, for the ball directs the movements, positions, and gestures of the players, the speed of their runs and the strength and tact of their kicks: “the ball arrays the teams around itself. Where and how it bounces differentially potentializes and depotentializes the entire field, intensifying and deintensifying the exertions of the players and the movements of the team.”<sup>154</sup> Rather than thinking of the player as the subject of activity and the ball the object, Massumi writes, “the ball is the subject of the play. ... The player is the object of the ball.”<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> See Foucault, “The Order of Discourse” in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 48-78; Foucault, “Truth and Power” in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 109-133; and “Modifications” in *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 6-7: “what I have held to, what I have tried to maintain for many years, is the effort to isolate some of the elements that might be useful for a history of truth. Not a history that would be concerned with what might be true in the fields of learning, but an analysis of the ‘games of truth,’ the games of truth and error through which being is historically constituted as experience; that is, as something that can and must be thought.”

<sup>150</sup> Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 72.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.



The kick is indeed an expression, but not of the player. It is an ‘ex-pression’ of the ball, in the etymological sense, since the ball's attractive catalysis ‘draws out’ the kick from the player's body and defines its expressive effect on the globality of the game. The player's body is a node of expression, not a subject of the play but a material channel for the catalysis of an event affecting the global state of the game.<sup>156</sup>

Now, this does not mean that the ball determines the player’s movement, but simply that it catalyzes it while the field and goal posts induce or influence the player’s movement. Hence, Massumi is clear that the ball and player do not exhaust each other; the ball is the “part-subject” and the player is the “part-object”<sup>157</sup> in a series of events in which, strictly speaking, they belong to one another. If the goals induce play, and the ball catalyzes it, then the player “transduces” play by translating their energy and motion into effective events within the game as a whole.

However, this rather rich discussion runs into a few problems. First, there no doubt would have to have been a time, before the codification of an official set of rules, where the players decided that there would be two teams, two goals belonging to each team, one ball, and that the object of the game is to kick the ball into the other team’s goal. This may have evolved from an earlier game that perhaps involved only one goal, or that involved running with the ball in hand rather than kicking it. But give or take a few variations, this set of evolving deliberations might very well be considered the proto-rules. For it makes little sense to argue, as Massumi seems to suggest, that the goals and field would appear as if by accident and, through a power that belongs only to them, manifest the polar tension that induces the play. Is not some deliberation inevitable? This problem is compounded when Massumi makes an important distinction between reflexivity and reflectivity. Massumi starts by making a fairly commonplace observation that most of us are probably familiar with: overthinking. When the players becomes too self-conscious of themselves as they are kicking the ball, they are more likely to miss. But unfortunately, he equates overthinking with self-consciousness and reflectivity as categorically distinct from reflexivity:

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 73.

The players, in the heat of the game, are drawn out of themselves. Any player who is conscious of himself as he kicks, misses. Self-consciousness is a negative condition of the play. ... [The player] is reflexively (rather than reflectively) assessing the potential movement of the ball. ... The player must let his trained body synthesize his separate perceptual impressions into a global sense of the intensity. The sensing of the intensity will be vague but goal-directed in such a way as to draw a maximally exact reflex expression from him.<sup>158</sup>

This passage makes a number of leaps. First, while overthinking becomes equated with self-consciousness *tout court*, this inhibiting self-consciousness becomes contrasted to reflexivity. Training, which may very well be considered a domain where self-conscious deliberation plays an important role, simply becomes the occasion for synthesizing perception and sensation as a reflexive expression of play. Then, play becomes qualified as sensory reflexivity distinct from self-conscious deliberation. In turn, the entire work, dedication, and *art of training*—what Foucault would call *ascesis*—becomes elided in Massumi's overdetermination of the role of sensation and reflex. To make things worse, Massumi's absolute distinction between self-consciousness and reflexive sensation allows him to remove the problem of subjectivity from play entirely: "the player's subjectivity is disconnected as he enters the field of potential in and as its sensation. For the play, the player *is* that sensation."<sup>159</sup> Subjectivity no longer has a role in play except as an inhibition. Besides disallowing the possibility that subjectivity is in fact a form of reflexivity—as Foucault

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 75.

argues<sup>160</sup>—this has the effect of escaping the risks and difficulties involved in subjectivity, escaping the whole question of training and forming oneself as a subject, and fleeing into a pure and ideal region of sensation and reflex devoid of any relation to subjectivity, its work, its *art*, and its feelings.

While Massumi’s description allows the influence of “shimmers of reflection and language” to bear on perception and sensation in the form of memory and “pregame strategy,”<sup>161</sup> it still occludes questions of the role of art, ascesis, and training in the formation of subjectivity. Does art form the appropriate strategy or is it subtractive and inhibitive? In separating out subjectivity and sensation and allowing the former to influence the latter only in an inhibitive fashion or as the product of memory, Massumi’s description risks impoverishing both subjectivity *and* sensation and their actual co-belonging. Sensation becomes artless, while subjectivity becomes lifeless. The problem is not that Massumi figures the player as an object of play, but rather the problem inheres in describing the player as a “material channel” for play<sup>162</sup> in a way that denies the integral involvement of the player’s training, art, and tactical know-how in the dynamics of play. When Massumi does get around to this question of art in terms of style, he divorces style from technique, something surely no athlete could agree with. Massumi: “style is what makes the player. What makes a player a star is more than perfection of technique. Technical perfection merely makes a player most competent. To technical perfection the star adds something extra.”<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> “The subject himself, as constituted by the form of reflexivity specific to this or that type of care of the self, will be modified. Consequently, we should not constitute a continuous history of the *gnōthi seauton* whose explicit or implicit postulate would be a general and universal theory of the subject, but should, I think, begin with an analytics of the forms of reflexivity, inasmuch as it is the forms of reflexivity that constitute the subject as such” (HS 462). Thus, Foucault’s late turn to the subject is partly a correction of universal theories of the subject which would figure subjective consciousness, its truth, obligations, and needs as the foundation of history and society in the fashion Massumi attributes to classical liberalism. But rather than entailing the death of the subject, for Foucault, this correction more exactly discredits philosophies of sovereign subjectivity. Instead, Foucault conceives the subject as various “forms of reflexivity” in which the subject’s truth and field of experience itself undergoes historical transformations in tandem with the subject’s freedom and ethical conduct. Here, freedom throws into question any law of social or historical determinism without serving a foundational and universal role in subjective and social change. Against Massumi, however, figuring subjectivity as synonymous with reflectivity, rather than a form of reflexivity, leads to an impoverished understanding of the subject and provokes a recourse to the naivety of sensation.

<sup>161</sup> Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 75.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

This “extra” is essentially a *je ne sais quoi*, a little flick here, a feint or maybe a spin there. Yet style effectively *games* the *rules*, adding the slightest variations to the play in order to gain an advantage over the opponent. Thus, “a star's style is always a provocation to the referee.”<sup>164</sup> Style, then, is where the freedom of the subject would clash with the codified rules of the game, provoking either other players to develop different strategies and techniques or the officials to create new rules. In any case, style engenders new *ways* of playing the game. And yet, the whole question of an *ars pathetica*, the difficulty, the work and feeling (feelings such as courage, pride, or tenacity) involved in developing and honing an advantageous style is abandoned by Massumi’s denial of the self-conscious reflection involved in training, art, and technique. So when Massumi finally concludes that “it is through stylistic, free variations that an already-constituted sport evolves,”<sup>165</sup> he is unable to account for the actual emergence of style itself, the ostensible lynchpin in the being of change, for which he wishes to provide an ontological consistency.

Despite the question of how the individual relates to the game (or society) remaining unanswered, Massumi’s line of thinking here poses problems for his wider affect theory. Because Massumi sees affect as beyond “the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience”<sup>166</sup> the player’s affect is juxtaposed to self-conscious deliberation, training, and art, and therefore divorced from any *ars pathetica* or practices of feeling. Affect is thus distinguished from *the way in which the subject plays the game*, or to carry the metaphor full circle, how the subject lives and understands truth and meaning within a given society. Massumi’s description of affect as “autonomic, bodily reactions occurring in the brain but outside consciousness”<sup>167</sup> has the effect of sidelining any question of an *ars pathetica* in favour of a *scientia affectus*, in which feeling is construed as an external material substance for thought, knowledge, and ethics. Ruth Leys, for one, has been a notable critic of Massumi for uncritically reproducing outdated or otherwise inconclusive physicalist theories of

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 29.

emotion, even while he maintains a definitive distinction between affect and emotion.<sup>168</sup> But Massumi's problem goes beyond miming a *scientia affectus*. By qualifying the empirical human being as a physical transducer or channel of potentiality, which functions on the ontological level of the in-between and relational becoming, he effectively reifies the empirical or the physical as the ontological and the transcendental. The field of immanence that comprises empirical elements (physical bodies, including humans, in space and time) becomes extrapolated to the level of fundamental ontology, and thus Massumi is able to characterize immanent physicality as transhistorical. Massumi: "although inseparable from the empirical elements ... the field of immanence is superempirical. ... As a dimension of becoming, gathering proto-, present, and post-, it is also transhistorical—uncontainable in the closure of any particular historical moment."<sup>169</sup> Historical and subjective change is possible, then, *only* because there is an immanent bedrock of physicality, sensation, and perception that is irreducible to history. Thus, following the "death of the subject," Massumi essentially refashions a vague, totally physical and yet "superempirical" "subject" that remains exterior to history. This amounts to an impoverishment of the actual historicity of the subject, which Massumi abandons in favour of a pure ahistorical subject of sensation. In my reading, the transhistoricity of immanence is the price Massumi pays for attempting to conceive an ontology of becoming on the basis of an occlusion of the subject of *ars pathetica*. If Massumi favours a *scientia affectus*, extrapolated to the superempirical level of ontology, over an *ars pathetica*, then this comes at the cost of excluding both the subject and history, as well as the whole question of the historicity of feeling.

In light of this irreconcilable problem of feeling and historicity in Massumi, I propose that Foucault's historical methodology provides a very different account of the inextricability of feeling and history—and without conceding a determinate or exterior relation between them. In contrast, Foucault's historical methodology entails that feeling and history abide in a fundamental relation of asymmetry and discontinuity. In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1971), he writes:

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<sup>168</sup> See Leys, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," *Critical Inquiry* 37 (2011): 434-472.

<sup>169</sup> Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 76-77.

We believe that feelings are immutable, but every sentiment, particularly the noblest and most disinterested, has a history. We believe in the dull constancy of instinctual life and imagine that it continues to exert its force indiscriminately in the present as it did in the past. But knowledge of history easily disintegrates this unity, depicts its wavering course, locates its moment of strength and weakness, and defines its oscillating reign. It easily seizes the slow elaboration of instincts and those movements where, in turning upon themselves, they relentlessly set about their self-destruction. We believe, in any event, that the body obeys the exclusive laws of physiology and that it escapes the influence of history, but this too is false. The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances. . . . History [is] without constants. Nothing in man—not even his body—is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men.<sup>170</sup>

While history never ceases to mold and break down the body, its instincts and its feelings, Foucault recognizes there is no strict law of determination. Bodily feelings and instincts (what Massumi might call affect) become seized by the laws, values, habits, and regimes of history in such a way as to prompt feeling to turn back upon itself in a movement of self-destruction that permits the elaboration of new feelings and affects. This self-reflexivity of feeling ensures that its mutability is not under the sole ownership of objective history, or the sort of top-down power expressed via law. Rather, the mutability of feeling follows from its asymmetrical relationship with history. Ultimately, history owes its character of discontinuity, its stop-start development of mutating experiences and worldviews, not to the evolutionary path of a universal telos, nor to the transhistorical immanence of materiality, physicality, or sensation, but to the mutable self-reflexivity of feeling itself. The body “constructs resistances” and in turn, “history is without constants.”<sup>171</sup>

The “knowledge of history easily disintegrates [the] unity” of the immutability of affect, feelings, the body, and instinctual life. This disintegration is precisely the intervention

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<sup>170</sup> Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 87-88.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

Foucault's genealogical method aims to achieve. And in turn, by disintegrating the supposedly immutable laws of transhistorical feeling, genealogy endeavours to innovate new ways of feeling and new forms of experience. Huffer likes quoting Nietzsche on this point: "we have to *learn to think differently* - in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more! to *feel differently*."<sup>172</sup> And while Foucault's genealogy is sometimes considered to be a break with his earlier methodology of archaeology, his commitment to a historical methodology that throws into question the necessity of historical development in order to make possible new ways of feeling and thinking is one of the few constants throughout Foucault's oeuvre. Speaking on his idea of an "experience book," which he attributes especially to his early archeologies, *History of Madness* and *The Birth of the Clinic*, he says that he wants his works to be "an experience" through which "you come out of changed. I write precisely because I don't know yet what to think about a subject that attracts my interest. In so doing, the book transforms me, changes what I think."<sup>173</sup> In an interview nearly eight months before his death, Foucault says, "one writes to become someone other than who one is."<sup>174</sup> Even going back all the way to his first published article in 1953, an introduction to the French translation of Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*, Foucault reserves this power of innovation for an ontological analysis of history that would aim to free the imagination and expression from being alienated and ossified in the static images that constitute objective historical becoming. Such an analysis finds in the movement of imagination and expression an existential freedom in which one can "rediscover and recognize" oneself in the "law" of the "heart": "these feelings, this desire, this drive to spoil the simplest things."<sup>175</sup> In turn, "the image is no longer *of* something, totally projected toward an absence which it replaces; rather, it is gathered into itself and is given the fullness of a presence, it is addressed to someone. Now, the image appears as a modality of expression, and achieves its meaning as a 'style,' ... But here we are already speaking in the register of

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<sup>172</sup> Huffer, "Conversation with Elizabeth Wilson," 331. And Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, 103.

<sup>173</sup> Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 27.

<sup>174</sup> Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, trans. James Faubion (London: Continuum, 2007), 184.

<sup>175</sup> Foucault, "Dream, Imagination, Existence," 68.

history.”<sup>176</sup> Historical ontology turns over the empirical succession of historical events, therein deciphering the movement of expression, imagination, and feeling, and converts them into modalities of style and art, setting free the image and delivering it to the other. In this way, Foucault’s point of departure for his entire intellectual project is in attending to the freedom of expression through history in order to transform the dead and alienating images of history into a cascade of styles and arts of feeling and expression. And thus, in envisioning the images of objective history into the ontological movements of expression and freedom the goal once again is to show that we are “much freer than [we] feel.”<sup>177</sup>

For Massumi and Foucault, change and innovation inhere in style, but in completely different ways. For Massumi, style occurs on the ontological level of transhistoricity and is juxtaposed with subjectivity. For Foucault, the consciousness of style emerges from the historicization of ontology, through which it becomes synonymous with subjectivity, in the form of the arts and styles of existence that preoccupied Foucault’s interest in the final years of his life. For Massumi, innovation arises from the transhistoricity of style; *innovation is the transhistorical immanence of style*. For Foucault, innovation follows from the confrontation with history, in a movement through which necessity and inevitability are converted into style; thus, *innovation is the historical consciousness of style*. This may very well be an irreconcilable disagreement between Massumi and Foucault about the nature of history, subjectivity, and the im/mutability of feeling or affect. But what I would like to show in the remainder of this chapter is how Massumi’s assumptions about the transhistoricity of affect and his privileging of a *scientia affectus* over an *ars pathetica* in fact has a history dating back to the last four centuries. While I have argued in the previous chapters that Foucault’s work on technologies of the self in antiquity demonstrates the role of an *ars pathetica*, which loses ground by the modern age in favour of a government of feeling, the focus of the remainder of this chapter will set sights on the emergence of a *scientia affectus* that functions as a correlative to the government of feeling in the relations between knowledge and power. How, in other words, does an art of feeling become a science of affect? By historicizing the categories and experiences of feeling, emotion, and affect that we tend to assume are

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>177</sup> Foucault, “Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault,” 10.



immutable aspects of human life, the point is to endeavour to elaborate different experiences of feeling, to innovate new ways of feeling, if only on the basis of learning to think differently about history, about subjectivity, or about the living being of humans.

### 3.2: An Archaeology of Feeling

The possibility of conducting a Foucauldian archaeology of feeling begins with the Renaissance. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault describes the *episteme* of the Renaissance as one of a complex functioning of diverse resemblances between things and words. Thus, he writes, “the universe was folded in upon itself: the earth echoing the sky, faces seeing themselves reflected in the stars, and plants holding within their stems the secrets that were of use to men” (OT 17). Rather than words or concepts representing things, as in the later *episteme* of the European classical age (with the role of language providing sense, meaning, and contour to the muteness of things), words and things in the Renaissance relate to themselves in a “vast syntax of the world,” in which, “different beings adjust themselves to one another; the plant communicates with the animal, the earth with the sea, man with everything around him” (18). As such, the soul relates to the body, not as a concept representing an immutable essence or substance residing in the body, but as forms in a relationship of resemblance which assures their dynamicity. For the *episteme* of the Renaissance, “body and soul ... are doubly ‘convenient,’” meaning adjacent and intermingling; “the soul had to be made dense, heavy, and terrestrial for God to place it in the very heart of matter” (Ibid). Within this resemblant intermingling of soul and body, the “passions of the soul” are communicated to the body (Ibid). The seat of the passions is in the soul’s resemblance with the body. This resemblance and communication of the passions was indebted to humoral medicine dating back to Hippocratic and Galenic medicine of antiquity, for which “passion was always the interface between the body and the soul” (HM 225). Rather than the passions simply indicating the ambiguity of activity and passivity, as Terada points out (see Introduction), historicizing the passions registers an inability to cleanly separate an active soul from a passive body (or a passive soul and an active body). The passions illuminate the body and the soul’s resemblance and deep communication, their

disposition toward each other, in which black and yellow bile, phlegm, and blood conveyed the correlative passions which can in turn further agitate the humors. This was effectively an experience and perception of the unity of the body and soul “as a form of reciprocal causality” (226). This site of intermingling and reciprocity was the condition for an *ars pathetica*, in which feeling is not a representation of physiological or psychological phenomena, nor an indelible component of the truth and nature of human existence, but in and as the fundamental entanglement of body and soul. The art of *ars pathetica* means giving style and value to that entanglement.

This unity of the body and soul through the passions would eventually become challenged in the classical age with the advent of Cartesian medicine, exemplified by the influence of Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715) and the physician François Bayle (1622-1709). The Cartesian doctrine of the animal spirits effectively shifted the space of the passions from the reciprocity of body and soul to the anteriority of body and soul. When a passion erupts in the soul, this is accompanied by the mechanical movements of the animal spirits throughout the body, concentrating into the arms or legs in a fearful flight, or burning up in the head during a burst of rage.<sup>178</sup> The soul itself, exemplified in the fit of passion, obeys the mechanical movements that pervade the body, thus entailing a more “metaphorical” unity of body and soul (HM 227). Later on in the medicine of the eighteenth century, these mechanical movements of the animal spirits will become the tensile states of the nervous fibres and the circulations and swellings of fluids (Ibid). But, at least originally, the passions, in the Cartesian sense, obey a mechanical movement of the animal spirits spread throughout the body, prefiguring its unity with the soul, and determining the possibility of their dissolution. For Cartesian medicine, “passion is no longer situated exactly at the geometrical centre of the ensemble of the body and soul, but slightly precedes them, in a place where they are not yet in opposition, the region when their unity and their

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<sup>178</sup> On the animal spirits spreading and concentrating throughout the body during fits of passions, Foucault quotes Malebranche: “Before seeing the object of their passion, the animal spirits are spread throughout the body in order to preserve all the parts in general, but when a new object appears this whole economy is thrown into jeopardy. Most of the spirits are forced into the muscles in the arms, the legs, the face and all the exterior parts of the body in order to give it the specific disposition of the dominant passion, and give it the countenance and movement necessary for the acquisition of the good, or flight from the evil that has appeared” [*Recherche de la vérité*, book V, chapter III, in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. I, ed. Geneviève Rodis-Lewis (Paris: Gallimard, Pléiade, 1979), pp. 502-3]. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 226.

distinctiveness are both grounded” (227). While the physicians and moralists of previous centuries, going back to the Greek and Latin traditions, observed a proximity between the passions and madness as a causal relationship, that madness may be a punishment for unrestrained passion or that the passions might be a weaker and less severe kind of madness (228), this new configuration of the space of the passions prior to the unity of body and soul entails a different experience of the proximity of the passions and madness. The passions, no longer the simple cause of madness, become instead the general condition of possibility of madness (227). “The chimera of madness were to be based on the nature of passion,” and the whole problem and pathology of madness was to be placed within “the determinism of the passions” (228). As the condition of possibility of madness, the passions signified the portent of a fundamental *disunity* of body and soul (Ibid); madness was the simple occasion in which the passions turned on themselves and threw into question the unity of body and soul, and it was in this disunity that madness found all those figures and phantasms of the “unreal” that had been named variously over the centuries as error, delirium, and hallucination (231).

While in medicine the passions begin to presage the disunity of body and soul, the perception of language and grammar begins to convey a fundamental relationship between the passions and time. The possibility of an analytic knowledge of language is made possible, Foucault argues, by the perception that time is inherent in language, not as a memory of the historical evolution of languages, but as the linearity and sequences of word order. Discussing French grammarians such as Gabriel Girard (1677-1748) and Nicolas Beauzée (1717-1789), Foucault observes the identification of the passions in the time of language itself. Hence, languages that exhibit a less “analogical” and more spontaneous word order follow the direction of the imagination and the passions and so are believed to indicate more ancient and less civilized languages (OT 90). Time itself, as an interior component of language, begins to convey both the memory and taming of the passions, soon to become writ large on the global historical scale. By the end of the eighteenth century anxieties about time and the passions began to surface on a widespread level across Europe, accompanied by a new historical consciousness of alienation as well as an idealization of nature. Madness became, once again, an object of fear and social panic (as it had long been since at least the Renaissance), now no longer as a cosmic triumph of man’s inborn unreason and the end of

time,<sup>179</sup> but as a mental disease and relationship with the self and one's truth specific to the milieu of modern civilization, the abstractions of culture, and the supposed perversions of art and literature. The "Age of Sensibility" was accompanied by an adjacent fear of the artificial stirring of the passions, in theatre and literature, which were believed to corrupt natural sensibility and open the door for all those fragments of the unreal that had been associated with madness and nervous illnesses.<sup>180</sup> Alienated from nature, and thus nature's reason, modern civilization intimated an experience of the present "surrounded ... with a temporal halo, an empty milieu, that of leisure and remorse, where men's hearts were given over to worry, and where passions opened time to indifference or repetition" (HM 369).

The consciousness and experience of the passions and feeling would thus directly entail a perception of time, history, and alienation from nature and reason. Madness was then considered the extreme conclusion of the alienated passions of modern civilization. At the dawn of the age of Romanticism, "madness became possible in the *milieu* where man's relation with his feelings, with time and with others was altered, and was made possible by the rupture with immediacy in man's life and his becoming. It was no longer of the order of nature nor of the fall, but bore witness instead to a new order, where history began to be felt" (HM 371-372). The idea, then, that madness and mental illness had a strong historical,

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<sup>179</sup> In *History of Madness*, Foucault documents a shift in thinking about the relationship between madness and death between the Late Medieval period and the Renaissance. In both cases, madness has a direct and tight relationship with death and apocalypse: "[w]hereas previously the madness of men had been their incapacity to see that the end of life was always near, and it had therefore been necessary to call them back to the path of wisdom by means of the spectacle of death, now wisdom meant denouncing folly wherever it was to be found, and teaching men that they were already no more than the legions of the dead, and that if the end of life was approaching, it was merely a reminder that a universal madness would soon unite with death. This much was prophesied by poets like Eustache Deschamps:

We are cowardly, ill-formed and weak  
Aged, envious and evil-spoken.  
I see only fools and sots  
Truly the end is nigh

All goes ill. [*Oeuvres*, ed. Saint-Hilaire de Raymond, vol. 1, p. 203.] (HM 15)

<sup>180</sup> This medical and moral fear is typified by the writing of French physician Chauvot de Beauchêne (1749-1824), who makes clear a gendered association between the arts, alienation, and nervous illness. Women, he writes, are attracted to the passionate spectacles of culture, so that "their soul is so strongly stirred that it produces a commotion in their nerves, which may be fleeting, but whose consequences are often most serious. The momentary loss of their senses, and the tears that they shed at a performance of one of our modern tragedies are the least of the accidents that may then befall them" [*De l'influence des affections de l'âme dans les maladies nerveuses des femmes*, Paris, 1783, p. 33.]. An anonymous contributor to the *Gazette salubre* will write in 1768 [no. 4, October 6] that "constant reading produces all the diseases of the nerves. Perhaps of all the causes that have been harmful to the health of women over the last century, the infinite multiplication of novels is the most important... A girl of ten who reads rather than running around will be a woman who suffers from the vapours at 20, and not a solid wet nurse" (HM 370-371).

social, or even political dimension is not an invention of the twentieth century, but had its origins in the moral fears and anxieties of the eighteenth century, with one little known physician going as far to say that “to each age its own variety of madness” (377).<sup>181</sup> It was only subsequent medical knowledge in the nineteenth century that would distance historical alienation from madness or mental illness. The medical and psychological experience would relegate madness either to the organic determinism of disease or the psychological interiority of a moral fault, while Hegelian philosophy and the Marxian analysis of political economy would take up the theme of alienation on its own (378). But the medical and psychological consciousness of madness would retain from alienation one key aspect, which was that madness was definitively no longer considered a form of error or a loss or absence of the truth: “at the end of the eighteenth century, a new outline of madness was becoming discernible, where man no longer lost the truth but lost *his* truth instead” (379). Once truth becomes something to be possessed, in the *bios* and living being of man, then madness would entail the personal degeneration of man’s truth. Through the plenitude of artificial passions and feelings that modern life had offered, madness emerged as a loss of the individual’s own immediate truth at odds with these new feelings (Ibid). This loss of immediacy would lead madmen back to a more primal “immediacy where their animal nature raged” that accompanied the “sure sign of original guilt” (380). Guilt then becomes the primary corrective feeling for all the artificial feelings modern life had had to offer.

Part of Foucault’s argument in *History of Madness* is that the theme of the moral fault and guilt of the madman was the origin of psychology as a discipline (HM 338-339). Here feelings instigate thought, and just like the fears of alienation had led to the social consciousness of madness, the reflection on guilt provided the basis for the psychological consciousness of madness. Psychology emerges precisely around the aspects of madness that

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<sup>181</sup> “It is easy for us to get the impression that the positivist conception of madness is physiological, naturalist and anti-historical, and that it took psychoanalysis, sociology, and nothing less than the ‘psychology of cultures’ to bring to light the links that the pathology of history might secretly have with history itself. But in fact this was already quite clearly established at the end of the eighteenth century: from that point on, madness was clearly inscribed in the temporal destiny of man, and was even the consequence and the price of the fact that men, unlike animals, had history. The writer who noted, in an extraordinarily ambiguous phrase, that ‘the history of madness is the counterpart of the history of reason’, had read neither Janet, nor Freud nor Brunschvicg; he was a contemporary of Claude Bernard, who posited what seemed to him to be an obvious equation: ‘to each age its own variety of madness’” (HM 377) This quote is attributed to a nineteenth century physician named Dr. Michea, who Foucault cites from an article “Démonomanie” in Volume 11 of Sigismond Jaccoud’s *Dictionnaire de Médecine et de Chirurgie*. See Foucault, *History of Madness*, 377n60.

are not entirely reducible to an organic sickness and thus bear the marks of a moral fault and a personal degeneration of one's own immanent truth. Physiology and psychology become cordoned off as separate domains according to physical and organic treatments that had purely mechanical effects on the one hand and moral therapy and punishment on the other. This split between physical and moral treatment had broke with the previous regimens and treatments advocated by doctors and moralists in the seventeenth century, a whole tradition of treatments that were believed to act on the soul and body as an integrated unity.<sup>182</sup> On the one hand, guilt, the place where, at the heart of man's essence and being, one's own truth is at stake, becomes the space of a psychological interiority that is to become the object of psychology and eventually the space "where modern men seek both their depth and their truth" (325). While the passion of Christian shame a millennium earlier had precluded the possibility of a *scientia affectus* with its negative conception of the self, guilt now becomes a positive attribute of the human as an object of psychology. While Christian shame had opened an inner interiority, guilt gives this interiority a solid basis for scientific truth deciphered in the material substance of man's feelings and passions; man's truth becomes an object of reason rather than the endless confrontations between reason and unreason. Shame is instrumentalized, disciplined, and objectified, becoming guilt, altering the subject's relationship with the self and opening the space of a psychological interiority, a deep reservoir of animal desires and cathectic energies that psychoanalysis will eventually take as its object.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, a sensibility of melancholy emerges in response to a new medical understanding of the body-as-machine and as a rich density of purely physiological mechanisms. Beginning with the discovery of pathological anatomy by Xavier Bichat (1771-1802), the space of disease and diagnosis enters a much more thoroughly physical space. Postmortem autopsies had demonstrated that the nosology of disease related less to the co-presences and orders of symptoms, which had a history dating back to humoral

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<sup>182</sup> For example, the consumption of iron was believed to directly strengthen the nervous fibres and bring mental fortitude to the soul (HM 309); coffee was supposed to bring dryness without heat to the body and invigorate the animal spirits (311); cold water immersion would cool the heat of mania and frenzy, while centuries later it would be used in asylums simply as a means of punishment (317); and horseback riding would calm the gastric juices and simulate the preternatural movements of the world (318-319). Many of these and similar techniques would be used in subsequent centuries but they would "[outlive] their meaning" and would be administered either for their purely mechanical effect or as moral punishment (321.)

medicine, but primarily to tissual and membranous lesions, which are perceptible in surgery and autopsy. The language of medical diagnosis would no longer need to provide recourse to the daily record of a patient's symptoms, but could be bent backward toward the physical and singular density of things and beings, introducing "language into that penumbra where the gaze is bereft of words" (BC 169).<sup>183</sup> Accompanying this emerging medical gaze of the dense and fleshy space of the body is a new experience of the proximity of life and death, wherein the truth of life (and its diseases) is given perfect clarity and singularity only in death (or autopsy). For the new medical gaze of the body, "to know life is given only to that derisory, reductive, and already infernal knowledge that only wishes it dead.... Now... it is in that perception of death that the individual finds himself ... [giving] it the style of its own truth" (171). It is within this new experience of the truth of life in death that a new aesthetic sensibility emerges in the Romantic and Victorian periods, that of the macabre and the melancholic, in which the secret truth of life and individual singularity is sought in the final void of death (171). Individual truth is secured by death, set upon the background of a new objectifying and mortifying medical perception of the body. Now a new experience of the passions, whether of melancholy or love, is given an incommensurable and incommunicable face and character, secured only by the new place occupied by death: "the lyrical core of man" (172). Like modern guilt's transfiguration of Christian shame, melancholy takes the place of Christian fear of the self as not a perception of the potential evil, deception, and error always threatening and haunting the soul, but as a perception of a mute organic death that haunts the physical singularity of life. In both cases, feeling is substantialized and made into the empirical contents of the subject that is the object of a *scientia affectus*, a science of the *psyche* and a science of *bios*.

Finally, science was applicable to the individual,<sup>184</sup> producing an individuality at once deeper and more singular and surficial and differentiated. This science of the individual

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<sup>183</sup> Also, from Bichat's *Anatomie générale*, vol. I, (Paris, 1801), xcix: "for twenty years, from morning to night, you have taken notes at patients' bedsides on affections of the heart, the lungs, and the gastric viscera, and all is confusion for you in the symptoms which, refusing to yield up their meaning, offer you a succession of incoherent phenomena. Open up a few corpses: you will dissipate at once the darkness that observation alone could not dissipate" (qtd. in BC 146).

<sup>184</sup> "The old Aristotelian law, which prohibited the application of scientific discourse to the individual, was lifted when, in language, death found the locus of its concept: space then opened up to the gaze the differentiated form of the individual" (BC 170).

would be predicated on a fundamental dehiscence of body and soul, psychology and physiology. And so while the *ars pathetica* functions within the integrated and intermingling space of the unity of the body and soul, the *scientia affectus* operates within the fundamental disunity of the body and soul, located squarely in the disequilibrium of the moral landscape of a psychological interiority and the physiological density of singular individuality. In the nineteenth century the psychological interiority of guilt would become situated within an objectification of freedom, conveying with it a set of questions and problems involving the juridical and moral responsibility and culpability of the mad (HM 515) but also a positive objectification of madness itself. The determination of madness would then be sought in man's estrangement from his own truth; and thus, the truth of madness—indeed the truth of truth—lies beyond the mad, in the space where man is a “stranger from himself, *Alienated*” (516). Once man's relationship with himself becomes split between a moralized psychological interiority and a deterministic physiological density, his truth is placed outside himself—either in the orders of psychology or physiology—so that he may be reduced “to the level of a nature pure and simple, to the level of things” (524). This is where modern man, his truth, his passions, and his feelings becomes an object of knowledge for science; modern man is a “homo psychologicus” (529).

The human sciences emerge precisely around the precariousness of the disequilibrium of psychology and physiology, in what Foucault termed the “empirico-transcendental doublet,” where man's condition as a subject of knowledge is brought into question by his status as an object of knowledge, in which the empirical knowledge of man as a living, speaking, and labouring being was made to extrapolate his transcendental conditions of knowledge (OT 321). Here, man's knowledge of himself in his own finitude and determinations was made to operate as his possibility of knowledge, all the while threatening the very cohesion and rationality of the conditions of knowledge. Once the empirical facts of existence become mapped back onto the transcendental conditions of possibility, the transcendental *ego* becomes the psychological *ego*. Empirical existence is then sufficient reduce man to the mechanisms of physiology and the energetics of psychology, doubly convenient for the vast disciplinary machinery required by emerging industrial-capitalist power. Man becomes an awkward figure fashioned and doubled between psychology and



physiology. Contrary to the transcendental function of the *ars pathetica* (such as *eros*, *epimeleia*, and *parrhēsia* as discussed in Chapter One) that gives style to existence and derives truth from the movements of feeling, the *scientia affectus* satisfies this transcendental function with the empirical contents of man's psychological and biological being. Any inquiry into the truth and art of the self thus requires circuiting through the feeling-substances of a guilty *psyche* or a melancholic *bios*, materializing the movement of feeling and locking the subject into an image of their own objectivity as a psychological and biological organism. Guilt and melancholy become substances for deciphering psychological or biological truths, foundational material for a new science of the self. Rather than communicating the spiritual significance of the transcendental conditions of existence, as did the Greek feeling-practices of *eros*, *epimeleia*, and *parrhēsia* or the Christian experiences of fear and shame, the feeling-substances of melancholy and guilt curtail the transcendental horizon by throwing the limits of existence back against the empirical finitude of man's *bios* and *psyche*: a sad creature with a guilty conscience. Man's being as a living, speaking, and labouring organism becomes the mute and unknowable background upon which he is summoned to know himself in all his finitude. It was this precarious position, with regard to man's knowledge of himself as a knowing being, that man, as the subject and object of knowledge, was born and destined to "be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (387). In his place, man becomes knowable as *the human*, the overdetermined object of anthropological knowledge; but *as a subject* his existence becomes a problem, a phantom, and a memory. This is the birth and death of man.

And yet, the pathos of the end of man is etched into the very beginning of the modern age at the start of the nineteenth century and the dawn of Romantic poetry. It is an end that would be both the annihilation and completion of melancholy and guilt. Foucault is fond of citing Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) and Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855) as examples of poets who find, in the extremity of the passions, unreason, and madness a truth that, while supposedly belonging to the positivity of man as an object of knowledge and psychology, also seemed to signify the tragic consciousness of madness that had been dormant following the time of Hieronymus Bosch's (1450-1516) paintings of the mad. But with Romanticism, madness, unreason, and the passions represent an inner truth: "the possibility in man of

abolishing both man and the world... the end and beginning of all things” (HM 532). A poet, whom Foucault does not cite, epitomizes this truth in the sonnet, “Ozymandias” (1818): “Nothing beside remains.”<sup>185</sup> If the *scientia affectus* emerges with the *birth of man* in the precarious space of the disequilibrium and doublet of the body and soul, physiology and psychology, the empirical and the transcendental, then it is perhaps this simple refrain of the *end of man* that bears the memory of an *ars pathetica*, the end and culmination of the *scientia affectus*: a memory and reminder that feeling might yet remain transcendental, deriving truths about existence, rather than throwing man back against an image of his empirical existence. This memory of an *ars pathetica* in the end of man would represent a rarefaction of the empirical image of man’s *bios* and *psyche*. Foucault would surely agree: “the art of living is the art of killing psychology, of creating with oneself and with others nameless individualities, beings, relations, and qualities. If one cannot manage this in life, then it is not worth living.”<sup>186</sup> If modern man is a *homo psychologicus*, then the art of living, an *ars pathetica*, entails the end of man (as we know it). While the meaning of the Romantic end of man has likely changed between then and now, perhaps this pathos and memory of an *ars pathetica* represents the force and urgency behind many of today’s posthumanisms. Only after man, perhaps, can our feelings become art and style.

### 3.3: Conclusion

Unfortunately, we are no closer to answering Massumi’s chicken-egg paradox of society and the individual. But rather than falling back on a *scientia affectus* and a transhistorical theory of affect, Foucauldian archaeology helps to convey the historical dimensions of feeling, how, for example, guilt emerges in a fashion unique to the modern age as a space opened by psychiatric impositions of fault and the psychological interiority discovered as its object. Similarly, modern melancholy emerges against a background of changing perceptions of the

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<sup>185</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Ozymandias,” *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat (New York: Norton, 2002), 109.

<sup>186</sup> Michel Foucault, “Conversation avec Werner Schroeter,” *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 4, 256.

body and its relationship with death.<sup>187</sup> In both these cases, the *scientia affectus* oscillates between psychological and physiological determinisms in a space of disequilibrium between body and soul. The question is not how the individual and society relate to one another, but to what extent we can experience the relationship of the individual and society differently. The question for a theory of feeling is not, then, a question of how the experience of deep and irreducible individuality squares with the perception of differential social positions. For both these experiences entails a relationship with the self and with others that has a specific historical emergence in eighteenth and nineteenth century medicine and psychiatry. Rather, the question Foucault's work poses for a theory of feeling is how to give style and art to life, in our relationships with ourselves and others that is less objectifying, alienating, or mortifying, and thus to innovate new experiences, perceptions, and feelings. It means contextualizing the *scientia affectus* and finding a resource for innovation in an *ars pathetica*.

We saw in the first chapter that the *ars pathetica* of antiquity entailed a rich experience of one's feelings, truth, and freedom and related to profound ethical practices and consciousnesses of time, death, and the other. The *ars pathetica* represents various ethical perceptions and practices that respond to and cohere in the transcendental function of feeling in giving truth to existence. In the second chapter, I then showed how this *ars pathetica* was taken up by the early Church Fathers in their understanding of fear and shame, before becoming transformed into a more Statist governmental rationality that took feeling as an object and substance of power, ethics, and knowledge. The third chapter then sought to pick up the historical objectification of feeling as an object of knowledge, which obtained in the emergence of a *scientia affectus*. But while the *scientia affectus* has undergone an ancillary

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<sup>187</sup> This is far from saying melancholy and guilt are exclusively modern experiences, but that their appearance of repetition in the modern age is not evidence that they accord to transhistorical subjective experiences or a universal identity of forms. Feelings of sadness, for example, may appear to repeat consistently, but the transformations in the transcendental horizons of existence alters their experience. This is intimated by Foucault's understanding of historical discontinuity vs. continuity: "today, there are obsessional gestures that seem like magic rituals, delirious patterns that are placed in the same light as ancient religious illuminations, and in a culture where the presence of the sacred has been absent for so long, a morbid desire to profane sometimes surfaces. This persistence seems to be an indicator of the dark memory that accompanies madness, condemning its inventiveness to be nothing more than repetition, and often designating it as the spontaneous archaeology of cultures. Unreason would be the great memory of peoples, their greatest faithfulness to the past, where history is always indefinitely contemporary. All that remains is to invent the universal element within which such persistence takes place. But that illusion of identity is a trap: continuity is actually a phenomenon of discontinuity, and if such archaic patterns of behaviour have survived, it is only in so far as they have been altered. The problem of reappearance only exists for the backward-looking glance; if one follows the warp of history, it becomes apparent that the real problem is the transformation of the field of experience" (HM 105).

abatement through the modern government of feeling, which make feeling into an ethical substance requiring management and augmentation, the *ars pathetica* that had prevailed in previous cultures has undergone a profound transformation, all but becoming silenced completely. While the affect theories of Deleuze and Guattari, Sedgwick, and Massumi may represent attempts to re-articulate an *ars pathetica*, or at least work through the problems inherited from a *scientia affectus*, the silence of the *ars pathetica* nevertheless eludes them. Instead, this deafening silence resounds in today's various anxious voices anticipating the end of times, from the apocalyptic tenor of theorists such as Eugene Thacker and Jason Bahbak Mohaghegh; to "weird fiction" and science fiction writers like Jeff VanderMeer or Thomas Ligotti; to the near constant stream of crisis and disaster literature that is found in today's news and social media cycles. In the apocalyptic timbre of our times—times of political and economic crisis, plague, social unrest, and ecological disquietude—one may be able to hear the echoing memory of another way of life, a different relationship with ourselves, intimations of a political and spiritual renewal of feeling. In any case, this burst of fascination with the end signifies not so much that end itself, but a cultural obsession engraved into the modern *episteme*—one only need look at the apocalyptic visions of Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826) to see that continuity in which an art and truth of the self is sought in the end. The modern subject is given to the other; the self is made world:

Peril will now be mine; and I hail her as a friend—death will perpetually cross my path, and I will meet him as a benefactor; hardship, inclement weather, and dangerous tempests will be my sworn mates. Ye spirits of storm, receive me! ye powers of destruction, open wide your arms, and clasp me for ever! if a kinder power have not decreed another end, so that after long endurance I may reap my reward, and again feel my heart beat near the heart of another like to me.<sup>188</sup>

What stands waiting to be overcome *is* this obsession with the end—the end of ends—which is what, in the last instance, the *ars pathetica* threatens to achieve.

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<sup>188</sup> Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*, ed. Anne McWhir (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 1996), 366.

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# Curriculum Vitae

**Name:** Austin Chisholm

**Post-secondary Education and Degrees:** University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada  
2015-2017 B.A. Honours

University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2018-2020 M.A.

**Honours and Awards:** Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)  
Masters  
2018-2019

Ontario Graduate Scholarship  
2019-2020

**Related Work Experience:** Teaching Assistant  
University of Western Ontario  
2018-2019