THE AESTHETIC AND ASCETIC DIMENSIONS OF AN ETHICS OF SELF-FASHIONING: NIETZSCHE AND FOUCAULT

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Both Nietzsche, as the nineteenth century wound down, and Foucault in the last third of the twentieth century, responded to, and sought a way out of, a profound *cultural crisis*. Nietzsche first signaled the eruption of that crisis with his proclamation of the death of God,[1] and eighty years later Foucault confronted the deepening impact of that *same* crisis. For Nietzsche, the death of God, in the words of Maurice Blanchot, was the event "that tears history apart,"[2] that shattered the very bases upon which morality, values, knowledge, truth, the very meaning of what it was to be human, and socio-political life, in the West had been based for nearly two thousand years. The outcome of the cultural crisis inaugurated by the death of God might be an historical period during which humankind establishes new gods – science, technology, race or nation -- to worship, new *foundations* upon which to slake its thirst for metaphysical certitude. However, that crisis might also open up the space for humankind to experiment with new and daring modes of existence, fresh ways of being. Both Nietzsche and Foucault were well aware of the dangers to which this cultural crisis exposed humankind, even as they both responded to it by articulating an ethics and aesthetics of self-fashioning. For Nietzsche, nothing less than a transfiguration of human being was at stake, while Foucault, especially through the introduction of a new concept, *subjectivation*, at the very end of his life, a concept that has so far received little attention, has provided us with the means that will enhance our understanding of how an ethics of *self-fashioning* can be a powerful response to the cultural crisis through which we are now living. Inasmuch as that cultural crisis was the point of departure for such an ethics, let us first indicate the contours of the crisis to which these two thinkers so vigorously reacted, before we turn to the manifold dimensions of their response to it.

For Nietzsche, that crisis was signaled by the death of God, the end of the belief in a stable reality, with an authoritative source of norms and values, and a fixed human essence. As Erich Heller has put it: "'God is dead' – this is the very core of Nietzsche's spiritual existence, and what follows is despair *and* hope in a new greatness of man, visions of catastrophe *and* glory …."[3] Catastrophe in the form of mounting chaos and horrendous wars, fueled both by a growing nationalism and the fruits of science and technology, each emblematic of a kind of "metaphysical nostalgia," in David Allison's striking phrase, both indications that humankind would continue for an extended period "to live under the shadow of the dead God."[4] Thus, Nietzsche forcefully claimed that our "scientific conscience" was the "sublimation" of "the Christian conscience," of "Christian morality

itself,"[5] even as he envisaged an epoch in which "there will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth."[6]   Nietzsche's fears about the impact of war and nationalism, as so much of his thinking, was rooted in his own personal experiences: the experience of the brutality and barbarism of modern, industrial, warfare, while he served during the Franco-Prussian war, and his meditation on the inverse relationship between culture and war, on "…*the defeat, if not the extirpation, of the German spirit for the benefit of the 'German Reich.'"*[7] Despair wrought by the omnipresence of a passive nihilism and the emergence of the "last man," issues which we shall explore below. Glory and hope, because out of the cultural crisis provoked by the death of God, there was also the prospect of an active nihilism, a possibility of self-overcoming, encapsulated in Nietzsche's different notions of the "free spirit," the "philosopher of the future," the "higher men," and the *Übermensch*, none conceived as an *end* or final state – Nietzsche has expunged teleology from his *Denken* -- or as a perfect human being, a *superman*, but as a process; what Alan Schrift has described with respect to the *Übermensch* as "becoming-*Übermensch*,"[8] a ceaseless process of self-overcoming or what we will designate as self-fashioning.

Eighty years after Nietzsche's final breakdown, at the end of the 1960's, Foucault, as we shall see, signaled the "death of man" – not the death of human being, but the death of a determinant historico-cultural form or modality of the subject. Just as the brutality of the Franco-Prussian war had been a profound experience for the young Nietzsche, so Foucault had experienced the horrors of twentieth century war, of the Nazi occupation of France and the depredations of the Vichy regime, as well as the bloody colonial wars that democratic France waged in its aftermath in Indochina and North Africa. Both the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union, and the war the US waged in Vietnam and Cambodia, had alerted him, as we shall see, to the need to fight the fascism in us all. Indeed, For Foucault the horrors of the Gulag, to take but one example of the disasters through which humankind has lived in our modernity, was no unfortunate "error," but like Nazism, or genocidal colonial wars, linked to the unfolding of bio-politics, and its technologies of domination.[9] However, for Foucault, the death of the humanist subject, that heir to the Christian subject, also created the possibility of an ethics of self-fashioning, entailing both an aesthetics of existence and a vision of asceticism rooted in the Greco-Roman world, and pointing to an overcoming of the crisis brought on by the death of man, a crisis explicitly linked to his understanding of the momentous implications of Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God.

This cultural crisis had a devastating *personal* impact on both Nietzsche and Foucault, for both of whom philosophy was not a matter of propositional statements about the "real" world. It was rather an act of *self-disclosure*, as Nietzsche wrote to Carl von Gersdorff about his *Zarathustra*, so that – as he also explained to Peter Gast – "some pages seem to be almost bleeding."[10] And, as Foucault pointed out, in describing his own work, what he writes is always an *experience* book.

Beyond, the act of writing out of their own suffering and turmoil, for both of these thinkers, philosophy had to *grip* the reader/auditor in a direct and personal way. Both the thinker and her audience would undergo a *transformation* as a result of the experience. So, as Nietzsche puts it in *The Gay Science*, the "art of transfiguration *is* philosophy."[11]   As Foucault explained: "From philosophy comes the displacement and transformation of the limits of thought, the modification of received values and all the work done to think otherwise, to do something else, to become other than what one is."[12] That is the sense in which both Nietzsche and Foucault can be said to understand philosophy as an *art of living*.

While the powerful impact of Nietzsche on Foucault has been generally recognized, particularly in the commitment to *genealogy* and the *perspectivism* that the two share, our own focus lies elsewhere. We are here concerned with how both thinkers sought to confront what they saw as the profound cultural crisis of their times through a rethinking of how the *subject*, or self "shows up" or is historically constituted, and a project of self-shaping, so that, we become, in Nietzsche's words, "the poets of our lives."[13] Such a project entailed a re-creation of what Nietzsche designated as our "second nature," through what Foucault termed "techniques of the self." Moreover it is not the influence of Nietzsche *on* Foucault that concerns us, but rather how a reading of each of these two thinkers can shed light on some of the deepest concerns of the other; indeed, how from a meeting or encounter of Nietzsche and Foucault that we stage, the insights of each can be focused on ways to respond to the experiential crisis of our own world.

For Nietzsche, then, the death of God can be disastrous, because the "shadows of God" will not "cease to darken our minds,[14] *or* liberating, "rather like a new and scarcely describable kind of light, happiness, relief, exhilaration, encouragement, dawn."[15] We shall elaborate on the implications of Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God below. For Foucault, as for Nietzsche, the death of God had occasioned a profound cultural crisis, the depths of which he had already seen by the mid 1960's, and a possible response to which he began to provide with his ethics of self-fashioning in the early 1980's. As Foucault knew, Nietzsche was not the first thinker to signal the death of God, but perhaps the first who did not fill the space vacated by God, with another transcendental:

> … but we must be careful, because the notion of the death of God doesnot have the same meaning in Hegel, Feuerbach and Nietzsche. For Hegel, Reason takes the place of God, and it is the human spirit that develops little by little; for Feuerbach, God is the illusion that alienates Man, but once rid of this illusion, it is Man who comes to realise his liberty. Finally, for Nietzsche, the death of God signifies the end of metaphysics, but God is not replaced by man, and the space remains empty.[16]

Nietzsche's "death of God" was also the death of man, not of course the death of human being, but the "death" of one historical form of the subject. According to Foucault:

> Nietzsche rediscovered the point at which man and God belong to one another, at which the death of the second is synonymous with the disappearance of the first, and at which the promise of the overman signifies first and foremost the imminence of the death of man.[17]

Thus, when, at the very conclusion to *The Order of Things*, Foucault speculated that if the present deployment of the subject, its existing constitution, was "to crumble … then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea,"[18] he believed his world was experiencing just such a crisis of the subject; the disappearance of an historically contingent form of the subject. In modern philosophy, the origins of that determinate form of the subject can be traced back to Descartes, for whom, according to James Bernauer, "… the discovery of the *cogito* was actually the transference to man of God's function in medieval metaphysics as source of the world's reality and intelligibility …. After Kant and Hegel had completed the transference and Nietzsche had declared it a cultural fact, it was Foucault who saw that the death of God necessarily entailed the death of the figure who had taken on his role as the Absolute."[19] Whereas for thinkers

such as Hegel, the death of God had not meant the end of *transcendence*, merely the need for another form of it, for Nietzsche, the death of God constituted nothing less than the end of transcendence, and the need for it. For Nietzsche, then, the space left vacant by the death of God, would not be filled at all, there would be no transference to man, or indeed, to his *Übermensch*, of God's function. Indeed, the very "space" would cease to exist. After all, it was not God, who was but a symbol, but the very *space* He once occupied that is central to metaphysics – which is what Nietzsche sought to overcome.

What, then, would fill the void left by what Foucault saw as the disappearance of "man"? How might the cultural crisis to which Foucault was responding, and which Nietzsche had first signaled, unfold? After all, the void created by the death of God had, for Nietzsche, left human being still confronted by the incredible *horror* of life, by a profound *suffering*, just as it had his Greek and Christian ancestors:

> The discipline of suffering, of great suffering – do you not know that only this discipline has created all enhancements of man so far? That tension of the soul in unhappiness which cultivates its strength, its shudders face to face with great ruin, its inventiveness and courage in enduring, persevering, interpreting, and exploiting suffering, and whatever has been granted to it of profundity, secret, mask, spirit, cunning, greatness -- was it not granted to it through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering?[20]

That horror of life and its suffering had already produced the ascetic ideal. For Nietzsche, the ascetic ideal, with its claim that human suffering has meaning, with its hatred of self and world, and the omnipresence of guilt, that has shaped Western man, is an historically determinate response to "metaphysical need," the need to construe one's life as meaningful, a form of "metaphysical comfort," the belief that the pain that we endure in this life can be redeemed in an other-worldly domain of existence. However, for Nietzsche, that metaphysical need is itself a product of history; it has a genealogy. It is not a natural or irreducible feature of the life of our species: "We have absolutely no *need* of these certainties, regarding the furthest horizon to live a full and excellent human life …. What we need, rather, is to become clear in our minds as to the origin of that calamitous weightiness we have for so long accorded to these things, and for that we require a *history* of the ethical and religious sensations."[21] The desire for metaphysical comfort too is suffused with historicity, and Nietzsche looks towards the day when it can be superseded by the quest for what he terms "this-worldly comfort" [*diesseitigen Trostes*].[22] However, confronted by the suffering experienced by human beings, it is the ascetic ideal that historically has had a purchase on us. In the face of that suffering:

> Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does not repudiate suffering as such; he *desires* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far – *and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning*![23]

That metaphysical need, the need for the world and its suffering to have an a-historical, transcendent, *meaning*, inherent in it, which had shaped the Judeo-Christian West, and which was itself the product of a determinate historical development, and the quest for metaphysical comfort to gratify the longing for some meaning to be found in the world's suffering, to which it gave rise, came to be historically instantiated in the ascetic ideal, of which Christianity is the exemplar, with its devaluation of this-

worldly life. However, the death of God did not necessarily put an end to the ascetic ideal. Indeed, atheism, as a manifestation of the will-to-truth, "is therefore *not* the antithesis of that ideal, as it appears to be; it is rather only one of the latest phases of its evolution, one of its terminal forms and inner consequences …."[24] Thus, following the death of God, metaphysical need, and the ascetic ideal, may reappear in a secularized form, in a faith in new idols, in an apotheosis of reason or science,[25] in nationalism and political religions, or even in a resurgence of more traditional religious *forms*, fundamentalism – and with them the kinds of wars that Nietzsche foresaw, and to which we have already pointed. The persistence of metaphysical nostalgia, then, can manifest itself in new mechanisms of *social control*, new forms of mass mobilization, often based on fear and hatred of the *Other*, that can arise even in formally democratic regimes. So long as humans demand that existence have its own intrinsic meaning and goals, so long as they crave a transcendental Truth, they remain confined within the horizon of metaphysics. That recourse to the transcendental can assume the form of a *transcendent* mode of Being or the Kantian sense of the necessary *a priori* conditions for thinking and knowledge. As Nietzsche himself professed: "God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. – And we – we still have to vanquish his shadow too."[26] The Judeo-Christian God may be dead, at least for the dominant tradition in contemporary philosophy, but his shadow still looms large in the claims for the existence of transcendentals, as made, for example, by Jürgen Habermas. For Nietzsche, such claims would be a manifestation of the need for meaning: "The impulse to desire in this domain *nothing but certainties* is a *religious after-shoot*, no more – a hidden and only apparently skeptical species of the 'metaphysical need'…."[27]

In the absence of an alternative to God and transcendent values, the outcome, for Nietzsche was *nihilism*. Yet nihilism, for Nietzsche, can be a positive as well as a negative phenomenon. It "can be a symptom of increasing *strength* or of increasing weakness …."[28] Active nihilism can open up the space for the re-valuation of values, for what we will designate a transfiguration, a project of self-fashioning. But there was also a danger of falling into the abyss of passive nihilism, where all that remained was the will to nothingness, and the brutal political ideologies and structures that could arise on its basis. According to Aaron Ridley, "… the self-overcoming of the ascetic ideal leaves us entirely bereft of a goal; and without a goal we will be catapulted into nihilism."[29] The hallmark of passive nihilism, for Nietzsche, is "… a will to nothingness, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life; but it is and remains a will! … And to repeat in conclusion what I said at the beginning: man would rather will nothingness than not will …"[30] But, as Ridley argues, "Nietzsche's deepest fear is not nihilism."[31] Rather, it is that, into the void created by the death of God, there will step the "last man" [*letzte Mensch*], a subject who lacks the very capacity to will, even to will nothingness. The figure of such a "man" is characterized by complacency, happiness, contentment, and indifference. As Robert Gooding-Williams describes him:

> Complacent to the end, the last man is oblivious to the advent of nihilism. Bearing witness to the death of God and to the self-destruction of the ascetic ideal, he remains indifferent to both events. …. Wholly satisfied and without suffering, the last man has no desire to achieve something he has not achieved or to make himself into something he is not. …. Because the last man does not suffer and want for a goal, it matters not to him that his will lacks a goal.[32]

When Nietzsche has Zarathustra descend from his mountain and offer the townspeople the vision of both the *Übermensch* and the last man, their response is "'Give us this last man, O Zarathustra'…. 'Turn us into these last men!'"[33]

Confronted by that grave danger, by the prospect of a world in which humans have ceased to will, in which action of virtually any kind is too much, the alternative that Nietzsche saw was the chance that out of the death of God, it might also be possible for some people, for "free spirits," "a spirit that has *become free*, that has again taken possession of itself,"[34] to effect a self-overcoming of what he designated as Christian-Platonic man, with its basis in the ascetic ideal, and thus to overcome the metaphysical need, and to give rise to the creation of new values. For Nietzsche, then, the crisis could actually be *liberating*:

> Indeed, we philosophers and "free spirits" feel, when we hear the news that "the old god is dead," as if a new dawn shone on us; our heart over-flows with gratitude, amazement, premonition, expectation. At long last the horizon appears free to us again, even if it should not be bright; at long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of a lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, our sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an "open sea."[35]

In place of the last man, then, this crisis might have a different outcome: "It is a measure of the degree of strength of will to what extent one can do without meaning in things, to what extent one can endure to live in a meaningless world *because one organizes a small portion of it oneself*.[36] How are we to take this shocking and bold statement? Is Nietzsche simply saying that it is possible that we can do without a transcendent meaning, without a meaning already immanent in the world, because we can create our own meaning?[37] Or is it possible that organizing a small portion of the world is not the same as creating meaning? We typically conflate the two. But isn't it possible that that conflation is itself historical, albeit built into the very structure of the language that we have contingently come to use? What we want to raise is the possibility that the act of *organizing* a portion of the world is not the same as the creation of *meaning*; that organization and meaning can be separated.[38] Perhaps we can decide *not* to raise the question of *meaning* in any form. Perhaps the very question of meaning, the quest or need for it, already casts us back into the world of metaphysics, back into what Bernard Reginster sees as "the dominant, life-negating values,"[39] from which Nietzsche sought to extricate himself.[40] What we are suggesting is that it may be possible to overcome not just the ascetic ideal, but metaphysical need in any form, that is, an overcoming of metaphysics, inasmuch as the very questions upon which it is based would no longer preoccupy us. Here we may have Nietzsche's vision of an *Übermensch*, who can live in a world without meaning, who has overcome the metaphysical need in all its forms, even the need for meaning, who can fashion her self, create his own values. It is in that sense that we read Alexander Nehamas's gloss on Nietzsche's vision:

> … it is to create for oneself a life that, despite and perhaps because of the pain and suffering it will contain, will constitute such an achievement that one would be willing to live through it again, down to its smallest detail, exactly as it has already occurred, if one were given the opportunity. It is to want one's life to be exactly what it has been and to be unwilling and unable to conceive that a life in any way different would be a life of one's own.[41]

Here Nehamas has joined aspects of Nietzsche's vision of the *Übermensch* and his doctrine of eternal recurrence. *Eternal recurrence*, for us, is not a metaphysical or cosmological doctrine, but an affirmation of life and a spiritual exercise, an integral part of a project of self-fashioning, through which we both evaluate and affirm our own lives: how much of it could we bear to live again, not just once, but for eternity, over and over again; have we *created* a life that, *in toto*, we would wish to live again and again? That path would entail a radically new deployment of the subject, new in respect to the forms of the subject that have historically inhabited the Christian or Western world. Nietzsche's vision of being able to live in a meaningless world because one organizes a portion of it, which Arthur Danto has termed "the most liberating thought imaginable,"[42] encapsulates, for us, the meaning of a project of self-fashioning. For Nietzsche: "We … *want to become those we are* – human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves."[43] That project arises from what Nietzsche would term a *tragic view of life*, a mutation of the Dionysian pessimism first articulated in *The Birth of Tragedy*, in contrast to a Schopenhauerian pessimism of weakness:

> Saying Yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems, the will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility even in the very sacrifice of its highest types – *that* is what I called Dionysian, *that* is what I guessed to be the bridge to the psychology of the *tragic* poet. *Not* in order to be liberated from terror and pity, not in order to purge oneself of a dangerous affect by its vehement discharge – Aristotle understood it that way – but in order to be *oneself* the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity – that joy which included even joy in destroying.[44]

As Kathleen Higgins has glossed Nietzsche's vision of the tragic: "Tragedy, according to Nietzsche, afforded a vision of life as meaningful despite the inevitability of human suffering …."[45] The prospect that one can fashion a life as a work of art, despite or because of the indetermination of life, and its attendant suffering, made it possible for Nietzsche to say a joyous "Yes" to life, which is the veritable hallmark of his tragic vision. And that was because, for him: "In man *creature* and *creator* are united: in man there is material, fragment, excess, clay, dirt, nonsense, chaos; but in man there is also creator, form-giver, hammer hardness, spectator divinity, and seventh day: do you understand this contrast?"[46] To create, indeed to seek to create oneself, to be futural, come together in the act of willing. Horst Hutter has clearly grasped this dimension of Nietzsche's thinking: "'Knowing' the future means 'creating' it. It is a venture fraught with uncertainty. …. Now Nietzsche intends to provide the principles in his writings for a new willing of the future. Hence 'willing' is the central category of both his writings and his own self-overcoming."[47]

How, then, did that cultural crisis, and the possible responses to it, look to Michel Foucault? Foucault does not provide us with a tragic vision, the experience of suffering, which permeates Nietzsche's writings. Suffering in its experiential or personal sense does not shape Foucault's writings. Though it seems clear that he experienced great suffering, and though all his books are in a sense autobiographical, he does not reveal himself the way Nietzsche does, or link his own life to that of his epoch. Yet, no less than the German thinker, Foucault believed that the death of God had inaugurated a profound cultural crisis, one fraught with both danger and fresh possibilities. One mode in which Foucault saw danger in the contemporary world lay in a recrudescence of metaphysical need, and of the ascetic ideal, in the form of *fascism*. He addressed that danger in his preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* in 1972. By fascism, Foucault did not just mean "…

historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini – which was able to mobilize and use the desire of the masses so effectively – but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us."[48] That fascism in us all, can be mobilized by the left as well as by the right, and, indeed, by democratic regimes and their leaders as well. Beyond that, Foucault, too, saw the prospect of the last man, and with him/her he also hinted at a possible way out of the danger unleashed by the death of God: "We are indeed the last man in the Nietzschean sense of the term, and the overman will be whoever can overcome the absence of God and the absence of man in the same gesture of overtaking."[49] We do not think that Foucault was necessarily confident about such an outcome; simply that the crisis inaugurated by the death of God created a possibility for it. One of Foucault's concerns, then, was to seek ways to actualize such an "overtaking." We believe that his project of an ethics of self-fashioning, and what has been termed his "journey to Greece," had such a motivation:

> And 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.[50]

As Gilles Deleuze has claimed, Foucault recognized that "…in moral matters we are still weighed down with old beliefs which we no longer even believe, and we continue to produce ourselves as a subject on the basis of old modes which do not correspond to our problems."[51] For Foucault, as it had been for Nietzsche, this was a cultural crisis, the result of the fact that the old ground for the West's very understanding of the "nature" of human being, God and transcendent values, had been removed, even as purportedly radical cultural and political movements could not fully extricate themselves from a reliance on that selfsame ground. Foucault's effort to forge an ethics of self-fashioning, and to explore the prospects for an art of living, was conceived as an antipode to what he saw as the grave threats of fascism, nihilism, and the prospect of the last man. One way to view his journey to Greece, then, is to see it as his quest to extricate us from the danger opened up by the death of God.

The cultural crisis to which we have pointed, was linked to Foucault's realization that the political movements which ostensibly challenged the ossified political regimes of his time, movements with which Foucault had always sympathized, had failed to offer an alternative to the modes of subjectivity, to the ways in which human beings were constituted as subjects, in the modern world:

> 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.[52]

The political movements of the left based their opposition to the prevailing power relations in society on the existence of a purported *authentic* subject or self, buried under a false consciousness and technologies of power, from which humankind had to liberate itself. Foucault believed that there was no authentic subject, no hidden human essence, the discovery and liberation of which would free us from relations of domination. Instead, new forms of the subject had to be invented, created, if the prevailing technologies of domination and control were to be challenged.

One aspect of this crisis, then, was Foucault's realization that a challenge to prevailing power relations, especially relations of domination and control, entailed the elaboration of a new ethics, a new relation of self to self; a project at which even the radical political movements of the twentieth century had failed. Yet Foucault was both convinced of the need for such a project, and profoundly pessimistic as to its chances for success:

> … in this series of undertakings to reconstitute an ethic of the self, in this series of more or less blocked and ossified efforts, and in the movement we now make to refer ourselves constantly to this ethic of the self without ever giving it any content, I think we may have to suspect that we find it impossible today to constitute an ethic of the self, even though it may be an urgent, fundamental, and politically indispensable task, if it is true after all that there is no first or final point of resistance to political power other than in the relationship one has to oneself.[53]

Foucault's journey to Greece was, then, propelled by this crisis, by his quest for a new relation of self to self, a new way of thinking about ethics, that would respond to what he saw as a profound cultural crisis and urgent political tasks. It was both stimulated by, and focused on, a history or ontology of the *present*.[54] For Foucault, the *use* of the Ancient's lay in the contribution that the thought of Socrates, Seneca, or Diogenes of Sinope, could make to the prospects for resistance to *modern* power relations. He was not interested in writing a history of Ancient philosophy, or primarily concerned with getting the Greeks and Romans "right," in discovering the "true" meaning of the ancient authors. Nor did he believe that the Greeks offered a solution to our present concerns, our current dangers: "… you can't find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people."[55] Indeed, as Foucault pointed out, Greek ethics were linked to a society structured by multiple hierarchies, " it was a virile society with slaves, in which women were underdogs whose pleasure had no importance, whose sexual life had to be only oriented toward, determined by, their status as wives, and so on."[56] Even homosexual relations lacked reciprocity. All of which led Foucault to describe the Greek ethics of pleasure as "quite disgusting!"[57] What attracted Foucault to the Graeco-Roman world, then, was not the content of its ethics, but the way in which the question of ethics was problematized. The concept of *problematization* plays an important role in Foucault's thinking. One can speak of a problematization when a field of experience, a complex of power/knowledge relations or a set of practices become a "problem," and provoke "a crisis in the previously silent behavior, habits, practices, and institutions."[58] In that problematization, and its genealogy, Foucault saw a way to respond to present dangers:

> My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism.[59]

In our view, what sent Foucault on his journey to Greece was what he saw as a crisis of the *ethical subject* in the modern world, a facet of the cultural crisis provoked by the death of God.

The Graeco-Roman world to which Foucault's final intellectual journey led him, also provided him with a basis for distinguishing knowledge of self from care of self. In his lecture course on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault distinguished between two types of philosophy in the Ancient world. From the Socratic injunction to "know thyself" [*gnôthi seauton*], philosophy progressively

assumed the form of *theoretical knowledge*, with its focus on *cognition*. Socratic thought, however, also gave birth to a very different vision of philosophy as well, one based on care of self [*epimeleia heautou*], with its focus on self-fashioning. Whereas in the Ancient world the two were inseparable, in the modern world care of self, which had once been the focus of philosophy, has been displaced by science and its truth game. Moreover, there is a clear link on the one hand between the modern West's preoccupation with knowledge of self, the constitution of the subject as an *object* of knowledge, and the pursuit of the subject's *True* nature, the origins of which can be found in Christianity and its hermeneutics of the subject, and on the other hand the constitution of the subject as obedient and submissive[60]—the form of subject consonant with states of domination or control. Moreover, according to Foucault, a growing primacy of knowledge of self over care of self was manifest in two great models, the Platonic and the Christian, the former based on a model of "recollection" and the latter on a model of "exegesis:" "I think that these two great models—Platonic and Christian, or, if you like, the model of the subject's recollection of himself and the model of the subject's exegesis of himself—both dominated Christianity and were afterwards transmitted through Christianity to the whole of Western culture."[61] And the subsequent development of that culture completely marginalized one element of that model: care of self.[62] Therein lies the significance of Hellenistic and Roman culture, for Foucault, in particular the Epicurean, Cynic, and Stoic schools, in which he finds an alternative to those two great models: "I would like to return to that important historical turning point, the moment at which, in Hellenistic and Roman culture, the care of self became an autonomous, self-finalized art imparting value to the whole of one's existence. Is this not a privileged moment for seeing the development and formulation of the question of the truth of the subject?"[63] That privileged historical moment, with its alternative to the model of truth provided by Platonism and Christianity, with its very different way of formulating the relation of the subject to truth, provided Foucault with the means to confront the crisis of the ethical subject, to which he believed the trajectory of modern, Western, culture had led. Indeed, Paul Veyne has explicitly pointed to "the role of this reinterpretation of Stoicism in Michel Foucault's interior life as he was writing his last book, in which he hoped to sketch a morality for the Nietzschean, post-Christian age, …"[64]

Where Nietzsche, in 1888, was elaborating on themes that had characterized his thinking for the preceding eighteen years, Foucault seemed to be breaking new ground in his last years, inasmuch as the *subject*, and not the *dispositif* [networks] of knowledge-power, and their attendant social practices, had become the focus of his thinking. Indeed, that has led some of Foucault's critics to claim that he finally had to acknowledge the existence of a "deep" subject; that he had, at least implicitly, conceded the game to Habermas, for whom the subject is characterized by *a priori* conditions for thinking and communication.[65] Foucault however demurred. He insisted, just months before his death, that the subject "… is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself. …. And it is precisely the historical constitution of these various forms of the subject in relation to the games of truth which interests me."[66] Foucault had virtually from his earliest writings questioned the existence of epistemological and anthropological *universals*, claiming that both the truth and the subject have their particular *histories*. Thus, with respect to truth, Foucault pointed out that:

> My objective for more than twenty-five years has been to sketch out a history of the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology. The main point is not to accept this knowledge at face value but to analyze these so-called sciences as very specific "truth games" related to specific technologies that human beings use to understand themselves.[67]

Concerning the subject:

> One has to dispense with the constituent subject … that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. And this is what I would call genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to a field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.[68]

With respect to the subject, then, Foucault was extremely skeptical concerning the claims, that have become one hallmark of the tradition of Western metaphysics, that behind or below the multiple historical forms of the subject there was an a-historical, or transcendental, subject:

> I do indeed believe that there is no sovereign, founding subject, a universal form of subject to be found everywhere. I am very skeptical of this view of the subject and very hostile to it. I believe, on the contrary, that the subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation, of liberty, as in Antiquity, on the basis, of course, of a number of rules, styles, inventions to be found in the cultural environment.[69]

Foucault, in a series of texts, had elucidated the bases for understanding how the subject was constituted in and through a *dispositif* that included technologies of domination. But what sent him on his journey to Greece was the conviction that a model for an alternative to such modes of subjectivity, the possibility for the constitution of a subject in *autonomous* fashion, through practices of *freedom*, might be found in the history of our own culture, in the Ancient world; that the Graeco-Roman world provided another modality for the ethical subject.

However, while Foucault never returned to a conception of a deep subject, didn't his very focus on the subject in his final years mark a significant shift in his concerns away from power? Foucault insisted that such was not the case. In an overview of twenty years of work, he claimed that his focus had not been, as most interpreters then claimed, on the phenomenon of power: "My objective instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings have been made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects."[70] Thus the domain of systems of knowledge focused on the discursive practices through which we are constituted as what Foucault -- in his in his late essay "What is Enlightenment?" – designated "as subjects of our own knowledge." The domain of modalities of power focused on "How we are constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations." The domain of ethics, by contrast, focused on "How we are constituted as moral subjects of our own actions."[71] Deleuze, in his reading of Foucault, points out that these three domains or what he terms "dimensions," which he designates as "Knowledge-Being," "Power-Being," and "self-Being," respectively, "are irreducible, yet constantly imply one another. They are three 'ontologies'" – though "historical" because "they do not set universal conditions."[72]

Nonetheless, it is also clear that Foucault's "long detour" between the first volume and the last two of his *History of Sexuality*, 1976 –1980, permitted him to focus his attention on that last domain, how we constitute ourselves as ethical subjects, a domain that received little attention before 1980. Yet it

is precisely here, in investigating Foucault's understanding of how, in each of these domains, human beings are made subjects, that we encounter a complex of issues that, we believe, has received too little attention thus far. This is the issue of Foucault's own concepts and terminology to describe the processes by which the subject "shows up." With respect to the processes through which the subject is constituted through knowledge-power relations, the term that Foucault uses is *assujettissement*. Thus, to take but one example, in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, in describing the complex processes through which Western man was constituted as a subject, Foucault speaks of «*l'assujettissement des hommes*» ["men's subjection," in Robert Hurley's translation].[73] Two problems immediately arise: the range of meanings contained in the word *assujettissement* as Foucault wields it, and the translation of it into English by Foucault's several translators, and then by those who write on Foucault.[74] With respect to the meanings of *assujettissement*, it clearly entails subjugation and subjection, but while such a meaning implies the passivity of the subject, Foucault also sees *assujettissement* as entailing more than relations of domination, as involving the *autonomy*, and the possibility of resistance, of the one who is *assujetti* [subjected] as well. While that range of meanings may be clear to Francophone readers, it is severely restricted when *assujettissement* is translated as subjection or subjugation.[75] The importance of acknowledging the active factor in *assujettissement* becomes especially important in the mid to late 1970's when Foucault expands the purview of his investigations of power relations beyond disciplinary power, and docile bodies, to include "governmentality," where the *reversibility* of power relations becomes particularly significant, and where he articulates a vision of government through *freedom*. Judith Butler has grasped the multifaceted elements of *assujettissement* that has escaped so many others:

> Power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts* the subject into being. As a condition, power precedes the subject. Power loses its appearance of priority, however, when it is wielded by the subject, a situation that gives rise to the reverse perspective that power is the effect of the subject, and that power is what the subject effects.[76]

In his *Powers of Freedom*, Nikolas Rose translates *assujettissement* as "subjectification," which seems to us particularly felicitous, as it does not foreclose any of the range of possible meanings that Foucault's term contains.[77]

However, around 1980, in discussing how we constitute ourselves as ethical subjects, Foucault very deliberately introduces a new term: *subjectivation*. While *assujettissement* pertains to how one is produced as a subject through the exercise of power/knowledge, including the modalities of resistance through which that exercise can be modified or attenuated, *subjectivation* pertains to the relation of the individual to him/herself; to the multiple ways in which a self can be constructed on the basis of what one takes to be the truth. The introduction of this new term and its significance has thus far elicited little or no mention in the literature. In his path-breaking lecture course on the hermeneutics of the subject, where Foucault first adumbrated his concept of subjectivation, he also linked that concept to the deployment of truth. Foucault there contrasted two different relations of the subject to truth, corresponding to very different modes by which the subject constitutes him/herself. There is a deployment in which "the subject objectifies himself in a true discourse,"[78] one model for which is submission to the law, the moral code, the Book or the Text. Historically, that *objectification* of a subject in true discourse has been instantiated in the Christian churches, though its legacy persists in modern philosophy with its subject-object relation, and in the sciences, which see both the natural world and the human being as objects the nature of which it is their task to discover

and classify. Foucault linked that objectification of a subject in true discourse to a renunciation of self.[79] However, there is another deployment that Foucault introduced in that lecture course, one that in our view both constitutes a fresh way of grappling with the question of the subject, though one that Foucault did not live to elaborate, and which is directly linked to an ethics of self-fashioning. It is the deployment that Foucault designated as "the subjectivation [*subjectivation*] of true discourse," which "enables us to become subjects of these true discourses, which enables us to become the subject who tells the truth and who is transfigured by this enunciation of the truth, by this enunciation itself, precisely by the fact of telling the truth."[80] Subjectivation of true discourse, as Foucault articulates it in this sense, entails "rejoining oneself as the end and object of a technique of life, an art of living. It involves coming together with oneself, the essential moment of which is not the objectification of the self in a true discourse, but the subjectivation of a true discourse in a practice and exercise of oneself on oneself."[81] At the heart of the Foucauldian distinction between objectification and subjectivation of true discourse, is that in the case of the former one accepts a truth whose authority is purportedly beyond question, while in the case of the latter the enunciation of the truth arises from the subject's own practices of freedom, from a choice.

Perhaps the very newness of the concept and term, as well as the lack of time to refine its use, led Foucault to designate as subjectivation both the two modalities through which the subject acted upon itself, and the specific modality through which the enunciation of truth arose from the subject's own freedom and not from a relationship with an unquestioned authority, as in Christian monasticism. The sharp contrast between these two modalities through which the subject relates to itself has profound implications for the trajectory of the West, and for possible ways to respond to the cultural crisis that Nietzsche signaled, and through which Foucault lived. In his still unpublished 1980 lecture course at the *Collège de France* on "The Government of the Living," Foucault opined that: "The subjectivation of Western man is Christian and not Graeco-Roman." The cultural crisis inaugurated by the death of God has been shaped by that stark fact. Let us tentatively indicate what we believe it entails. The objectification of a subject in true discourse, with its roots in Christianity, entails a renunciation of self. It leads to a quest to *discover* one's true self, to a hermeneutics of suspicion. It is the path back to metaphysical comfort in old or new forms. The subjectivation of true discourse, by contrast, entails techniques or practices through which one *creates* a self; a kind of self-knowledge within the ambit of care of self. Moreover, care of self is not solipsistic. It "intensifies the relation to political action rather than hindering it. …. The distance between me and the world, hollowed out by care of the self, is constitutive of action, but of regulated, specific and deliberate action. One cares for oneself not in order to escape from the world but in order to act properly in it."[82] Here the link to Nietzsche's tragic vision is patent; like Nietzsche, the Foucauldian project entails a joyous Yes to the world. With the processes of subjectivation in this second sense, it is through what Foucault termed practices of the self that one makes the truth one's own. That process of subjectivation is integral to fashioning oneself as an ethical subject, and for both Nietzsche and Foucault fashioning oneself as an ethical subject has an aesthetic and an ascetic dimension, to which we now turn.

Self-fashioning, for Nietzsche, is conceived on the model of a work of art. As he puts it in *The Gay Science*:

> To "give style" to one's character – a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until

> every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of the original nature has been removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it. …. In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste![83]

Foucault also conceived an ethics of self-fashioning on the basis of aesthetic criteria:

> What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals, or to life. That art is something which is specialized or which is done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life?[84]

Foucault's journey to Greece led him to a conception of art that was far different from that found in Kant or modern aesthetics. Foucault discovered there an "art of existence" or "life, " a "*technê tou biou*," "dominated by the principle that says one must 'take care of oneself'."[85] It is this idea of care of self (*epimeleia heautou*), and the idea that one could take one's own life or body, as the "material" for a work of art that is the hallmark of Foucault's refunctioning of aesthetics. Several conceptual breakthroughs follow from this move. First, there is the establishment of an intimate link between the aesthetic and the ethical domains, between an art of existence and care of self, the latter being central to Foucault's ethics of self-fashioning. Indeed, for Foucault, the transformation of the self, the hallmark of ethics for him, and the aesthetic realm are closely related: "This transformation of one's self by one's own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting?"[86] As Timothy O'Leary glosses Foucault's aesthetics of existence: "In this sense, aesthetic is closest in meaning to the ancient Greek term *techne*, as it is used in expressions such as *technê tou biou* ('the technique/art of life', or in Foucault's rendering, 'the art/aesthetics of life/existence'). In this sense to understand ethics as an aesthetics of the self is to understand it as a relation which demands a certain attitude towards the self, an attitude not unlike that of an artist faced with his or her material."[87] Second, there is Foucault's translation of art as *technê*, which also links it to the Greek concept of *poiêsis*, to the work of an artisan, and to the word "technique." Paul Veyne has seconded Foucault here, and called our attention to the fact that for the Greeks "an artist was first of all an artisan and a work of art was first of all a work."[88] Third, even when Foucault did link the aesthetic to the beautiful, it was in the Greek, not the modern sense, that he used this term. Thus, for Foucault, the beautiful, *kalos*, had – as it did for the Greeks – the sense of "fine" or "good," as when we still speak today of one's "inward beauty" or "beautiful soul," and mean it in an *ethical* sense. Timothy O'Leary's gloss on Foucault's understanding of the aesthetic captures the distance that separates his vision from the one that prevails in modernity:

> Not only did the Greeks have no conception of an "aesthetic sphere" as opposed to a "moral sphere", but in their art practices they did not rely on a specialized notion of the "fine arts" as opposed to utilitarian craft. It would seem that they had too much respect for *techné* and *poiésis* to leave it entirely in the hands of "artists". In the modern period, however, art has been transformed both theoretically and practically. The idea that the artist is the specialist producer of non-utilitarian objects of aesthetic pleasure is, despite the best efforts of the avant-garde art movements still dominant.[89]

For Foucault, an aesthetics of existence entails "those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria."[90] What is entailed is an art of living.

The art of living shaped the world of Antiquity, and underlies the Nietzschean project, "Be yourself!"[91] It is no less central to Foucault's ethics of self-fashioning. When an ethics of self-fashioning has an aesthetic component, as it does for both Nietzsche and Foucault, according to Alexander Nehamas that means:

> As in the acknowledged arts, there are no rules for producing new and exciting works. As in the acknowledged arts, there is no best work – no best life – by which others can be judged. As in the acknowledged arts, that does not imply that judgment is impossible, that every work is as good as every other. As in the acknowledged arts, the aim is to produce as many new and different types of works – as many modes of life – as possible, since the proliferation of aesthetic difference and multiplicity, even though it is not in the service of morality, enriches and improves human life.[92]

Nehamas's depiction of an *art* of living, clearly consonant with both the Nietzschean and Foucauldian visions, seems to us to be a telling response to the charge that any intrusion of the aesthetic into the other life spheres is fraught with danger or even flirts with fascism.[93]

The self-practices entailed by such an art of life are linked to Foucault's dramatic refunctioning of the concept of asceticism. In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault pointed out that when we speak of asceticism or ascesis today it is within a certain tradition of increasingly greater degrees of "renunciation," culminating in "renunciation of the self" (*renonciation à soi*).[94] By contrast, Foucault argued: "that ascesis (*askêsis*) had a profoundly different meaning for the Ancients. First of all, because obviously it did not involve the aim of arriving at self-renunciation at the end of ascesis. It involved, rather, constituting oneself through *askêsis*. Or, more precisely, let's say it involved arriving at the formation of a full, perfect, complete, and self-sufficient relationship with oneself, capable of producing the self-transfiguration that is the happiness one takes in onself."[95] So, for Foucault: "In two words, ancient ascesis does not take away: it equips, it gives."[96] According to James Urpeth, Foucault re-functions asceticism so that "it concerns an activity of self-constitution beyond the constraints imposed by 'external' authorities and institutions."97 Indeed, the later Foucault's understanding of asceticism is very close to that of the authority on early Church history, Richard Valantasis:

> Asceticism may be defined as performances within a dominant social environment intended to inaugurate a new subjectivity, different social relations, and an alternate symbolic universe.[98]

For Valantasis, as for Foucault, then: "Ascetic performances revise the understanding of the self, society, and the universe by directing them intentionally toward an alternative mode of existence within a dominant environment."[99] Asceticism, in this vision, then, is clearly in the service of a transfiguration of existence, not a renunciation of life.

This re-functioning of the concept of asceticism, by advertence to its meaning in the Ancient world, so that from a negative charge, it now acquires a positive one, may seem to distance Foucault from Nietzsche. However, Nietzsche's own understanding of asceticism makes room for precisely the meaning that Foucault now wants to attach to it. Nietzsche's treatment of the ascetic ideal, and the ascetic priest, in his *Genealogy of Morals* certainly focuses on "self-mortification, self-flagellation, self-sacrifice."[100] However, Nietzsche also points out that the ascetic ideal is self-contradictory; it is hostile to life, and yet it serves the interests of life. For the ascetic priest, no matter how much he champions self-abnegation, still seeks dominion over life. That said, the ascetic ideal is only one element in Nietzsche's treatment of asceticism. For Nietzsche too seeks to re-function asceticism in the service of life:

I also want to make asceticism natural again: in place of the aim of denial, the aim of strengthening. A gymnastics of the will; abstinence and fasting of all kinds, in the most spiritual realms too; a casuistry of deeds in regard to the opinions we have regarding our strengths; an experiment with adventures and arbitrary dangers.[101]

James Urpeth, for one, recognizes that Nietzsche undertakes a "fusion … of the 'ascetic ideal' with the affirmation of existence," so that it becomes "possible to conceive 'noble' ascesis as a self-disciplining carried out in pursuit of the intensification of the pleasures of the whole economy of the 'human' rather than as an attempt through 'denial' to transcend them."[102] Such a reading makes it possible to distinguish between Nietzsche's "ascetic priest" and other forms of the ascetic ideal, forms that are life affirming. As Keith Ansell-Pearson has recognized: "It would be a mistake to suppose that Nietzsche opposes ascetic practices completely, since the kind of greatness that he esteems requires sacrifice and self-discipline. What he is opposed to are practices of self-denial which devalue earthly, sensual life."[103] Nietzsche's usage here is very close to Foucault's understanding of how the Greeks understood ascesis, and how he wishes to use this concept in his own ethics of self-fashioning: "In a word, we can say that the theme of an *askêsis*, as a practical training that was indispensable in order for an individual to form himself as a moral subject, was important – emphasized even – in classical Greek thought, especially in the tradition issuing from Socrates."[104] Such training with its focus on both physical exercises (athletics, dietetics), and spiritual exercises (meditation, examination of one's conscience), and the discipline that was required for them, led to the self-mastery (*enkrateia*) that was integral to an ethics of self-fashioning. Thus, for the Ancients, as Herman Nilson shows: "The use of pleasures required control of them. Enkrateia, as Foucault attempted to define it, was essentially a balance of the individual with himself; it was an attitude of the individual towards himself through self-control."[105]

Thus, for Foucault, what is at issue is:

> Ascetics [*L'ascétique*], that is to say the more or less coordinated set of exercises that are available, recommended, and even obligatory, and anyway utilizable by individuals in a moral, philosophical, and religious system in order to achieve a definite spiritual objective. By "spiritual objective," I understand a certain transformation, a certain transfiguration of themselves as subjects, as subjects of action and as subjects of true knowledge. This objective of a spiritual transmutation is what ascetics, that is to say, the set of given exercises, must make it possible to achieve.[106]

It is precisely here, where Foucault elaborates on the technologies of the self, the specific exercises and techniques through which it may be possible to fashion oneself, to give style to one's life, that he builds upon the basis that Nietzsche had bequeathed to him. Nietzsche had called for making one's life into a work of art, the broad outlines of which he had delineated, but he had not specified the actual modalities of such a project in the detailed way that Foucault had begun to provide.

åThe ethics of self-fashioning as envisaged by Nietzsche and Foucault, with its basis in their daring visions of an *art* of living and a refunctioned concept of asceticism, are of more than historical interest as responses to the profound cultural crisis manifest in the death of God. That ethics and aesthetics of self-fashioning, with its vision of philosophy as a way of life, and not as theoretical knowledge, is, for us, linked to the conviction that the cultural crisis to which Nietzsche and Foucault responded shapes *our* world of the twenty-first century, and that the paths blazed by Nietzsche and Foucault can perhaps help us to overcome it.

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1 See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Translated with commentary by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), § 125, pp. 181-182, and § 343, p.279.

2 Maurice Blanchot, *The Work of Fire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 290.

3 Erich Heller, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 3.

4 David B. Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), p. 97.

5 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 357, p. 307.

6 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo in Basic Writing of Nietzsche*, Translated and Edited by Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), p. 783. It is interesting to note that in his recently published *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (Norton, 2006), David Blackbourn explicitly links technology and the conquest of nature to the conquest of others, to imperialist war.

7 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, Edited by Daniel Breazeale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 3.

8 See, for example, Alan D. Schrift, *Nietzsche's French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism* (New York/London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 70-74.

9 For Foucault's treatment of the Gulag, and its links to both the very trajectory of the October revolution, and to modernity, see his 1977 review of Andre Glucksmann's *The Master Thinkers*: "La grande colère des faits" in Michel Foucault, *Dits et Écrits: 1954-1988* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), volume III, pp. 277-281.

10 See *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Christopher Middleton (Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996), pp. 213 and 218.

11 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 3, p. 35.

12 Michel Foucault, "The Masked Philosopher" in *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1961-1984)*, Edited by Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), p. 307.

13 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 125, pp. 181-182.

14 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 109, p. 169, and § 125, pp. 181-182.

15 Ibid., § 343, p. 280.

16 Michel Foucault, "Philosophy and the death of God (1966)" in *Michel Foucault, Religion and Culture*, Selected and edited by Jeremy R. Carrette (New York: Routledge, 199), p.85.

17 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p.342, translation modified. This work was originally published in 1966. The Foucauldian death of man, then, is the death of what Nietzsche designated in *Ecce Homo* as "present-day man." See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo in Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 755.

18 Ibid., p. 387.

19 James Bernauer, "Michel Foucault's Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life" in *Michel Foucault and Theology: the Politics of Religious Experience*, Edited by James Bernauer and Jeremy Carrette (London and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), p. 88.Though, as we have seen, as early as *The Order of Things*, Foucault had indicated that it was Nietzsche who had linked the death of god to the imminence of the death of man.

20 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future in Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, Part Seven, § 225, p. 344.

21 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, Translated by R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), "The Wanderer and his Shadow," § 16, p. 308.

22 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy Or: Hellenism and Pessimism*, "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 26.

23 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic, in Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, Third Essay, § 28, p. 598.

24 Ibid., Third Essay, § 27, p. 596

25 According to Nietzsche, "science today … is not the opposite of the ascetic ideal but rather the latest and noblest form of it." Ibid., Third Essay, § 23, p. 583.

26 Nietzsche, The Gay Science, § 108, p. 167.

27 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, § 16, p. 308.

28 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, edited by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), § 585 B, p. 319.

29 Aaron Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience: Six Character studies from the "Genealogy"* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 147.

30 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, § 28, p. 599.

31 Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience*, p. 148.

32 Robert Gooding-Williams, *Zarathustra's Dionysian Modernism* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 88-89.

33 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra in The Portable Nietzsche*, Edited by Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), First Part, § 5, p. 130.

34 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo in Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, *Human, All Too Human*, § 1, p. 739. We believe that it is important not to conflate Nietzsche's "free spirits" and the *Übermensch*: the former is well defined by Nietzsche; the latter is not.

35 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 343, p. 280.

36 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, § 585 A, p. 318.

37 That meaning is a-historical and transcendent, is certainly a feature of the Christian understanding of the world.

38 In raising this possibility, we are aware that the task of elaboration and development remains to be done.

39 Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 9.

40 Keith Ansell Pearson seems to be making a similar point when he describes how difficult it was for Nietzsche to "give up on the idea that the human will requires a meaning and direction," and that, perhaps, the problem of meaning does not "need resolving but dissolving." See Keith Ansell Pearson, *How to Read Nietzsche* (W.W. Norton & Company: New York/London, 2005), pp. 102-103.

41 Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 136.

42 Arthur C. Danto, "Some Remarks on The Genealogy of Morals" in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals*, Edited by Richard Schacht (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 46.

43 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 335, p. 266. This is reprised in the subtitle to Nietzsche's autobiography, *Ecce Homo*: "How One Becomes What One Is." *Ecce Homo in Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 671.

44 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols in The Portable Nietzsche*, Selected and Translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), "What I Owe to the Ancients," pp. 562-563.

45 Kathleen Higgins, "Reading Zarathustra" in *Reading Nietzsche*, Edited by Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 136.

46 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part Seven, § 225, p. 344.

47 Horst Hutter, *Shaping the Future: Nietzsche's New Regime of the Soul and Its Ascetic Practices* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), p. 128.

48 Michel Foucault, "Preface" in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). P. xiii. It seems to us that Foucault here means the power to dominate others, and the power to control and suppress our own freedom, and not a life-affirming power to which he is no less committed than is Nietzsche.

49 Foucault, "Philosophy and the death of God," p. 86, translation modified.

50 Michel Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence" in *Michel Foucault, Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984*, Edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), p. 49.

51 Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p.107.

52 Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress" in *The Foucault Reader*, Edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 343.

53 Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 251-252. The relationship one has to oneself is what Foucault understands by ethics.

54 As for Nietzsche, so too for Foucault, ontology is not separated from history. For both thinkers, an ontology, and its categories, cannot be fixed or static, but rather is suffused with historicity.

55 Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 343

56 Ibid., p. 344.

57 Ibid., p.346.

58 Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, Edited by Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), p. 74. These were six lectures that Foucault gave at the University of California at Berkeley in 1983.

59 Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p.343.

60 See Fréderic Gros, "Introduction" in *Foucault et la Philosophie Antique*, Edited by Fréderic Gros and Carlos Lévy (Paris: Éditions Kimé, 2003), p. 12

61 Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p. 257.

62 Here we encounter a difficulty in the English translations of Foucault, which typically render his term *souci de soi* as care of the self, a problem even with the title of Robert Hurley's translation of volume 3 of *The History of Sexuality* as *The Care of the Self*. Yet Foucault's term is *souci de soi*, not *souci du soi*. Care of self is closer to Foucault's meaning inasmuch as it avoids an essentialization of the self, a danger to which Foucault was especially sensitive.

63 Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p. 254, translation modified.

64 Paul Veyne, *Seneca: The Life of a Stoic* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), p. x. While Veyne's linkage of such a Foucauldian project to a Nietzschean age is consonant with our own focus in this essay, where he speaks of "morality," we would speak of "ethics," reserving the former term for codes of behavior, rules of conduct, imposed from without.

65 See, for example, Peter Dews, "The Return of the Subject in Late Foucault" in *Radical Philosophy*, 51, Spring 1989.

66 Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom" in *Michel Foucault, Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, Edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), pp. 290-291.

67 Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" in *Michel Foucault, Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), pp. 17-18. These seminars were held at the University of Vermont in the fall of 1982.

68 Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power" in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other writings 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 117.

69 Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence," pp. 50-51. Foucault dared to ask: "Can't there be experiences in which the subject, in its constitutive relations, in its self-identity, isn't given any more? And thus wouldn't experiences be given in which the subject could dissociate itself, break its relationship with itself, lose its identity? Wasn't this perhaps the experience of Nietzsche, with the metaphor of the Eternal Return?" See Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), p.49.

70 Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 208.

71 Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, p. 49.

72 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p.114.

73 Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la Sexualité I: La Volonté de Savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 81 and Michel Foucault, the *History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 60.

74 This second problem is especially important because far more people are likely to read Foucault in English translation than in the French original, and much of the discussion of his writings is carried on in English – and that as a result of the processes of globalization and the role that the English language plays in it.

75 As is the case, for example, with Hurley's translation of *assujettissement* as "subjection" in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, or when it is translated as "subjugation" by David Macey in the case of Foucault's 1975-1976 lecture course "Society Must Be Defended."(New York: Picador, 2003).

76 Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997), p.13. However, Butler's own translation of assujettissement as "subjection" weakens her otherwise powerful argument, inasmuch as subjection privileges the element of domination and control in assujettissement to the detriment of the very autonomy and agency to which she is here pointing.

77 See Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

1999).

78 Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p. 333.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid., p. 332.

81 Ibid., p. 333.

82 Fréderic Gros, "Le souci de soi chez Michel Foucault; A review of The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-1982," *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, Vol. 31, No 5-6, September 2005, p. 702.

83 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 290, p. 232. The last sentence, often taken as the hallmark of a dangerous aestheticism in Nietzsche, fraught with ominous political consequences, should be read in light of Nietzsche's warnings about the danger of the "last man," of the life-denying ascetic ideal and ressentiment, and in the preceding entry (§ 289) that "what is a new justice!" Ibid.

84 Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 236.

85 Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), p. 43.

86 Michel Foucault, "The Minimalist Self" in *Foucault, Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, p. 14.

87 Timothy O'Leary, *Foucault and the Art of Ethics* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), p. 14.

88 Paul Veyne, "The Final Foucault and His Ethics," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, Edited by Arnold Davidson (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), p.231.

89 O'Leary, *Foucault and the Art of Ethics*, p. 56.

90 Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 10-11. To set oneself "rules of conduct" is close to Nietzsche's vision of oneself as a "law-giver."

91 When Nietzsche says "Be yourself!" he is speaking of creating oneself, fashioning oneself, not of some "true self" hidden beneath our historical forms of subjectivity. It is a vision, then, consonant with that of Foucault.

92 Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1998), p. 10.

93 For an expression of just such a view, see Richard Wolin, "Foucault's Aesthetic Decisionism," *Telos*, Number 67, Spring 1986.

94 Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p. 319.

95 Ibid., pp. 319-320.

96 Ibid., p. 320, translation modified.

97 James Urpeth, "'Noble' Ascesis Between Nietzsche and Foucault," *New Nietzsche Studies*, Volume Two, Numbers 3 & 4, Summer 1998, p. 74.

98 Richard Valantasis, "Constructions of Power in Asceticism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LXIII/4, 1995, p. 797.

99 Ibid., p. 800.

100 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, § 11, p. 554.

101 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, § 915, p. 483.

102 Urpeth, "'Noble' Ascesis Between Nietzsche and Foucault," p. 72 and p. 81.

103 Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker: The Perfect Nihilist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 141.

104 Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p.77. Nietzsche conceived such ascetic practices, before asceticism was given its definitive, Christian, form by Paul, as providing humans with the means to work on themselves, to configure themselves, indeed to give "style" to themselves.

105 Herman Nilson, *Michel Foucault and the Games of Truth* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1998), pp. 11-12.

106 Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, pp. 416-417.

105 Herman Nilson, *Michel Foucault and the Games of Truth* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1998), pp. 11-12.

106 Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, pp. 416-417.