

UN/INHIBITED ORGANISM:
POLITICAL POWER, PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY, AND TECHNIQUES

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Robert Turner
January 2009

© 2009 Robert Turner

UN/INHIBITED ORGANISM:
POLITICAL POWER, PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY, AND TECHNIQUES

Robert Turner, Ph.D.

Cornell University 2009

Beginning from the observation of a range of apparently "inexplicable inhibitions"¹ in myself and others – inhibitions one might not expect from having grown up in a culture constituted by the "free exercise of free human reason under conditions of liberty"² – this dissertation examines and evaluates prominent ancient and modern political theory, neuropsychology, and a specific dance practice in terms of their neglect or use and understanding of specific practices and techniques, employed in human relations, that might affect the psychophysiology of the political subject.

This analysis – based in part on recent neuroscience evidence – is intended to achieve an understanding that might transform its author and readers. To the extent that, in our "democracy" (i.e., rule by us, the people), we find ourselves dissatisfied and yet in the habit of feeling, thinking, and acting so as to maintain and reinforce conventional arrangements of power, we may, through this improved understanding, be able to work directly upon ourselves – the feelings, thoughts, and actions that affect us in those moments when we decide our relations to institutional authority (as it exists in ourselves and others), and thereby maintain or disrupt existing power relations, as they exist in our own subjectivities and in our associations with others.

¹ See Chapter 4, below.

² John Rawls *Political Liberalism* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1996), 144.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Turner is a researcher and dancer in Toronto, Canada. After completing his M.A. in Political Theory at Cornell University, and finding himself not entirely satisfied by the study of political theory in its current form, he began training as a dancer and performer in ballet, modern, and improvisation while completing his Ph.D.. He spent the 2006-7 academic year dancing for HighJinks Dance Company in Columbus, Ohio, has performed extensively at Cornell, as well as at festivals in Boston and Europe.

Over the course of the last six years, dancing and studying, Robert eventually came to understand dance in a political sense, and politics as another form of movement and contact between people. He continues to dance professionally, co-choreograph, and write and publish articles on the relationship between political power, habit, and risk in individual movement and contact.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the long course of completing this dissertation work, I enjoyed the irreplaceable academic and personal support of my Chairperson, Isaac Kramnick, from the beginning of my time at Cornell. The thought and encouragement of Jason Frank have also been of inestimable worth. Geoff Waite's focused and learned guidance were also crucial, especially at the beginning of the project. My external reader, Burke Hendrix aided in rethinking material from several chapters. I am also indebted of course to those philosophers and scientists whose careful work and ideas I write about and refer to in the body of this work.

I must, in addition, acknowledge those discouraging comments from others who saw no value in this project; they helped define what I see as a shortcoming of political theory in general, specifying its general characteristics, and to some extent its psychophysiology. I will simply say that if I had not taken the time to continue asking questions and "navel-gazing" when I was explicitly accused of and derided for doing so, this project would not have been completed.

Other friends' thoughts and criticisms were also essential, in particular those of Asaf Bachrach, a dancer and cognitive neuroscientist, currently at M.I.T.. Many close friends were helpful more generally in thinking with me about movement and contact in everyday life, in various terminologies and situations: in particular, Brady Moss, Rebecca Lee, Mike Cant, Phil Schniter, Maggie Paige, Sam Bell, Sarah Dean, Norman Rosenberg, Brandt Adams, Byron Suber, and Craig Ewasiuk.

Finally, I want to thank those I spent enjoyable as well as difficult times with through these years. Their support helped me continue writing: Guillermo Mendoza, Matthew Stearns, Brent Ledvina, Alex Vaughan, Liz Erber, James Slezak, Jumay Chu, Debbie Raftus, Charlotte Nunes, Veronica Morales, Doreen Lee, Diana Hernandez, Emiko Manners, Erika Czerwinski, Veronica Carnero, Michael Murphy, Ann, John, and my parents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biographical Sketch	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
List of Figures	vii
1. Introduction	1
2. Foucault's Truth-teller	8
3. Plato's Continual and Measured Agitation	36
4. Kant's Dispositional Techniques: Chains in the Limbs	73
5. Rawls' "Inexplicable Inhibitions" and Habermas' "Motivational Deficit"	99
6. Agonistic Respect and Ambivalent Tension	161
7. Steve Paxton's "Interior Techniques"	213
8. Conclusion	237
Works cited	245

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. LTP (long term potentiation).	183
Figure 2. No LTP.	183
Figure 3. Early LTP.	184
Figure 4. Early and late LTP.	184
Figure 5. Neural processing of fear.	187
Figure 6. Neural processing of fear – in more detail.	194

1. Introduction

About five years ago, I was teaching assistant to a professor in a 300-student university class. He assigned essay questions that students could not answer given the readings and lecture material. Students got frustrated and sometimes the courageous ones would ask questions in lecture; where should they look for answers to the essay questions if the lectures and readings didn't provide the necessary background? But instead of addressing their questions, the professor would make fun of them. I met with him privately a few times, asking him to make changes to the reading list and lectures, or to suggest additional sources, so students could formulate answers, but he kept on refusing. Finally I told my students that if he continued abusing his position of authority with them during lecture, and in the course generally, I would back them up and ask him their questions again. I knew a TA shouldn't be challenging the professor in public, but isn't *this* what the liberal arts education is all about – the right to ask questions of authorities – authorities who are accountable for the demands they make?

It's the last class. The professor's doing it again. A student has asked a good question, and he's making fun of her. So I put up my hand, objecting, "But that doesn't really answer the question..." and I explain why. He starts responding, but he's evading the question, and by the end he's trailing off, talking so quietly that no one can hear him. So, I rephrase her question. Now it's getting really silent. People seem nervous, are shifting in their seats, whispering to each other. This time he retorts, "I really want to distribute these hand-outs!" And I know it's now or never. I risk it: "But if you don't answer now, they'll never get an answer." Everything in my body, including my thought, is screaming at me that something is "very wrong!" Why is no one else

asking questions? Why am I making a big deal out of this? "What am I *doing*?" In this moment, I notice my body, sweating but cold, shaking, my voice trembling, my body contracted in on itself, very literally – I am hunched over, leaning forward. So, when he replies angrily, "Well, they may not!!" I can't take it anymore. I just want this feeling to end. I'm scared. I stop asking questions, go silent, pick up the sheets with all the other TA's, and pass them out, still feeling high tension throughout my body. And I'm still ambivalent – maybe I should have kept asking; it was at least *possible*.

Afterwards, sitting there, I suddenly realized, I knew this feeling! I remembered it from when I was small. My mom angry or hurt – at me, I think. My dad angry and punishing: "Your mother is very upset!" I knew what came next. My body felt the same (as it does now in the classroom). I've gone somewhere deep back inside the shell of my skin, hiding, watching. I know it's going to hurt. I search out my sin and blame myself ahead of time, humble myself, feel the guilt, and apologize. Walking out of the lecture hall, and during the days after, my thoughts returned to that moment in the classroom. The decision not to engage further, not to ask questions, was made in that moment, in relation to those sensations, feelings, and thoughts.

This physically intense experience provided my first piece (then, at least) of easily recallable evidence that power seemed to operate through these "intensities." Subsequently, I became more aware - in part through reading, thinking, discussions, but also other "bodily" techniques aimed at developing my awareness - of a whole series of what Rawls calls "inexplicable inhibitions"³ in myself and others, inhibitions that seemed general and that one might not

³ See Chapter 4, below.

expect from having grown up in a culture constituted by the "free exercise of free human reason under conditions of liberty."⁴ These inhibitions seemed to have resulted from a conditioned (i.e., learned) disposition to authority – a subjectivation that appeared to maintain and reinforce traditional arrangements of power through these moments of perception, judgment, and behavior. If one wanted to transform oneself, so that one did not just "automatically" obey particular rules and avoid confronting authority, in oneself, with others, and institutions of power, then perhaps direct work upon those feelings, thoughts, and actions that seem central to the moment of decision was prerequisite, and therefore an important focus for not just myself, but also political theory. Political theory might become more truthful about the foundational nature of techniques ("disciplinary" and "of the self") in the establishment of allegedly "legitimate" power relations. Finally, in our technical work upon ourselves (which includes our theorizing), we might find ourselves thinking and acting in even more aggressive ways than those conceived of as "proper" (e.g., voting, public and private debate, and techniques of the self conceived entirely in terms of their effect only upon the "ethos" of one's immediate and intimate relations) in a liberal democracy; the creation of a real "rule of the people" would probably require a disposition *not only* ethically predisposed to democratic governance *but* also willing to confront arbitrary authority in its several forms. That is, a less fearful disposition. One that could speak and act fearlessly, truthfully, even in the midst of fearful experiences; a subjectivity who would risk this confrontation, and thereby change the distribution of power. This was the thinking behind the following chapters.

⁴ John Rawls *Political Liberalism* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1996), 144.

Foucault, the focus of chapter one, offers a way of thinking about these "inexplicable inhibitions" in his understanding of both the institutional application of disciplinary techniques through which one is corporealized to automatic obedience and self-surveillance, and also "techniques of the self," which one intentionally applies to oneself in order to transform one's being to meet certain standards of conduct and aesthetic values. But while Foucault observes the body as the site of power's operation, what remains unclear is the political significance of specific techniques of the self, *parrhesia* (or fearless speech) in particular, and, relatedly, how exactly they relied on and simultaneously changed the body; could one simply assume an ability to "remark, describe, and remember"⁵ as the basis for critique, if one were an automatically disciplinary subject? Should not one know more about the body first?

Chapter two discusses how Plato's legitimation of the rule of philosophy and the philosopher over the demos, though criticized in political theory and philosophy repeatedly for being founded on his untenable opposition of reason and the soul to appetites and the body, relies not simply on this binarizing discourse but also, and more importantly, on an entire psychophysiological project. Breaking the rules in small, everyday things – including dance, music, games, diet, sex, and physical regimen generally – would establish not "harmonious" and "moderate" obedience, but rather habits that undermined the polis. That political theory in general focuses on Plato's conceptual oppositions

⁵ Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 385, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

to the neglect of these everyday practices seems indicative of a conceptual habit which Foucault connected to the enlightenment.

Therefore, I turn next, in chapter three, to Kant's enlightenment philosophy. Kant, to whom much of mainstream democratic theory is indebted, claimed that freedom depended on establishing reason's autonomy from and legislative power over bodily passions and prejudice. This absolute opposition of reason to passion breaks down in Kant's texts, and it turns out that bodily passion and habit, cultivated by coercive techniques of humiliation, provide the motive force for obedience of the allegedly universal, rational law. Insofar as Kant *has* set the terms of liberal democratic theory, then perhaps our liberal democratic institutions and way of thinking about politics continue to rely on coercion and manipulation rather than "universal, free" consent.

In chapter four, I examine Kant's most prominent heirs, Rawls and Habermas. Rawls continues the Kantian tradition of establishing his conception of justice on the basis of universal rational autonomy. This rational autonomy, in *A Theory of Justice*, ensures the universal commitment of all rational beings to the ideal of autonomy – i.e., their commitment to not being guided by prejudices in choosing principles of justice. Rawls, in dialogue with critics (including Habermas) later in *Political Liberalism* admitted that in conditions of reasonable pluralism, one could *not* expect that all citizens' comprehensive doctrines would accept this essentially liberal ideal as the basis for choosing their principles of justice, but that they would still agree to the liberal principles of justice because they have been acculturated by and believe in the liberal political practices and institutions embodying liberal principles of justice. But Rawls' account of the historical development from temporary acquiescence to liberal principles of justice to the overlapping consensus, and his account of

childhood moral development, raise the same suspicions about the essential role of coercion and manipulation as in Kant. Habermas, critical of the exclusionary potential of Rawls' overlapping consensus, aims to achieve political freedom and equality on the basis of our universal communicative rationality, guaranteed by a similarly universal psychological development. Habermas' later admission that in fact there are motivation problems in realizing this ideal speech community reiterates, but in different ways, the legitimacy problems in Rawls' account. That these two theories of liberal democratic justice and their assumptions continue to affect the imagination of much political thought, despite their legitimation problems and "motivational deficits," only furthers suspicion about what in fact does establish consensus in liberal democratic societies - what motivates our moral and political choices.

Connolly's theory of "neuropolitics" suggests that instead of the universal, rational humans that Rawls and Habermas assume, we are in fact not very "in control" of our perceptions and decisions. Using Connolly's neuroscientifically informed discussions of our dispositions, chapter five begins to answer the question originally posed and variously answered in the preceding chapters: how can we be free, and how free can we be? Based on his understanding of neuroscientific evidence, Connolly suggests certain techniques that we can use to work via neural mechanisms upon "the visceral register," recultivating our subjectivity to a disposition of "agonistic respect" in relation to others. Given the "ubiquity" of technique in all of our daily lives, Connolly's preoccupation with cinematic technique probably needs supplementing. In fact, recent neuroscientific evidence suggests that if we want to recultivate our dispositions more thoroughly and consequentially, we will need techniques that can be applied more ubiquitously throughout the day, and

especially in those moments of tension not typically encountered in the quiet and dark of the theater or living room.

In the final substantive chapter (six), I discuss Steve Paxton's contact improvisation (CI) as a technique of the self that aims at developing the basic critical capacities of the human organism into a "habit of attending;" but this attention was directed specifically and exclusively to sensations and "reflexes," in order to overcome what Paxton called American democracy's "conditioning" to "voluntary slavery." While there are limits to this technique, and undeveloped potentials in the practice of CI, Paxton's technique could be altered in ways that might develop its political potential beyond the dance studio walls, as a "truth-telling" rather than disciplinary subjectivity in confrontation with authority.

This exploration of texts and techniques has been both personal and also an attempt to encourage a rethinking of the attentional focus of political theory. Only if we understand and experiment with the "minute" everyday mechanisms of our perception and decision can we begin to change those habits of obedience and avoidance that continue to characterize our lives, even as we profess our desire for freedom and critique.

2. Foucault's Truth-teller

In his work, Michel Foucault discusses how power operates to produce bodies; bodies whose efficient and obedient production is ensured through various disciplinary techniques that make authority function, without coercion, automatically in the individual. The body is thus corporealized political power. Because the body is the means by which political power is realized, by which “forms of existence or political society”⁶ are created and maintained, the body remains central throughout Foucault’s writings and interviews – from the genealogical work through the books and lectures on “arts of the self” (Foucault also calls them “techniques, technologies, aesthetics, practices, exercises... of the self,” and “arts, aesthetics... of existence”) - “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.”⁷

Despite the body’s centrality to political power, however, Foucault does not *fully* explicate the political significance of specific techniques of the self, nor does he explore the physiological mechanisms by which they work. This does not seem to have been, as Alexander Nehamas suggests, because Foucault saw new forms of knowledge as new forms of control – i.e., any system of political power is and always will be just as oppressive as any other - and therefore investigated arts of the self as a personal *but not political* project. Foucault *did* conceive of arts of the self and his “critical ontology of ourselves” as *politically* consequential, and even *foundational* to political society. Foucault's discussion of

⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow et al. (New York: New Press, 1997), 283.

⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985).

parrhesia in particular, in combination with his attention to the body as the site of application of both disciplinary techniques (on the one hand) and techniques of the self (on the other), suggests an important attentional focus for political theory, one that, I will argue, has been largely neglected, but to some extent even by Foucault. If our bodies are the means of stabilizing political power in the ways Foucault describes, and we want to change our relation to power, then perhaps we should know more about our bodies, specifically the neurophysiological mechanisms which make certain disciplinary techniques and techniques of the self succeed or fail.

Disciplinary Techniques

Throughout his *oeuvre*, Foucault connects political power with techniques applied to the body. Foucault discusses the historical establishment of techniques that create our subjectivity in terms of a capillary / micro- system of panoptic / disciplinary power. This system, which is nonegalitarian and asymmetrical, emerges and takes form through the eighteenth century. This system is the real basis of the formal juridical system of rights (which is egalitarian only in principle) which we assume that we enjoy as "free" political subjects. In other words, real, corporeal disciplines constitute the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties and norms according to which an unequal redistribution of power in society is formally legitimated.⁸ At the same time that enlightenment philosophy's celebration of reason's autonomy, of individual freedom, set the stage for a Kantian legacy in political thought, projects of docility set the terms of our obedient subjectivity - the automatic functioning of authority in the individual through the disciplinary techniques of the army,

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 223.

school, hospital. These institutions were/are able to achieve a new scale of control through “uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising processes of activity according to the partitioning codification of time, space, movement.”⁹

Specifically, these techniques control activity through minute attention, in the application to the body of 1) the time-table 2) anatomo-chronological schema – positioning of body, limbs, articulations; movements are assigned direction, aptitude, duration, order of succession; 3) the imposition of the most efficient relation between particular gestures and the overall position of the body 4) the definition of relations of the body to its object of manipulation 5) increasingly detailed internal arrangement (analysis), specialization to maximize efficiency and speed.¹⁰ These technical arrangements make possible a perpetual characterization of the individual, and the production of a subject in a system of command that triggers the right combination and order of forces.¹¹ The application of these techniques allows: hierarchical observation – surveillance by specialized personnel, constantly present, seemingly less “corporal” but only because it is more subtly “physical;”¹² normalizing judgment – subjecting even slight departures from correct behavior to punishment, preferably through exercise; distribution according to rank/grade to hierarchize and order but also to punish and reward;¹³ and examination – to classify (from psychiatry to pedagogy, diagnosis of diseases to hiring of labor), to require the individual to be constantly seen, to be documented as a case (an object for a branch of the sciences of man and an object of control). The “birth of disciplines in the new sense” occurs when the art of the human body is born –

⁹ Ibid., 137.

¹⁰ Ibid., 150–56.

¹¹ Ibid., 165.

¹² Ibid., 173–77.

¹³ Ibid., 178–84.

directed at not only growth of skills and intensification of subjection but also the formation of a relation that makes the bodily mechanism itself more obedient as it becomes more useful; "Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)." ¹⁴

In the body, the capillary system of power works through conditioning of habit – the mobilization and direction of the "mechanics of forces" of the body into a stable configuration. The application of disciplinary techniques creates associations that work "naturally" and automatically in the individual body to create an obedient subject. In the second half of the 18th century, for example, the transition out of the classical period of punishment is marked by the application of punishment to the "mind... the play of representations and signs circulating discreetly but necessarily and evidently in the minds of all... the soul... One must set up a complex of obstacle-signs [to the crime] that subject the movement of the forces to a power relation." ¹⁵ The nature of the punishment must be made to resemble the nature of the crime, so that their association, though not natural, seems natural, "comes to mind in the train of thought that considers committing the crime;" ¹⁶ penalties are made to seem like, have an analogic relation to, the crime. But this "complex of signs" which works on the "mind" functions by mobilizing and directing "the mechanics of forces" of the body. One must "reduce the desire that makes the crime attractive; increase the interest that makes the penalty be feared; reverse the relation of intensities, so that the representation of the penalty and its disadvantages is more lively than that of the crime and its pleasures." ¹⁷ In other words, this

¹⁴ Ibid., 138.

¹⁵ Ibid., 104.

¹⁶ Ibid., 104–5.

¹⁷ Ibid., 106.

enlivening and redirection of desire, fear, intensity is a corporealization of the association of crime with punishment/displeasure. Foucault's point is that "discourse becomes the vehicle of law,"¹⁸ but discourse works upon and recreates the subject's body through an associating mechanism that organizes pleasure and pain.¹⁹

Just as the body is the means of discourse's encouragement of obedience, it is also the means of rehabilitation of the criminal disposition that needs changing. In the developing project for the 18th century prison, corrective penalty acts on the "body, time, everyday gestures and habits, the soul too... as the seat of habits... time-tables, compulsory movements, regular activities, solitary meditation, work in common, silence, application, respect, good habits..." – all these aim at restoration of the obedient (rather than juridical) subject – "the individual subjected to habits, rules, orders, an authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must *allow to function automatically in him*."²⁰ Indeed, the prison is, according to Foucault, at least in theory the "ideal form of apparatus intended to render individuals docile and useful, by precise work on their bodies."²¹ This precise work conditions subjects by "gratification-punishment"²² systems.

At the end of the 18th century, the panoptic functioning of power in the prison becomes generalized in the human sciences, the disciplines governing all human activity. The habituating techniques that applied in the prison become generalized. Power's regulative penetration "into even the smallest details of everyday life" now takes place through the "mediation of a complete hierarchy

¹⁸ Ibid., 112.

¹⁹ This is also Plato's perspective. See *Laws* 653a, b.

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 128–29.

²¹ Ibid., 231.

²² Ibid., 180.

that assured the capillary functioning of power."²³ Each individual is assigned to his "'true' name, place, body, disease." The disciplines in general function to increase the utility of individuals,²⁴ the mechanisms of the prison begin to function and circulate in the free state, "centers of observation disseminated throughout society,"²⁵ and the police power of the state bears over "events, actions, behavior, opinions – 'everything that happens,' 'things of every moment,' 'unimportant things.'"²⁶ Disciplinary power doesn't replace all other modes of power. It rather infiltrates them and thus enables it to reach "the most minute and distant elements."²⁷ In the clinic and clinical medicine, whose imperative is a "definition of a political status for medicine and constitution of a medical consciousness (at the state level) with the constant task of providing information, supervision, constraint – that is, as much a police as a medical function,"²⁸ the medical consciousness/knowledge/gaze "dominates and founds all perceptual experiences, structures into a sovereign unity the lower level of eye, ear, touch."²⁹ This gaze, the corporealized authority functioning in the disciplines, *and in the individual himself*, assures the success of capillary power. The penetration of political power in the individual human body, whether in the formal institutions of the prison, hospital, the army, the school, or through the reach of the human sciences, is thus extensive.

²³ Ibid., 198.

²⁴ Ibid., 210.

²⁵ Ibid., 212.

²⁶ Ibid., 213.

²⁷ Ibid., 216.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic* (New York: Pantheon, 1973), 165.

Physiology

It is clear, then, from Foucault's discussion that in order to be disciplined into an automatically obedient subject one's body must in general and to a considerable degree be physiologically accessible – its forces and mechanisms amenable to formation and direction, to conditioning by disciplinary techniques. If the disciplinary corporealization of the subject works, as Foucault says, through the application of disciplinary technique to neurophysiological conditioning systems (pleasure and pain mechanisms) whose recruitment and direction is in no way guaranteed ahead of time but in fact produced ("the product of arbitrary constraints"³⁰), then these bodily systems might also be recruited for the recorporealization of the subject in another direction. Through the individual's own self-application of techniques ("of the self") that work on these same "forces," pleasure and pain mechanisms, to transform himself, established (political) authority might come to function less automatically in him.

But the application of techniques of the self would require some understanding of the effect of one's "arts" or "practices" upon the body – our neurophysiological organism. An understanding of the neurophysiological means by which specific disciplinary techniques corporealize power and arts of the self would not, then, be a merely academic pursuit, another exercise in knowing. It would help provide the basis for discerning what it is about a particular technique – either "disciplinary" or "of the self" – that makes it, in its action (in creating, maintaining, or changing the neurophysiological structure of corporealized power) succeed or fail; it would allow the *selection and*

³⁰ Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 45.

refinement of technique based on a more specific understanding of technique's operation.³¹ Foucault, while he was clearly concerned with "techniques of the self" in much of his later work, did not undertake this study.

Techniques of the Self

Alexander Nehamas argues that Foucault did not investigate or prescribe any kind of *positive* epistemic or political project of the subject for strategic reasons, and ultimately because of his pessimistic despair regarding political power. Foucault's books in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Nehamas writes, "were intended to show that everything we take as orderly and rational (the prison, the court system, the school, the statistical information a government collects about its citizens) is a product of domination and subjugation, in short, of power; and that no system can be created from which domination and subjugation can ever be even partially absent."³² Given this situation, even if one intends to control or modify established power relations, one cannot, because these relations "reassert themselves in constantly changing forms." According to Nehamas, Foucault held that trying to

humanize... rationalize, even to renounce power results only in the exercise of new forms of it—in the creation of new ways of knowing what individuals or "subjects" are, indeed, in the creation of new individuals or "subjects." New forms of knowledge and new forms of control, of power, thus go together. That is why Foucault refused, throughout that period, to offer alternatives to the "intolerable" situations he exposed in his writings

³¹ Should not the same kind of "minute attention" that the disciplinary project directs towards the goal of domination, the controlling of all activity, must be applied to discovering the neurophysiological means of corporealizing freedom?

³² Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 174.

and in his political activities. Any alternative would simply perpetuate power relations.³³

Thus, Nehamas argues, Foucault's later technical experimentation with the corporealization of power was not a political but personal question of ethics and not politics. "Foucault came to believe that he might combine ancient ethics (which 'was not a question of giving a pattern of behavior for everybody [but] a personal choice for a small elite') with the stuff of his own life and thereby fashion a self of his own;"³⁴ Foucault looked at Socratic parrhesia because "he was looking in Socrates for a model of his own manner of caring for himself."³⁵ This personalization of Foucault's analyses of Greek arts of existence assumes that the later Foucault was *no longer concerned* with the capillary / micro- system of panoptic / disciplinary power (i.e., the motivating concern of Foucault's earlier work).

But if Foucault is right about the penetration of disciplinary power into the corporeality of the subject, then there can be no such thing as a purely "personal" ethical project. Nehamas' characterization of Foucault's investigations of Greek aesthetics of existence implies, at the same time, therefore, both a) Nehamas' rejection of Foucault on the basis of a misreading of him, according to which Foucault thought any system of political power is and always will be just as oppressive as any other (which, if true, would make Foucault's personal ethics into a kind of voluntarism), and b) Nehamas' own, thoroughly un-Foucauldian view that ethics is apolitical.

Minute, Everyday Practices

³³ Ibid..

³⁴ Ibid., 178.

³⁵ Ibid., 183.

Nehamas' opposition of ethics to politics is clearly at odds with Foucault's extensive research, in the early work that Nehamas surveys, into the ways the disciplinary project makes authority function automatically (is corporealized) in the subject, as we have already seen. In the course of his writing, Foucault focuses on both those techniques/practices that we do not choose, that result from a disciplinary regime of power, but also on an arts of the self that aims at the very least to decrease the degree of domination in power relations. Indeed, Foucault's persistent concern in his writings and interviews to address the relationship between political power and practices of the self is even a *distinguishing* feature. He repeatedly emphasizes the political importance of his "critical ontology of ourselves" as an "attitude... ethos... philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them."³⁶ Attending to the everyday, small things that are the foundation of the asymmetrical and nonegalitarian power arrangements in our society is the basis of the revolutionary process; if one wants to avoid the Soviet experience and prevent... the revolutionary process from running into the ground, [that is, to]... render impossible the reproduction of the form of the State apparatus within revolutionary movements... one of the first things that has to be understood is that power isn't localized in the State apparatus and that nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatuses, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not also changed.³⁷

³⁶ Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 50.

³⁷ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 60–61.

It is for *this* reason that a “critique of relations existing at a minute level”³⁸ is necessary.

Foucault makes this same point in “The Ethics of the Concern for Self” where he distinguishes between the “process of liberation” and “practices of freedom;”³⁹ the latter, he says, are necessary if a people, a society, a group of individuals “are to be able to define admissible and acceptable forms of existence or political society.”⁴⁰ Liberation paves the way, is prerequisite to, but is not sufficient to ensure, new power relationships, which are instead “controlled by practices of freedom.”⁴¹ The care of the self is political insofar as it is self-government, but this entails also government of others – it “enables one to occupy his rightful position in the city, the community, or interpersonal relationships, whether as a magistrate or a friend... and... proper care of the self requires listening to the lessons of a master.”⁴² Care of the self is “ethically prior” to the care of others because the care of the self is “ontologically prior.”⁴³ Clearly, Foucault's persistent association of the care of the self with political power in the internal and external power relations of subjects (with themselves and one another) was *not* the kind of despairing pessimism that Nehamas thinks explains Foucault's turn to the “arts of existence.” Indeed, Foucault's examination of the relation between techniques of the self and critical perception – *parrhesia* – even appears to suggest that techniques of the self was a kind of positive political project.

³⁸ Ibid., 61.

³⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow et al. (New York: New Press, 1997), 282–23.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 283.

⁴¹ Ibid., 283–84.

⁴² Ibid., 287.

⁴³ Ibid., 287.

Parrhesia

This question of the relation between techniques of the self and critical perception was one, Foucault writes,⁴⁴ that became salient in Athens in the 5th century B.C. – a crisis of *parrhesia* [fearless / frank speech]. "Fearless speech" was supposed, ideally, to be the courageous speaking of truth to one's political superior, for example, the king. But this speech could also be just ignorant outspokenness. Given this ambivalence in *parrhesia*, and since they took for granted the influence of arts of the self on thought and behavior, the Greeks asked what was the relationship between true *parrhesia*, on the one hand, and *mathesis* (knowledge and education), on the other. In other words, what practices / techniques are prerequisite to being able to speak the truth – to having a critical perception of, a courageous relation to, reality? This was essentially Plato's question in *Republic*: given that only a few are able to achieve a critical and courageous relation to truth, what political organization of power is appropriate, and what *mathesis* is necessary to the creation and maintenance of this form of organization of political power? The question of *mathesis* was a question of *askesis* – physical training or exercise that aims at endowing the individual with the preparation and moral equipment permitting him to fully confront the world in an ethical and rational manner.⁴⁵ In *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault examines not just Plato but also more generally the ancient Greek effort to engender mastery, self-governance, through particular practices – exercises, food, drink, sleep, and sexual relations.⁴⁶ The Greeks were emphatic

⁴⁴ Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001),

<http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT5.techniquesParrhesia.en.html>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 101. In the "Introduction" to *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault indicates that the moral problematization of sexual conduct was and is connected to a group of practices of "unquestionable importance in our societies" – that is, the "arts of existence" (10). The moral

in establishing the relationship between the care of the body and the soul's purity and harmony;⁴⁷ Plato makes clear that physical regimen is not conducted for its own sake; one cultivates harmony in the body for the sake of his soul's consonance.⁴⁸ And Foucault indicates that all these things were considered in terms of mastery, that askesis was conceived *in political and personal terms* simultaneously – if a man could not find some degree of mastery of himself through regimen, he was not fit to be master of others who could not master themselves.

Care of the self was for the Greeks “a way of limiting and controlling power.”⁴⁹ A good ruler governs himself at the same time as he governs others, and so doesn't abuse others. Abuse, the enslavement of others, comes rather from the failure of caring for the self, since this allows one to become slave to one's desires. The relation between care of the self and politics is obvious in the case of Ancient Greece; “the care of the self appears a pedagogical, ethical, and also ontological condition for the development of a good ruler.”⁵⁰

But Foucault's examination of the question here (in *Fearless Speech*) is intended not simply as an intellectual, historical exercise but as an interrogation of our own subjectivity, a “critical ontology of ourselves.” The techniques of the

conceptions of Greek antiquity were much more oriented “toward practices of the self and the question of *askesis* than toward codifications of conducts and the strict definition of what is permitted and what is forbidden” (30), as is the case in Christianity. These moral conceptions were concerned with “four great axes of experience: the relation to one's body, the relation to one's wife, the relation to boys, and the relation to truth” (32). Foucault considers the Greeks' dietetics, economics, and erotics – “the three great arts of self-conduct” or “three major techniques of the self” (251) – as the form of relation to the self that were considered to enable the individual to mold himself into a “subject of ethical conduct” (Ibid., 251).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 102.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 104.

⁴⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow et al. (New York: New Press, 1997), 288.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 293.

self Foucault finds in the ancient Greeks are very different from those that characterize our own ontology. The arts of existence and moral conceptions of Greek antiquity are more in accord with a practice of freedom than the ascetics of Christianity, which aim at self-renunciation or repression in the effort at realization of a universal code, and detachment from the world (in a sense, an arts of *non-existence*). Foucault is therefore careful to distinguish between the “arts of existence,” “techniques of the self,” on the one hand, and the asceticism of Christianity, on the other. The first Christian doctrines and the ancient moral philosophy *did* borrow directly from, and shared continuities with, each other.⁵¹ Even if the ancient and the Christian moralities share many themes, principles, notions, they are valued and placed differently in each.⁵² The Church and its pastoral ministry organized “the demands of austerity... into a unified, coherent, authoritarian moral system that was imposed on everyone in the same manner”⁵³ – an ascetics. Classical thought, on the other hand, treated the same principles as a “supplement, a ‘luxury’ in relation to the commonly accepted morality.”⁵⁴ Classical thought's arts of existence originated in a nonuniform manner and in scattered locations; and they “proposed – more than they imposed – different styles of moderation or strictness, each having its specific character or ‘shape.’”⁵⁵ Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman “freemen” were more concerned with “practices of the self,” aimed at the transformation of one’s own mode of being, the question of *askesis*, and of attitude, than they

⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 15. The arts of existence were “assimilated into the exercise of priestly power in early Christianity, and later, into educative, medical, and psychological types of practices” (Ibid., 11).

⁵² Ibid., 21.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

were ascetics – i.e., codifying their conduct according to “the strict definition of what is permitted and what is forbidden.”⁵⁶

This can be seen, Foucault observes, in the ancient Greek notion of *aphrodisia*, which included “act, desire, and pleasure”⁵⁷ as a closely bound unity. The Christian clergy morally devalued pleasure by its injunctions against its pursuit as the aim of sexual practice; desire was a sign of fallen nature and the human condition. Socrates held mastery over, rather than abstinence from, pleasures to be best;⁵⁸ a relationship of the “domination-submission,’ ‘command-obedience,’ ‘mastery-docility’ type.”⁵⁹ Whereas, Christian spirituality demanded that the individual’s relationship to himself be of the ‘elucidation-renunciation,’ ‘decipherment-purification’ type” (in which “subjection was to take the form not of a *savior-faire* for oneself, but of a recognition of the law and an obedience to pastoral authority”⁶⁰). The relation to truth via techniques of the self in the ancient Greek morality was “a structural, instrumental, and ontological condition for establishing the individual as a *moderate subject leading a life of moderation*” rather than as in the Christian case an ascetics aimed at “epistemological conditioning enabling the individual to recognize himself in his singularity as a desiring subject and to purify himself of the desire that was thus brought to light.”⁶¹ The Greeks shared the same anxieties (“violence, expenditure, death”) as the Christians, but the Greek *techne* aimed at “making oneself like a doctor treating sickness, the pilot steering between the rocks, or the statesman governing the city – a skillful and prudent

⁵⁶ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁸ “It is not abstinence from pleasures that is best, but mastery over them without ever being worsted” (Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, IV, 7, 49; cited Ibid., 70).

⁵⁹ Ibid., 70.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 92.

⁶¹ Ibid., 89.

guide of himself, one who has a sense of the right time and the right measure.”⁶² While the Christian teaching required mutual chastity on the part of husband and wife, classical Greece was concerned with the spouses’ sexual behavior only when it was a question of having children⁶³; moderation in marriage was prescribed only in terms of an ethics of submission on the wife’s part and “self-delimiting domination” on the husband’s.⁶⁴ The kind of mastery that characterized the ancient Greek techniques of the self, then, was to be not an attempt at purity, renunciation, not authoritarian command, but the modification of one’s attitude, one’s mode of being, *moderation* so that one is not enslaved by the violence of the passions, but rather learns to be doctor, pilot, and statesman – to oneself first, and then to others.

Foucault’s critical ontological attitude is, thus, simultaneously a question of ethics - arts of existence – *and* politics. As opposed to Nehamas’ reading, Foucault was concerned *throughout* his oeuvre with questions of political power, and this was no less true of his examination of arts of the self. If one reconceives political power as corporealizing / producing a habituated, obedient body, then techniques of the self are politically significant. For this reason Foucault explicitly and repeatedly acknowledges the inextricability of ethics and politics. The problem posed by power relations is “to acquire rules of law, the management techniques, and also the morality, the *ethos*, the practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible,”⁶⁵ for example, learning how to keep a child from being subjected to a

⁶² Ibid., 138–39.

⁶³ The Christian “juridico-moral codification” specified the rules regarding times, specific acts, and purpose/intention (procreation within marriage) that defined legitimate sexual activity.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 184.

⁶⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow et al. (New York: New Press, 1997), 298. “This problem must be framed in terms of rules of law, rational techniques of government and *ethos*, practices of the self and of freedom.” Because between strategic games (through which groups

teacher's arbitrary and unnecessary authority or a professor's abuse. Since "our own moral subjectivity is rooted, at least in part, in... practices" that try to "shape the specific relations individuals have to themselves," techniques of the self are of "unquestionable importance in our societies."⁶⁶

Nancy Luxon suggests that what Foucault offered in the lectures on *parrhesia* can be "reconstructed" as a model of what she calls an "educated" "expressive subjectivity"⁶⁷ (as opposed to a "produced" docile one), in which individuals' "practices of ethical self-governance" would prepare them for "ethical subjectivity" (establishing in them a "disposition to steadiness"⁶⁸). This new subjectivity would impel them to political action, and allow them to identify themselves via their relationships with each other (via a "body of practices") rather than atomistically in terms of their "body of knowledge" which establishes and is established through an essential external order (e.g., "nature, custom, tradition, religion"⁶⁹). The practices and tactics of the "disposition to steadiness" are meant to "supersede" the corporealization of a docile subject (created by governmentality's disciplinary techniques). Instead of answering ethical uncertainty by reference to some external standard, the parrhesiastes (truth-teller) merely "attends" to his initial responses with "curiosity and resolve;" this ability "simply to be present to [oneself]" is

try to control the conduct of each other) and states of domination are technologies of government – "not only the way institutions are governed but the way one governs one's wife and children," and the latter must be analyzed because "it is very often through such techniques that states of domination are established and maintained" (Ibid., 299).

⁶⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 10.

⁶⁷ Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 378, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 386.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 378.

developed through various practices, including walking, writing, and meditation. Unsteadiness or "shakiness" in the individual (e.g., Serenus is Foucault's example) is a sign not of his failure to examine the truth of himself as a disciplinary object. His unsteadiness means, rather, that he cannot "orient and steady"⁷⁰ himself in relation to others, himself, and truth-telling – in relation to his chosen ideals.⁷¹

Luxon maintains that Foucault is less concerned in these lectures with actual ethical content; in these practices one's ethics consist in the "harmony of words and deeds."⁷² But Luxon *also* indicates that ethical content is provided by normative convention, which is "given" for a particular community. Serenus "knows the relevant ethical guidelines;" he is just uncertain about how to "dispose himself to these guidelines in his relations to others."⁷³ The parrhesiastes evaluates his actions and techniques in terms of their effects in his personal relationships. In addition, however, parrhesiastic education teaches the individual to recognize (rather than simply expect, on the basis of some universal normative criterion, some version of the categorical imperative) instances of manipulation as opposed to sincerity. He must learn which relationships to avoid and which to engage in. "It is as much as education in sincere suspicion as in sincere trust."⁷⁴ Truth-telling practices rely on their collective rather than individual maintenance.⁷⁵ Parrhesia's political effect is that of "re-formation" rather than "revolution;" the parrhesiastes is neither a legislator nor a governor, but a doctor, who will "'heal and bring [others] an

⁷⁰ Ibid., 386.

⁷¹ Ibid., 387.

⁷² Ibid., 388.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 390.

⁷⁵ Michel Foucault, *Le Courage de la vérité* 21 Mars 1984, CD1A, cited in Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 385, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

education... thanks to which they will be able to assure their own healing and happiness."⁷⁶

Supersession and side-stepping

The "supersession" that Luxon and perhaps Foucault suggest, however, which would allegedly leave behind the disciplinary subject corporealized ("produced") by disciplinary techniques, seems unrealistically voluntarist, given the automaticity with which the earlier Foucault said the disciplinary subject functioned. Luxon is right to indicate that the subject here is not explored in its interiority or as a body of knowledge but rather in terms of its "body of practices" in relationships. But if the earlier Foucault was right about power corporealizing bodies, then these bodies are corporealized in their practices too. The earlier Foucault's work, which indicated that the material effects of practices on the body by disciplinary techniques are *real*. In his discussion of the emergence from the classical period in the 18th century, Foucault is not *merely* describing a theory of the body *implied* by theories of punishment;⁷⁷ the corporealization of discipline in the body's automatic obedience – its docility – appears as a real effect of these disciplinary techniques. Likewise, Foucault implies that the practices of the self have material effects on this subject, in its practices. If this is true, then the disciplinary subject needs to be *confronted*, and cannot be simply "superseded."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Luxon, citing Foucault, *Le Courage de la vérité* 21 Mars 1984, CD1A, in *Ibid.*, 393.

⁷⁷ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 104–5.

⁷⁸ This latter solution to the problem posed by the disciplinary subject would only further support Nehamas' assumption, though it disregards the conclusions of Foucault's earlier work, that Foucault's aesthetics of the self is a merely "personal" endeavor; that is, *this solution also* appears to disregard the conclusions of Foucault's earlier work.

Luxon says the "curiosity and resolve" – those "basic human capacities to remark, describe, and remember"⁷⁹ – "*side-step[s]*"⁸⁰ the "putative... late modern conception of individuals as fundamentally divided against themselves" – that is, a conception which relies on a problematic humanist attempt to oppose an "essential" and resistant self to an oppressive "cultural order," and a kind of neoKantian (possibly Habermasian) subject that is motivated by its essential, universal psychological constitution to "face the demands of the day."⁸¹ But the divided subject is not only a conception of these two perspectives; it is also a conclusion of Foucault's earlier, and even later, work discussing the differences between Christian ascetics and ancient Greek arts of the self (i.e., the basis for the discussion of parrhesia). But Foucault's disciplinary subject must also be divided – by those disciplinary practices, the ascetics, that the modern disciplinary subject applies to itself, as Foucault spends much of *The Use of Pleasure* establishing. This subject, it would appear, is our *reality*, and cannot simply be "side-stepped." Likewise, according to Luxon, because "parrhesia operates before scientific rationalization and Christian confession" we "need not harbor the same epistemological skepticism that plagues their modern counterparts;"⁸² we can again "side-step" or "supersede" the problems of late modern morality's basis in disciplinarity. But this observation, as opposed to

⁷⁹ To which Luxon says Foucault attends in terms of the effects of their "elaboration and externalization" (Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 385, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>).

⁸⁰ Ibid. Italics mine.

⁸¹ Ibid. Italics mine.

⁸² Ibid., 395. "In order better to analyze the forms of relation to the self, *in and of themselves*, I found myself spanning eras in a way that took me farther and farther from the chronological outline I had first decided on, both in order to address myself to periods when the effect of scientific knowledges and the complexity of normative systems were less, and in order eventually to make out forms of relation to the self different from those characterizing the experience of sexuality" ("Preface to *The History of Sexuality*, Volume Two," in Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow et al. (New York: New Press, 1997), 204).

being a "way out," should merely remind us of the problem with which we late modern disciplinary (rather than ancient allegedly pre-disciplinary) subjects are faced with in our subjectivity – the automatic functioning of disciplinary power in us.

Curiosity and Obstinacy

Foucault's observations of these basic human capacities, and indeed the entire practice of techniques of the self, relies on a conception of a subject that is still capable, though not accustomed – because of disciplinary conditioning – to using his curiosity and resolve to the degree characteristic of the successful parrhesiastes. In Foucauldian terms, this conception cannot be a simple voluntarist supersession or side-stepping of the disciplinary subject, since according to Foucault we are disciplinary subjects. Our truth-telling capacity, if it exists, depends upon a subject that, despite its disciplinary conditioning, retains these basic psychological capacities, which Luxon notes the disposition to steadiness is "rooted in."⁸³ (The position that freedom in Foucault is "freedom-as-power"⁸⁴ merely defers the question of how freedom exists in the corporealized subject; in any case, Foucault makes no effort in *Fearless Speech* to base these basic psychological capabilities in freedom-as-power.⁸⁵)

These basic human capacities, exercised in the practices Luxon calls

⁸³ Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 377, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

⁸⁴ See Saul Tobias, "Foucault on Freedom and Capabilities," *Theory, Culture & Society* 22, no. 4 (2005), 65–85; Réal Fillion, "Freedom, Truth, and Possibility in Foucault's Ethics," *Foucault Studies*, no. 3 (November 2005), 50–64, .

⁸⁵ Foucault's statements regarding Kant's enlightenment project, implying Foucault's own perspective on freedom, do not necessarily provide a clear answer. For example, "Men are at once elements and agents of a single process. They may be actors in the process to the extent that they participate in it; and the process occurs to the extent that men decide to be its voluntary actors" (Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 35).

"expressive subjectivity," form an ethics, an ethical model and standard, indeed a normative practice and disposition which Luxon and Foucault recommend. But this practice is one at odds with the conclusions of *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* – what Luxon calls "the haunting unease prompted by Foucault's claim that individuals unwittingly replicate the very structures that are the conditions and limits to their claims to self-hood."⁸⁶ This unease would, it seems, rather than prompt one to suggest a positive practice of freedom, make one hesitate at the suggestion that a positive practice of freedom was even a possibility, especially one with normative practices defended on assumptions about basic/essential human psychological realities – i.e., curiosity and resolve. If the conclusions of *Discipline and Punish* and the *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* still have an effect, it may be to make Luxon and Foucault (and perhaps us), in their pessimism over the possibility of human freedom, hesitate over leadership. Luxon takes care to note that the parrhesiastes is not a legislator;⁸⁷ but then this pessimism should *also* make us hesitate over *any* positive practices of freedom, including personal ethical ones. We would be left simply with the norms with which we are born (i.e., a subjectivity to which we are supposed to be brought, in fact, by the ascetic disciplinary practices that Foucault and Luxon are concerned to avoid).

Whether Foucault's techniques of the self, Luxon's "expressive subjectivity," provide a "way out" or not depends on the answer to the question

⁸⁶ Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 378, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

⁸⁷ "To the extent that parrhesia has political effect, it leads to a different politics of re-formation rather than a revolutionary politics. Yet, Foucault cautions that the parrhesiastes does not have 'the mission of a legislator, or even a governor ... It is a relation to the self, it is the relation of a doctor. ... who will heal and bring [others] an education, an education thanks to which they will be able to assure their own healing and happiness' [*Le Courage de la vérité*, 21 mars 1984, CD10A]. The parrhesiastes is an educative healer, not a legislator; he does not aspire to the position of Solon" (Ibid., 393).

posed by the *combination* of, on the one hand, the conclusions of Foucault's earlier writing and, on the other, the observations about basic human capabilities of freedom in *The Use of Pleasure* and *Fearless Speech*; that is, just how disciplined are we, how in/capable of freedom? Just how effective is the disciplinary corporealization of ourselves? If these practices do provide a "way out," then it has to be because his basic capacities allow the subject to *confront* rather than sidestep or supersede his disciplinary subjectivity. This confrontation would require an understanding of just *how* disciplinary this subject is, not simply culturally, in terms of one or other particular community's disciplinary "production" or parrhesiastic "education," but in terms of its "basic human capacities to remark, describe, and remember" – the very site of Foucault's and Luxon's hope. What are its limits and possibilities neurophysiologically? Is it always able to exercise these? If not, in what kind of situations? How does its previous conditioning affect this ability? - All questions that neuroscientific research has been engaged with for some time, as we shall see. Answers to these questions, questions that are guided by a curiosity regarding what will enable us to free ourselves, would provide a foundation for establishing "ethical standards" (as opposed to simply accepting the norms of a particular community⁸⁸) and techniques that "heal and bring others an education... thanks to which they will be able to assure their own healing and happiness."⁸⁹

The answer to these questions *does* lie in practices of observation based in curiosity and resoluteness, and in relationships that provide the guiding concerns of our own arts, but these relationships include those with the bodies

⁸⁸ Luxon writes, "Serenus' discomfort results not from epistemological uncertainty—he knows the relevant ethical guidelines—but an uncertainty of how to dispose himself to these guidelines in his relations to others" (Ibid., 388).

⁸⁹ Luxon, citing *Le Courage de la vérité* 21 Mars 1984, CD1A, Ibid., 393.

of knowledge, and those involved in "the human sciences... codify[ing] and reproduc[ing]" the "insight gained"⁹⁰ – actual doctors⁹¹ and medical sciences, for example. Even for Foucault, the curiosity and "obstinacy" that characterize the parrhesiastic practice do not seem to be incompatible with his analyses and codification of not only disciplinary techniques and ascetic practices themselves but also techniques/practices of the self including parrhesia:

As for what motivated me, it is quite simple; I would hope that in the eyes of some people it might be sufficient in itself. It was curiosity - the only kind of curiosity, in any case, that is worth acting upon with a degree of obstinacy: not the curiosity that seeks to assimilate what is proper for one to know, but that which enables one to get free of oneself.⁹²

It would appear that all bodies of knowledge can be used in practices of freedom, an extended techniques of the self, and also that a practice of freedom can lead to a codified body of knowledge.

Suspicion and Trust in Parrhesia and Politics

Luxon holds that the problem to which Foucault tries to find an answer in *Discipline and Punish* and the *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* is the fact that individuals are "over-steady, over-coherent, disciplined"⁹³ while in parrhesiastic practice the problem is one of attaining "steadiness and a forever imperfect coherence;" whereas the answer to the first problem is political governance

⁹⁰ Ibid., 379.

⁹¹ Luxon's use of Foucault's metaphor of the parrhesiastes as "doctor" at least *seems* at the same time to preclude the "human sciences" as a locus for or partner in legitimate parrhesiastic "educatory" rather than disciplinary "productive" relations.

⁹² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 8.

⁹³ Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 397, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

relying on an "artful interruption of cultural attitudes and actions,"⁹⁴ the "contestation of those *collective practices that might facilitate the internalization* of cultural values and norms and unfolds through the contest of claims"⁹⁵ – the answer to the second is the suspicion and trust one learns in the interpersonal practices of parrhesia. But by juxtaposing "politics" as deciding collective practices that internalize subjectivity (on the one hand) to parrhesiastic practices that develop awareness and "reflexivity" (on the other), politics looks like it can only work against parrhesia, and parrhesia against politics. This conception of politics also appears to rely on the pessimistic assumption of a totally disciplinary subjectivity⁹⁶ that is incompatible with the hopeful trust in the "basic human capacities to remark, describe, and remember" that make parrhesia possible. As I have suggested above, Foucault's focus on parrhesia appears to be motivated precisely by the desire to free the disciplinary subject; if parrhesiastic practice ends up being a merely private, personal practice that is meant to change only the individual's coherent harmonization of oneself with standards that are decided through what may turn out to be disciplinary techniques, then its political significance appears to be that it acquiesces to the problem of the disciplinary subject by a kind of voluntarist self-distraction (as implied by Nehamas' characterization of Foucault).

But parrhesiastic practices appear (at least for Foucault) to aim at *not* the steadying of the individual in terms of its cultural values and norms but a steadying of the individual *to* his own *unsteadiness*, to the fundamental uncertainty of one's norms, a simple observation of one's initial responses, to approach the truth of oneself – one's basic capabilities. What is parrhesia if it is

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Or something in between. But Luxon and Foucault leave this unspecified.

not precisely the "contestation of those *collective practices that might facilitate the internalization* of cultural values and norms"⁹⁷ that Luxon says constitutes "politics"? Parrhesia, writes Luxon, provides its students "the means to work past the dependency provoked by ethical unease;"⁹⁸ Foucault observes that Serenus' "malaise" is "due to the instability, the unsteadiness of his mind," which keeps him "from advancing towards the truth, towards steadiness, towards the ground."⁹⁹ But if parrhesia takes as "given" the individuals' standards/norms, this does not have to mean that it aims simply to "harmonize" the parrhesiastic participant with them – i.e., that parrhesia is ethically contentless, as Luxon contends;¹⁰⁰ the teacher, at least, points to the basic facts, basic observations, intervening and truth-telling in precisely a "rough-and-tumble"¹⁰¹ way; "the master still uses frankness of speech with the disciple in order to help him become aware of the faults he cannot see."¹⁰² His intervention, at least in Foucault's (and Luxon's) case, is based on what he observes and has observed of the student's "basic human capacities to remark, describe, and remember"¹⁰³ to prompt him in elaborating and externalizing them; in contesting them – especially in the "barbed dialogues" during the final

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 385.

⁹⁹ Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 153–54,

<http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT5.techniquesParrhesia.en.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Luxon does indicate that individuals are in parrhesia to "take their norms as starting rather than stopping points" (Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 388, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>). But Foucault begins, even according to Luxon, from basic human capacities and a desire for freedom. These are as much the basis of parrhesia as is the "harmony of one's words and deeds," of one's norms and actions.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 397.

¹⁰² Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001),

<http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT5.techniquesParrhesia.en.html>.

¹⁰³ Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 385, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

stages of parrhesiastic education.¹⁰⁴ Could *not* political contestation aim at precisely this goal? If Foucault hesitates over government, he *also* indicates that the care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*) – i.e., proper self-government – was prerequisite to caring for not just oneself but also governing others; in ancient Greece, the parrhesiastes is, though not a political dictator, still a citizen, a member of a class, a slaveholder, and head of a household.

If the earlier pessimism regarding the disciplinary subject is replaced by an instead "*suspicious*" and "*expressive subjectivity*" who *risks* the trust of his interlocutor – Foucault states in the very first of these lectures that the parrhesiastes is "someone who takes a risk" in relation to an authority, "a sovereign," "a tyrant"¹⁰⁵ – then it turns out that one never ultimately knows whether one is in a parrhesiastic relationship or not. The "contest" of claims in politics is not unlike this. Perhaps this explains the apparent steadiness with which Foucault simultaneously discusses parrhesiastic practices in terms of both "personal" relationships *while* explaining that its essential practices (curiosity and obstinacy) motivate him in a research practice that has clearly been useful in *public* debate and interviews (rather than only in his closer and intimate relationships).

If the "problematic of care of the self [is] at the heart of a new way of thinking about politics, of a form of politics different from what we know today,"¹⁰⁶ perhaps this politics can be a kind of parrhesiastic practice, which focuses on the development of those basis human capacities it observes in its

¹⁰⁴ Luxon writes, "Such barbed dialogues school the student in independence, and, as a result, being to confer the ability to act with sincerity and courage from positions of strength rather than from dependency on 'experts'" (Ibid, 395).

¹⁰⁵ Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/foucault.DT1.techniquesParrhesia.en.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow et al. (New York: New Press, 1997), 294.

relationships, with both suspicion and experimental trust. In this politics, if we want to increase our freedom in relation to those "mechanisms of power" that work by means of the individual body on a "minute and everyday level"¹⁰⁷ through techniques of the self, we will need to find out what our natural capabilities are, their limits and their possibilities. This will involve, as Foucault indicates, "the exercise of the self on the self"¹⁰⁸ to become closer and more courageous in relation to the truth of our everyday relations. But this truth will require knowing what practices have what effects, what in these practices makes them fail / succeed, which techniques¹⁰⁹ act to further corporealize a productive body and which to free it, a knowledge of what we can expect and hope for from the body. In this respect the experience of neuroscientists and practitioners of these techniques may be instructive. Such an exercise might still be motivated by and effect a greater curiosity and less domination. But it must also be based in limits one finds in "nature" as a result of one's experimentation within it.

¹⁰⁷ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 60–61.

¹⁰⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow et al. (New York: New Press, 1997), 282.

¹⁰⁹ Or techniques within techniques, as it were. Since the same technique, e.g., sitting in meditation, can have different effects on different subjectivities, we will need to understand what it is in the technique that makes it work or not.

3. Plato's Continual and Measured Agitation

[I]f he persistently refuses to allow his body any degree of rest but exercises and continually agitates it through its whole extent... and if the agitation is a measured one, he will succeed in bringing order and regularity to those disturbances and... elemental parts that wander all over the body according to their own affinities. (Plato, *Timaeus* 88e¹¹⁰)

Many have indicted Plato for establishing a definition of philosophy that relies on a fundamental and untenable dualism: by elevating the philosopher's rational soul and denigrating the demos' irrational body – passion, appetite, emotion, Plato tries to establish the legitimacy of the soul's/ philosopher's authoritarian tyranny over the body / demos.¹¹¹ Seeing Plato's dualism as the source of Platonic authoritarianism and exclusion, some of this literature tries to expose contradictions in and therefore the rational/logical untenability of Plato's perspective. Insofar as Plato's idealism "sets up the whole of western metaphysics in its conceptuality,"¹¹² such a critique, by displacing the

¹¹⁰ Unless otherwise indicated, Plato quotations are taken from *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Hackett Publishing Company: Cambridge, 1997).

¹¹¹ See, for example, Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Diana Coole, *Women in Political Theory: From ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism* (Boulder, Colorado: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988); Michelle Boulous Walker, *Philosophy and the Maternal Body: Reading Silence* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

¹¹² Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 76.

assumptions that lie behind or within our own thought and action, would presumably alter our thought and action. Two such critiques prove illustrative. E. R. Dodds and Jacques Derrida demonstrate respectively that: a) in contradiction with his soul/rationality-body/irrationality dualism, Plato also says that the soul is infected by the body, and even acts like the body; and b) against Plato's opposition of speech/philosophy and writing/sophistry, speech/philosophy end up being another kind of writing/sophistry.

These critiques are not mistaken about Plato's authoritarian proclivities, or that signification is essential in the work Plato carries out to establish the boundaries of legitimacy in philosophy and in politics. What they overlook, however, is the larger psycho-physiological project (i.e., a system of physical practices/techniques in which signification must be understood as issuing from and affecting differential power relations) that Plato himself says provides the foundation of his system; Platonic idealism/authoritarianism's only hope of realization is the conditioning of habit by and to "seemingly insignificant" everyday activities. This habituation works to produce what Plato sees as a "moderate" and "harmonious" subject, with an obedient disposition, amenable to an orderly life in the republic. While it is plain that Plato wants to establish conceptual boundaries, this is only part of a broader psycho-physiological project aimed at creating a particular kind of political subject.

Drawing attention to Plato's concern with habit-producing techniques is not meant to distract from his prescription of authoritarianism. It *is* to suggest that Derrida's and Dodds' inattention to technique ("disciplinary"¹¹³ and "of the self") replicates Plato's more idealist assertions (regarding the autonomy of

¹¹³ While some may object to the use of "disciplinary technique" in referring to ancient Greek governmental practices, it is clear that the intention of these techniques – the automatic functioning of power in the individual's habit – is the same as that in the techniques to which Foucault refers from the 18th century onwards.

soul/ philosophy / philosopher from the body / sophistry / demos) about how authority establishes itself, in philosophy and more generally. Criticizing Plato on the basis of his self-deconstructing definitions directs our attention away from the "seemingly insignificant" practices that Plato prescribes for achieving the unthinking obedience that maintains order in the polis, *and*, possibly, away from the habit-conditioning techniques that may in our own time continue to provide the foundation for the predominance of Platonic metaphysical conceptuality and attitudes to authority in our own thought.

Body and Soul

Plato has for a long time been conceived of as dismissing and denigrating the body, and as inaugurating for Western philosophy an antagonistic relationship with the body – the alleged unruliness of the body's sensations, affects, passions, "this mortal coil" to a rational and legislating consciousness.¹¹⁴ To the extent that, as Alfred North Whitehead claimed, all philosophy has been a footnote to Plato, it cannot be surprising that he in particular has received much attention in this regard—for his efforts to define and establish hierarchical relations between soul and body, and on this basis also between philosophy and sophistry, virtue and vice, male and female, political leaders and followers, authoritarianism over democracy. In Plato's hands, the rational soul's superiority seems to legitimize the authoritarian tyranny of the "rational" over the "bodily." This can of course amount to a defense of systematic political exclusion and violence.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason* (Minneapolis: U. Of Minnesota Press, 1984).

¹¹⁵ For example, against women: Love, according to Plato in *Symposium*, on the mother's side is poor, ugly, and always in need; on the father's side, love is a philosopher (203d). Woman, because she is associated with the body, is hysterically fearful of death (*Phaedo*, 60a, 112d; *Apology*, 35b), is the next reincarnation of a man who fails to live according to reason (*Timaeus*,

There can be no doubt that Plato was concerned with staking out autonomous territory for the soul. Socrates, in *Apology*, says he spent “all [his] time going about trying to persuade you [Athenians], young and old, to make your first and chief concern not for your bodies nor for your possessions, but for the highest welfare of your souls.”¹¹⁶ The soul and its intelligence preexist the body.¹¹⁷ Indeed, the soul is responsible for the fact that the body even lives at all.¹¹⁸ Mortals come into being when certain souls lose their wings and then drift along until they can land on something secure—an “earthly body”—that moves, not on its own but by the soul’s power. “This united whole of a soul and a body fastened together is called a living being and has the name ‘mortal.’”¹¹⁹ The soul is that which changes itself, the originless origin, which is always changing, but not dependent on anything else for this change.¹²⁰

When the soul uses the body to investigate phenomena, it becomes “confused and dizzy, as if it were drunk.” But when it “investigates by itself it passes in to the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging... it ceases to stray and remains in the same state as it is in touch

42b-c, 76e, 91a), fails to distinguish between Beauty itself and beautiful things (*Republic* 557c). Though women can potentially occupy all the same offices as men in the ideal state, women are still to be owned in common by the guardian class. In general, children, women, and slaves, and the inferior free majority – in sum, the “licentious” – who have “all kinds of diverse desires, pleasures, and pains” must be controlled by those “few” born with the best natures and provided the best education, whose desires are “simple, measured, and directed by calculation in accordance with understanding and correct belief” – that is, the “self-controlled” (*Republic*, 431b, c). Also, against homosexuals: Though in the *Symposium*, Plato clearly indicates that same-sex attraction can be the basis of a life of philosophy, this philosophical life only derives from transcendence/sublimation of the erotic, physical attraction. In *Laws*, on the other hand, Plato writes that homosexual sex acts are “unnatural” (636c). Accordingly, the Athenian prescribes legislation banning homosexual acts, masturbation, and illegitimate procreative sex (838-839d).

¹¹⁶ *Apology*, 30a-b. Cited in Elizabeth Spelman, “Woman as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views,” *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1982), 111.

¹¹⁷ *Phaedo*, 76c.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 105c.

¹¹⁹ *Phaedrus*, 246b-c.

¹²⁰ “Only what changes itself, since it needs nothing beyond itself, never stops changing” (*Phaedrus*, 245c); “Every object that is changed from without lacks a soul, but every object in which change comes from within itself has a soul, as that is the nature of the soul” (*Phaedrus*, 245e).

with things of the same kind, and its experience is then called wisdom....”¹²¹ The body is a tomb,¹²² a grave or prison,¹²³ barnacles or rocks to the soul.¹²⁴ The soul, Plato writes, “reasons best when none of these senses trouble it... in its search for reality,¹²⁵ because the body confuses the soul and does not allow it to acquire truth and wisdom whenever it is associated with it;”¹²⁶ the soul must try to “escape the contamination of the body’s folly.”¹²⁷ In *Phaedo*, Socrates says that every man’s soul, when it feels object-related pain or pleasure, believes that the cause of its feelings is “very clear and very true, [whereas] it is not; every pleasure and every pain provides... another nail to rivet the soul to the body and to weld them together. It makes the soul corporeal, so that it believes that truth is what the body says it is....”¹²⁸ Whereas, reality is a realm of Forms or Ideas, and only the soul—not the temporal body—has access to it. Real beauty, for example, cannot “take the form of a face, or of hands, or of anything that is of the flesh.”¹²⁹ In the *Phaedo*, philosophy—reason’s proper activity—gives access to the thing-itself / reality, the Forms / Ideas, “reality pure and by itself,”¹³⁰ unchanging and perfect.

Because of this access to the ideal, philosophy can provide a model (or paradigm) to follow in one’s actions. In the *Republic*, following the theoretical paradigm of the moral individual and the “theoretical paradigm of a good community”¹³¹ ends in happiness. This is why unless political leaders become

¹²¹ *Phaedo*, 79c, d.

¹²² *Gorgias*, 493a.

¹²³ *Cratylus*, 400c.

¹²⁴ *Republic*, 611e-612a.

¹²⁵ “[N]either hearing nor sight, nor pain nor pleasure, but when it is most by itself, taking leave of the body and as far as possible having no contact or association with it” (*Phaedo*, 65c).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 65e-66a.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 67a.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 83c, d.

¹²⁹ *Symposium*, 221a.

¹³⁰ *Phaedo*, 66a.

¹³¹ *Republic*. 473a.

philosophers or philosophers become political leaders, that is, “unless political power and philosophy coincide... there can be no end to political troubles... or even to human troubles in general... there is no other way for an individual or a community to achieve happiness.”¹³² Which is to say, unless the intellectual part of the soul, which sees reality itself, rules the body of the leader and the bodily¹³³ republic, then the body and its appetites will lead to the ruin of the republic, causing war, civil discord, battles,¹³⁴ and in general the unhappiness of the republic – as in the Athenian democracy that kills Socrates; democracy’s rule by appetite / the body leads to its disharmony and destruction.

If the soul “gather[s] itself together by itself,” and in practicing philosophy willingly dissociates from and avoids the body – its “confusion, ignorance, fear, violent desires and the other human ills”¹³⁵ – then the soul will be “completely pure”¹³⁶ and travel to and be happy with the gods in the realm of the “invisible, which is like itself, the divine and immortal and wise.”¹³⁷ But

if the soul is polluted and impure when it leaves the body, having always been associated with it and served it, bewitched by physical desires and pleasures to the point at which nothing seems to exist for it but the physical, which one can touch and see or eat and drink or make use of for sexual enjoyment... accustomed to hate and fear and avoid that which is dim and invisible to the eyes but intelligible and to be grasped by philosophy...

[*then*] such a soul... is no doubt permeated by the physical, which constant

¹³² Ibid., 473d-e.

¹³³ Bodily because its majority are “constitutionally incapable” of seeing with the soul alone (*Republic*, 476b).

¹³⁴ *Phaedo*, 66c.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 80e-81c.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 72b-c.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 80e-81c.

intercourse and association with the body, as well as considerable practice, has caused to become ingrained in it....¹³⁸

In the afterlife, these souls of inferior men “wander until their longing for... the physical again imprisons them in a body,”¹³⁹ the body of characters resembling those characters they practiced in their life: donkeys if they were gluttonous, violent and drunk; wolves, hawks or kites if they were unjust, tyrannical or plunderous. In *Laws* Book VIII, Plato warns that the legislators and all citizens “must not confuse the cult of the gods of the underworld with that of the ‘heavenly’ gods... They are to keep the two kinds of celebration separate... The union of body and soul, you see, can never be superior to their separation (and I mean that quite seriously).”¹⁴⁰

It would appear from this account that Elizabeth Spelman, for example, was right in claiming that “What we learn from Plato” is that “the body, or the irrational part of the soul, is seen as an enormous and annoying obstacle to the possession of... knowledge, reality, goodness, beauty, love, and statehood.”¹⁴¹ Or as E.R. Dodds put it, Plato accepted the dualism that “attributed all the sins and sufferings of the *psyche* to the pollution arising from contact with the mortal body;”¹⁴² “[O]nly when by death or by self-discipline the rational self is purged of ‘the folly of the body’ can it resume its true nature which is divine and

¹³⁸ Ibid., 80e-81c. Italics mine.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 81e.

¹⁴⁰ *Laws*, 828cd.

¹⁴¹ Elizabeth Spelman, “Woman as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views,” *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1982), 113.

¹⁴² *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 212. Plato identifies “the detachable ‘occult’ self which is the carrier of guilt-feelings and potentially divine with the rational Socratic *psyche* whose virtue is a kind of knowledge.” But, Dodds points out, “the old shamanistic culture-pattern kept its vitality, and its main features are still recognizable in Plato” (210). For example, reincarnation. Shamanic trance survives as the “practice of mental withdrawal and concentration which purifies the rational soul” (210).

sinless; the good life is the practice of that purgation."¹⁴³ As we will see, however, this reading is one-sided and misleading.

Contradiction and Deconstruction

According to some critics, Plato fails to realize his intentions and contradicts himself. He undermines the system of dualisms he wants to set up, and therefore, they argue, delegitimizes the elitist authoritarianism he uses this system to justify.

E.R. Dodds writes that Plato contradicts himself when he contends that the soul itself feels sensations and emotions he associates with the body. In *Phaedo*, as we have seen already, Socrates says that "the soul... feels violent pleasure or pain," and that this "makes the soul corporeal."¹⁴⁴ Even the rational part of the soul is explicitly motivated by desire and the emotion of love. In *Phaedo*, the philosopher does not simply relate intellectually to wisdom; he "yearns" for it; he is a "lover" of it; he does not fear death because he loves wisdom above life itself.¹⁴⁵ Plato, as we know, seems in other places clear that the philosophical activity of the soul requires its separation from the body, its sensations and passions; philosophical activity depends on recollection of its pre-terrestrial journey outside the top of the circuit through the heavens to the "colorless, formless, intangible, truly existing essence"¹⁴⁶ — what it comes to know as general concepts, in its dialectical unification and transcendence of particulars.¹⁴⁷ All this notwithstanding, Plato *also* holds that the philosopher's

¹⁴³ Ibid., 212-13.

¹⁴⁴ *Phaedo*, 83c, d.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 68a.

¹⁴⁶ *Phaedrus*, 247c.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 249b. The place beyond the heavens is "occupied by the being that really is, which is intangible and without color or shape. It is perceived only by the intellect, the pilot of the soul, and is the object of the true kind of knowledge" (*Phaedrus*, 247c). Whereas the gods have evenly balanced chariots with good horses, mortals have one good and one bad horse, and the one bad

motivation is precisely *eros*¹⁴⁸ – which Plato held to be a kind of "madness." Eros within the soul provides the desire for beautiful bodies, but it is also the motive force behind the love of laws and customs, and branches of learning, including philosophy. For Plato, says Dodds, eros "was the best kind of madness," divine madness, and the one mode of experience bringing together the "two natures of man, the divine self and the tethered beast."¹⁴⁹ Eros is based in "the physiological impulse of sex" but also "supplies the dynamic impulse which drives the soul forward in its quest of a satisfaction transcending earthly experience."¹⁵⁰ In the *Symposium*, Plato says that Love needs/wants beautiful things, and is between being a god and being a mortal. Love can be poor, ugly, always in need, but it can also be a philosopher. Love's progress decides which it approximates more; it can remain obsessed with beautiful particular things, or it can progress from its initial obsession with beautiful bodies to souls, to beautiful activities and laws (i.e., customs), and then to knowledge, not of particulars but of ideas and theories, until it comes to see the beautiful itself. The "mystery of Love" is that those who are oriented towards the soul always go "upwards for the sake of... beauty, starting out from beautiful things and

pulls them down toward "the earth, where hard toil and an arduous testing await the soul" (247b). When it has studied and enjoyed the other things that really are, it returns to the region within the heavens and goes home. When it arrives there, the charioteer stations his horses at their feeding trough, puts ambrosia before them, and gives them nectar to drink. Such is the life of the gods (248a). "The reason for the great eagerness to see the plain of truth is that the meadow there provides the pasturage that is appropriate for the best part of the soul and the nature of the wing that carries the soul aloft is nourished by this" (248c).

¹⁴⁸ Dodds' student A.W.H. Adkins notes, in addition, that in the *Phaedrus*, it is eros that drives the soul in its cycle through the heavens, and that even the best souls' intellect are so troubled by spirit and desire that it hardly glimpses reality – outside the vault of heaven – "colorless, formless, intangible, truly existing existence" (*Phaedrus*, 247c). To be human, the soul (before earthly life) must have perceived some degree of ultimate reality, and the various gradations of human are based upon how much they have perceived (*From the Many to the One: A study of personality and views of human nature in the context of ancient Greek society, values and beliefs* (London: Constable, 1970), 131-4).

¹⁴⁹ E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 218.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

using them like rising stairs.”¹⁵¹ The basis for transcending limitations imposed by physiological impulse is thus physiological impulse itself. The soul’s rationality, contradictorily, seems like it has its source in the body’s irrationality. Dodds’ student, A.W.H. Adkins writes: “The *psuche* [soul] seems to be entangled in a nexus of causes over which it has no control.”¹⁵²

In Dodds’ interpretation, Plato’s real intention was to establish the soul’s pure autonomy, distinguishing it absolutely from the body. Plato would not systematize the soul’s irrationality because this would undermine his attempts to absolutize the opposition of soul and body, and the whole system of oppositions that rested upon them. In the end, even though he has Eros bringing soul and body together, and “in fact comes very close to... the Freudian concept of *libido* and sublimation,” Plato never “fully integrated this line of thought with the rest of his philosophy; had he done so, the notion of the intellect as a self-sufficient entity independent of the body might have been imperiled, and Plato was not going to risk that.”¹⁵³

Dodds concludes that Plato’s apparent ambivalence over the relationship of the soul/intellect to the body thus threatens to undermine the legitimacy of the philosopher and his hierarchical position over the bodily, appetitive demos. Jacques Derrida finds an equally threatening and related ambivalence in Plato’s treatment of *logos* – i.e., “‘discourse’... argument, line of reasoning, guiding thread animating the spoken discussion.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ *Symposium*, 211c.

¹⁵² A.W.H. Adkins, *From the Many to the One: A study of personality and views of human nature in the context of ancient Greek society, values and beliefs* (London: Constable, 1970), 141-2.

¹⁵³ E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 218-9.

¹⁵⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 78.

Plato opposes logos as speech to mere writing. The philosopher *speaks*, rather than writes, the truth. Speech is "the living, breathing discourse of the man who knows."¹⁵⁵ Socrates says that "the nature of speech is to direct the soul."¹⁵⁶ The philosopher, or

dialectician[,] chooses a proper soul and plants and sows within it discourse accompanied by knowledge – discourse capable of helping itself as well as the man who planted it, which is not barren but produces a seed from which more discourse grows in the character of others. Such discourse makes the seed forever immortal and renders the man who has it as happy as any human can be.¹⁵⁷

Speech "can defend itself, and it knows for whom it should speak and for whom it should remain silent."¹⁵⁸ Speech can control its effects; it knows the souls of its audience and addresses each type of soul appropriately.

Plato establishes the superiority of speech to writing on the basis of speech's attendance by the one who knows, i.e., its father. In Socrates' recollection in the *Phaedrus* of the myth of Theuth – the god of writing, Thamus, the god of gods – who speaks and does not write, says that writing is a *pharmakon* (the word for both remedy and poison), not, as Theuth claims, good "for memory and for wisdom,"¹⁵⁹ but rather one that "will introduce forgetfulness" into the soul, whose trust will now depend on something "external," "on signs that belong to others." Writing, and the soul that trusts in it, will merely *appear* wise, like sophistry. The *pharmakon* of writing "produces a

¹⁵⁵ *Phaedrus*, 276a. One can imagine that Dodds might find Plato's privileging of this form of logos when its source is a living body more evident of the untenability of Plato's legitimization of philosophy and the rule of the philosopher.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 271d.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 276e-277a.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 276a.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 274e.

play of appearances that enable it to pass for truth."¹⁶⁰ It is therefore seductive. In *Phaedrus*, Socrates compares the "leaves" of the book Phaedrus has brought with him to a "potion," or *pharmakon*, that "charm[s]" Socrates into the countryside, like "a hungry animal... driven by dangling a carrot or a bit of greenstuff in front of it."¹⁶¹ away from the "logos"¹⁶² of living speech in the city. The *pharmakon* – "leaves of a book containing a speech"¹⁶³ (*logoi en biblios*) – seduces because it defers speech, but it never delivers the goods (i.e., truth/knowledge/wisdom) that speech conveys. Writing "know[s] nothing;"¹⁶⁴ it will always need/lack its father's support. Thamus condemns it as practically worthless; while writing "is good for *hypomnesis* (re-memoration, recollection, consignation)," it is bad "for the *mneme* (living, knowing memory)."¹⁶⁵ Speech and writing are brothers, but only speech is "legitimate." Writing, the bastard brother, "can neither defend itself nor come to its own support."¹⁶⁶ Written words "are as incapable of speaking in their own defense as they are of teaching the truth adequately."¹⁶⁷ "[W]ords that have been written down can do [no] more than remind *those who already know* what the writing is about."¹⁶⁸ Like myth, writing "repeats without knowing."¹⁶⁹ It threatens, since it is not attended by the one who knows, to get out of control and go astray: "When once it has been written down, every discourse roams about everywhere, reaching

¹⁶⁰ Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 103.

¹⁶¹ *Phaedrus*, 230d-e.

¹⁶² Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 71.

¹⁶³ *Phaedrus*, 230e.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 274e-275b.

¹⁶⁵ Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 103.

¹⁶⁶ *Phaedrus*, 275e.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 276c.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 275d-e. Italics mine.

¹⁶⁹ Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 75.

indiscriminately those with understanding no less than those who have no business with it, and it doesn't know to whom it should speak and to whom it should not."¹⁷⁰ Writing mindlessly repeats: "You'd think [written words] were speaking as if they had some understanding, but if you question anything that has been said because you want to learn more, it continues to signify just that very same thing forever."¹⁷¹ Writing, writes Derrida, "being nobody's son at the instant it reaches inscription, scarcely remains a son at all and no longer recognizes its origins, whether legally or morally."¹⁷²

Derrida indicates that Plato's opposition and hierarchical ordering of speech and writing constitutes *a decision and departure* from the preceding and surrounding tradition.¹⁷³ "Plato is bent on presenting writing as an occult, and therefore suspect, power... His mistrust of mantic and magic... is well attested."¹⁷⁴ In the mythological precedents to Plato's brief recounting in the *Phaedrus*, writing and speech are ambiguously defined, even though the same oppositional binaries that preoccupy Plato's books also preoccupy his sources: "Plato had to make his tale conform to structural laws. The most general of these, those that govern and articulate the oppositions speech/ writing... soul/body... good/evil... also govern, and according to the same

¹⁷⁰ *Phaedrus*, 275e.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 275d-e.

¹⁷² Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 77.

¹⁷³ "We hope to display in the most striking manner the regular, ordered polysemy that has, through skewing, indetermination, or overdetermination, but without mistranslation, permitted the rendering of the same word by 'remedy,' 'recipe,' 'poison,' 'drug,' 'philter,' etc. It will also be seen to what extent the malleable unity of this concept, or rather its rules and the strange logic that links it with its signifier, has been dispersed, masked, obliterated, and rendered almost unreadable not only by the imprudence or empiricism of the translators, but first and foremost by the redoubtable, irreducible difficulty of translation. It is a difficulty inherent in its very principle, situated less in the passage from one language to another, from one philosophical language to another, than already, as we shall see, in the tradition between Greek and Greek; a violent difficulty in the transference of a non-philosopheme into a philosopheme. With this problem of translation we will thus be dealing with nothing less than the problem of the very passage into philosophy" (*Ibid.*, 71-72).

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 97. See *Republic* II, 364ff; Letter VII, 333e; *Laws* X, 909b-c.

configurations, Egyptian, Babylonian, and Assyrian mythology."¹⁷⁵ In Egyptian mythology, Thoth occupies the role of messenger-god, who represents what has already been thought by Horus;¹⁷⁶ Thoth is the origin of linguistic difference; Ra's replacement, but always scheming to take over the throne.¹⁷⁷

[G]od-doctor-pharmacist-magician... As a substitute capable of doubling for the king, the father, the sun, and the word, distinguished from these only by dint of representing, repeating, and masquerading, Thoth was naturally also capable of totally supplanting them and appropriating all their attributes. He is added as the essential attribute of what he is added to, and from which almost nothing distinguishes him. He differs from speech or divine light only as the revealer from the revealed. Barely.¹⁷⁸

Thoth is the god "of the absolute passage between opposites."¹⁷⁹ He "can become the god of creative speech."¹⁸⁰ What Plato, Derrida writes, on the other hand, is novel for is his "Platonic" fervor for legislating strict and hierarchical oppositions between Thoth and Thamus, father and son, soul and body... In his version of the myth, Thamus quickly passes judgment on Theuth's *pharmakon*, proclaiming its inferiority and subservience to speech.

According to Derrida, Plato's decision to strictly oppose and order speech and writing is momentous.

The opposition between *mneme* [living, present memory, or knowledge] and *hypomnesis* [deferred, absent re-presentation of living speech] would thus preside over the meaning of writing... [and] form a system with all the great structural oppositions [life/death, father/son, master/servant, first/second,

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 85.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 88.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 89.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 90.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 93.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 90, Fn 29.

legitimate-son/orphan-bastard, soul/body, inside/outside, good/evil, seriousness/play, day/night, sun/moon, etc.¹⁸¹] of Platonism.¹⁸²

Plato thus establishes the legitimacy and authority of philosophy and the philosopher – as opposed to sophistry or myth and the demos – as the one who knows, the soul – as opposed to the body – as the source of truth. "What is played out at the boundary line between these two concepts is consequently something like the major decision of philosophy, the one through which it institutes itself, maintains itself, and contains its adverse steps."¹⁸³

Plato's motivating fear is of, precisely, democracy, says Derrida: "At the disposal of each and of all, available on the sidewalks, isn't writing thus essentially democratic?"¹⁸⁴ Philosophers know that composed speeches, poetry, and political documents are "of little worth,"¹⁸⁵ are "recited in public without questioning and explanation... only in order to produce conviction" – i.e., mere belief and opinion.¹⁸⁶ But the democrat is "ready to do anything, lend himself to anyone... even to politics and philosophy... he belongs to the masses... has no essence, no truth, no patronym, no constitution of his own."¹⁸⁷ He is ruled by desire. And like writing, "[d]esires, says Plato, should be raised like sons,"¹⁸⁸ kept in their place, in order. At stake in Plato's decision is precisely the choice of *authoritarianism* over democracy – that is, the speech of the father, the authority over politics, over philosophy, over truth. "Platonism" is not alone in assigning "the origin and power of speech, precisely of logos, to the paternal position,"

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 85.

¹⁸² Ibid., 111.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 144.

¹⁸⁵ *Phaedrus*, 278c.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 278a.

¹⁸⁷ Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 145.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

but given that it is Platonism that “sets up the whole of Western metaphysics in its conceptuality,”¹⁸⁹ there is much at stake for Derrida in Plato’s method of guarding and managing the boundaries of the soul, philosophy, and the polis.

But, Derrida argues, despite Plato’s attempts to fix their boundaries and order, he has difficulty guarding speech from writing, philosophy from sophistry, and so on. How does one know philosophy from sophistry, the philosopher from the demos, when a speech is given as opposed to written, “said for the sake of understanding and learning” instead of given only to “produce conviction”¹⁹⁰ (and, of course we can add, the product of reason/the intellectual soul as opposed to mere habitual desire)? How does one know the legitimate from the bastard son? One knows, Plato writes, by consulting “what is truly *written* in the soul concerning what is just, noble, and good.”¹⁹¹ One must search precisely for *signs* or *inscriptions* of knowledge.¹⁹²

That Socrates must use a metaphor – substitution of a mere sign for the real thing/essence – at the very moment of trying to help Phaedrus, a philosopher (i.e., the “man who knows”),¹⁹³ “understand... and learn...” the difference between a mere sign/substitute and the real thing/essence indicates the ultimate indistinguishability of essence and signification/substitution; the essence of essence turns out to be signification/substitution (a fact with which the preceding mythological tradition was more at ease; Thamus/speech now

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 76.

¹⁹⁰ *Phaedrus*, 277e-278a,

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 278a. Italics mine.

¹⁹² Plato portrays speech as Thamus the father’s “responsible presence” (Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 78). The father is “*present, standing* near it, behind it, within it, sustaining it with his rectitude, attending it in person in his own name. Living *logos*, for its part, recognizes its debt, lives off that recognition” (Ibid., 77).

¹⁹³ *Phaedrus*, 276a.

appears to be a manifestation of Thoth/writing, rather than the other way around). Speech in the *Phaedrus* is ultimately a kind of writing, and so its distinction as "knowing" must have recourse to basing itself on *another* opposition; philosophy is now good, fertile writing, while sophistry is bad, sterile writing:

According to a pattern that will dominate all of Western philosophy, good writing (natural, living, knowledgeable, intelligible, internal, speaking) is opposed to bad writing (a moribund, ignorant, external, mute artifice for the senses). And the good one can be designated only through the metaphor of the bad one. Metaphoricity is the logic of contamination and the contamination of logic. Bad writing is for good a model of linguistic designation and a simulacrum of essence. And if the network of opposing predicates that link one type of writing to the other contains in its meshes all the conceptual oppositions of 'Platonism'—here considered the dominant structure of the history of metaphysics—then it can be said that philosophy is played out in the play between two kinds of writing. Whereas all it wanted to do was distinguish between writing and speech... the conclusion of the *Phaedrus* is... a preference for one sort of writing over another, for the fertile trace over the sterile trace....¹⁹⁴

Derrida's argument leads us to conclude that the boundaries of philosophy, of truth (intelligibility, as opposed to mere visibility), and therefore of authority (i.e., a monopoly of dictation) over the souls of the republic, not just the demos but also its "guardians proper" – its philosophers, must be

¹⁹⁴ Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 149.

established through their (i.e., philosophy's, truth's, authority's) repeated metaphorical alignment/ association with other established oppositions (e.g., good/bad, fertile/sterile, soul/body). We might add that these oppositions must be precisely, as when the *pharmakon* of writing is administered, "recited... without questioning" so as to "produce conviction." Where this doesn't work, they can be ensured with direct physical force. The law, written by the legislator, provides the standard to which subjects must make themselves conform (i.e., it is the source of correct political subjectivity), or be made to conform, even where this involves death. To the extent that the subject errs in self-legislation against "bad" writing, writing that is the product of the mere senses and passions of the poor judge of his own well-being, the legislator must provide correction through the violent application of the law. One way or the other, the republic's citizen must be convinced that *his* writing "always needs its father to attend to it, being quite unable to defend itself or attend to its own needs,"¹⁹⁵ even if this attendance means precisely more writing. In this regard, Derrida cites Plato: "The one certain touchstone of all is the writings of the legislator," which are supposed to assure the well-being of the souls of the city;

The good judge will possess those writings within his own soul as antidotes against other discourse, and thus he will be the state's preserver as well as his own. He will secure in the good the retention and increase of their rectitude, and in the evil, or those of them whose vicious principles admit remedy, will promote, so far as he can, conversion from folly, from profligacy, from cowardice, in a word, from all forms of wrong. As for those who are fatally attached to such principles, if our judges and their superiors prescribe death as a *cure* for a soul in that state, they will, as has been more

¹⁹⁵ *Phaedrus*, 275e.

than once said already, deserve the praise of the community for their conduct.¹⁹⁶

The *pharmakon* of writing can only be guarded against with precisely another *pharmakon*. Authority in the ideal republic must be continually *rewritten* on the soul/body of the demos. Specifically, the legislator must exclude – i.e., write out of existence – those practices (what Derrida would call "democratic impulses" in writing) that might undermine his authority. The legislator's rule must be "one topic, one doctrine;"¹⁹⁷ "one of the best regulations you have is the one which forbids any young man to inquire into the relative merits of the laws; everyone has to agree, with one heart and voice, that they are all excellent and exist by divine *fiat*; if anyone says differently, the citizens must absolutely refuse to listen to him."¹⁹⁸

The (Legislator's) Psycho-Physiological Project

Dodds was right that Plato could not integrate the two lines of his thought (one that made eros the ultimate source of intellect and another that made the soul superior to and autonomous from eros).¹⁹⁹ Derrida's careful documentation demonstrates at least implicitly how such an integration would have threatened Plato's legislative aspirations. In spite of his intentions Plato delegitimizes the dominion of speech over writing, of philosophy over

¹⁹⁶ *Laws* XII, 957c-958a; cited in Derrida, *Plato's Pharmacy*, 120-1.

¹⁹⁷ "[W]hen a poet takes his seat on the tripod of the Muse, he cannot control his thoughts. He's like a fountain where the water is allowed to gush forth unchecked. His art is the art of representation, and when he represents men with contrasting characters he is often obliged to contradict himself, and he doesn't know which of the opposing speeches contains the truth. But for the legislator, this is impossible: he must not let his law say two different things on the same subject; his rule has to be "one topic, one doctrine" (*Laws*, 719c, d).

¹⁹⁸ *Laws* I, 634e.

¹⁹⁹ Though intellect is a specific development of eros, Plato has to disavow this source and so separate eros, identify it as a tyrant that infects the soul - in order to justify the domination of the intellect/philosophy over eros.

sophistry, as well as the political domination that is premised on these oppositions.

But Plato's explicit attention to the management of eros and impulse seems to be more than just a self-contradicting concession to the mythologically inflected context that still held the consciousness of those readers he wished to convert. While Plato did intend to establish the superiority of the soul, philosophy, and the philosopher (on the one hand) and the inferiority of the body, sophistry, and the demos (on the other), he also addressed the question of how, through specific techniques, to achieve a subjectivity, a specific psychophysiology, that would acquiesce to and support his system. Derrida's and Dodd's analyses, though instructive, remain on the surface of a psychophysiological project that Plato's legislator is instructed to execute, a project that is even broader than (but includes) the system of philosophical oppositions that Dodds and Derrida examine. If we are to take seriously Derrida's assertion that Plato "sets up the whole of western metaphysics in its conceptuality"²⁰⁰ (and this conceptuality provides legitimating force to relations of political domination), then we need to understand *how* this conceptuality is achieved. Derrida is right that Plato resorts to metaphor to establish the superiority of the soul, and the whole project of subjectivation relies on signification. But the process by which signification achieves subjectivation needs also to be understood as a physiological process, one disciplinary technique among many Plato says the legislator must apply to the subject not just in the moments when he contemplates strictly "political" decisions, but also in his seemingly apolitical

²⁰⁰ Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 76.

and insignificant activities to achieve the conditioning of the subject's habit, so that he "instinctively" thinks and acts so as to "bind the state together."

In *Laws*, Plato notes that though the legislator provides laws that are "backed by legal sanctions,"²⁰¹ the everyday customs and habits that he "regards as respectable" should be just as binding upon the citizen. But this is not just because they are the completion of the more fundamental work done by the laws proper. These habitual practices are the very *foundation* of the state; they do nothing less than *hold the republic together*:

all the rules we are now working through are what people generally call "unwritten customs"... "ancestral law"... although "laws" is the wrong term for these things, we can't afford to say *nothing* about them, because they are the *bonds of the entire social framework*,²⁰² linking all written and established laws with those yet to be passed. They act in the same way as ancestral customs dating from time immemorial, which by virtue of being soundly established and *instinctively observed*,²⁰³ shield and protect existing written law... this is what we have to bear in mind in thoroughly binding your state together while it is still a new foundation; we must do our best not to omit anything, great or small, whether "laws," "habits" or "institutions," because they are all needed to bind a state together, and the permanence of the one kind of norm depends on that of the other. So we ought not to be surprised to see a flood of apparently unimportant customs or usages making our legal code a bit on the long side.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ *Laws*, 823a.

²⁰² Italics mine.

²⁰³ Italics mine.

²⁰⁴ *Laws*, 793b-d.

Plato, therefore, prescribes disciplinary techniques, *and* guidelines for techniques of the self, that are meant to condition the people's dispositions to habitually obey the laws, and the customs – habitual practices – that maintain obedience. These techniques are meant for all the people, regardless of their nature. The vast majority of the population is capable only of opinion and common virtues,²⁰⁵ but *all* souls at least *ultimately* desire perfection, and even our most appetitive desires are just misdirections of the soul's proper development²⁰⁶; "No one is willfully evil. A man becomes evil, rather, as a result of one or another corrupt condition of his body and an uneducated upbringing" (*Timaeus* 86e). Education, therefore, must as far as possible direct those desires so that all subjects are disposed towards order.²⁰⁷ A habit of order is the basis of not just an obedient population in a "well-ordered city,"²⁰⁸ but the further love of order and eventual "turning of the eye"²⁰⁹ (towards reality) in the future guardian's philosophical study – the turning that, Plato says, makes possible the proper ordering and education of the city in the first place.

The conditioning of the citizen should occur according to a general regimen of repeated, rhythmic, traditional/choreographed, moderate activity – aimed at producing an orderly disposition, characterized by rhythm, tradition, and moderation. It is accompanied by sanctions that effect pain and pleasure in the subject, from early on. Since the child's "earliest sensations... are of pleasure of pain," they are "the route by which virtue and vice first enter the soul."

²⁰⁵ Republic X, 619c.

²⁰⁶ This also helps explain Dodds' observations regarding eros' relationship to philosophy.

²⁰⁷ Samuel Scolnicov, "Plato on education as the development of reason."

Proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, (Boston: Paideia: Philosophy Educating Humanity, 1998), <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Anci/AnciScol.htm>.

²⁰⁸ Republic X, 619c.

²⁰⁹ Republic, 518b6-d7.

Education is the process of channeling "the feelings of pleasure and affection, pain and hatred that well up in his soul... *in the right courses before he can understand the reason why.*"²¹⁰

Once the long process of education is finished (i.e., in rational man), then his "reason and his emotions agree in telling him that he has been properly trained by inculcation of appropriate habits."²¹¹ But in the meantime, because uneducated emotion is unstable and can easily be mislead and deformed, the education and training of children is "not something we can leave on one side: that would be out of the question."²¹² Just as "flocks and herds" cannot be left unattended, "children must not be left without teachers... Of all wild things, the child is the most unmanageable: an unusually powerful spring of reason, whose waters are not yet canalized in the right direction, makes him sharp and sly, the most unruly animal there is. That's why he has to be curbed by a great many 'bridles,' so to speak." When he misbehaves, he must be treated "as if he were a slave"²¹³.

The dangers posed to the soul by "excessive pleasures and pains" are the "gravest." When we experience too much pleasure or pain, we go to extremes to "seize the one or avoid the other," and are unable to "see or hear anything right," incapable of "rational thought."²¹⁴ The "correct formation of our feelings of pleasure and pain" makes us "hate what we ought to hate from first to last, and love what we ought to love."²¹⁵ The educational process therefore associates pain with wrong acts and (moderate) pleasure with right – by means of the regimen of activities (i.e., their effect on the body / soul), but also sanctions that

²¹⁰ *Laws*, 653a, b. Italics mine.

²¹¹ A formulation disturbingly close to those of Habermas and Rawls.

²¹² *Laws* VII, 788a-c/799b-d.

²¹³ *Laws*, 808d-e.

²¹⁴ *Timaeus*, 86b.

²¹⁵ *Laws*, 653a, b.

enforce it. This regimen and sanctions form a moderate disposition, which instinctively avoids excess (now associated with pain), a disposition amenable to orderly life in the polis. Thus, the restraint or moderation of the passions should characterize *everything*, even the child's conception. The Athenian's first consideration is to provide instructions for the physical care of the individual, from the very beginning of life.

Children should not be conceived when their parents are in a state of drunken relaxation, since "when he's drunk a man reels about all over the place and bumps into things, and a raging passion invades his body and soul; this means that as a sower of his seed he is clumsy and inefficient, and he'll produce unbalanced children who are not to be trusted, with devious characters, and in all probability with misshapen bodies too."²¹⁶ Plato's "athletics of the embryo"²¹⁷ begins with the mother's avoidance of extremes of either pleasure or pain²¹⁸; "An expectant mother should think it important to keep calm and cheerful and sweet-tempered throughout her pregnancy."²¹⁹

The child should be given predictable, rhythmic "perpetual" motion – the Corybantic cure – and harmonious sound²²⁰ to calm its emotions. The mother calms the child's fear (which results from "some inadequacy in the personality")²²¹ by rocking it "constantly in her arms, not silently but humming a kind of tune. The cure consists of *movement*, to the rhythms of dance and song; the mother makes her child 'pipe down' just as surely as the music of the *pipes*

²¹⁶ Ibid., 775d.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 789b.

²¹⁸ "[A]ll expectant mothers, during the year of their pregnancy, should be supervised more closely than other women, to ensure that they don't experience frequent and excessive pleasures, or pains either" (*Laws*, 792e).

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ See below for discussion of the effect of harmonious sound on learning.

²²¹ *Laws*, 790e-791a.

bewitches the frenzied Bacchic reveler."²²² The condition of the frenzied reveler and the child can be treated "by vigorous movement. [T]his external motion, by canceling out the internal agitation that gives rise to fear and frenzy, induces a feeling of calm and peace in the soul, in spite of the painful thumping of the heart experienced by each patient."²²³ Thus, "exercising very young children by keeping them in motion contributes a great deal towards the perfection of one aspect of the soul's virtue."²²⁴

The child's environment should be relatively predictable, and adjusted if the child is easily upset; shocks are to be avoided. Cries and moans are the "child's way of signaling his likes and dislikes," and must be taken seriously, "because this stage lasts at least three years... quite a large part of one's life to spend badly (or well);" the "moaning and grumbling" child should be sheltered from "distress and fright and any kind of pain at all" so as to be "educated into a more cheerful and genial disposition." But this does not mean the child will be spoiled; the object of this strategy is predictability, not pleasure. He is not allowed to pursue pleasure unchecked. Rather, "the right way of life is neither a single-minded pursuit of pleasure nor an absolute avoidance of pain, but a genial... contentment with the state between those extremes."²²⁵

Music, dance, and games must be entirely canonical, pre-choreographed, traditional, and harmonious, so as not to excite the organism to new ideas or unruliness: Music²²⁶ and dancing are crucial, according to Plato's Athenian, because together they amount "in a sense, to education as a whole"²²⁷ – music

²²² Ibid., 790d,e.

²²³ Ibid., 791a.

²²⁴ Ibid., 791c.

²²⁵ Ibid., 792c, d.

²²⁶ "When the sound of the voice penetrates the soul, we [take] that to be an education in virtue, and we [hazard] the term 'music' to describe it" (*Laws*, 673a).

²²⁷ Ibid., 672e.

and dance are both the teaching or recollection of rhythm, the *measured flow of movement*. The state should control both "by a set of rules and use [them] to cultivate moderate habits."²²⁸ Therefore, "no one shall sing a note, or perform any dance-movement, other than those in the canon of public songs, sacred music, and the general body of chorus performances of the young... If a man obeys, he shall go unmolested by the law; but if he disobeys, the Guardians of the Laws and the priests and priestesses must punish him."²²⁹ Musical melodies must not be improvised, have harmonious intervals, and simple and predictable rhythms. In this way, learning is assisted.²³⁰ In *Timaeus*, Socrates says that when the motions of sounds "conform" – slower sounds with faster – they produce "a single effect – a mixture of high and low. Hence the pleasure they bring to fools and the delight they afford – by their expression of *divine harmony in mortal movement* – to the wise."²³¹

Children should not be taught Bacchic dances where the dancers represent "drunken persons they call Nymphs and Pans and Sileni and Satyrs."²³² Instead they are to learn "gestures that express what one is saying... gestures that are invariably in harmony with our words"²³³ – "dances performed by those who enjoy prosperity and seek only moderate pleasures;"²³⁴ moderate dances teach the temperament to be "more composed" and, therefore, the movement "more deliberate," whereas unrestrained dances teach violently

²²⁸ Ibid., 673e.

²²⁹ Ibid., 800a.

²³⁰ "[T]he lyre should not be used to play an elaborate independent melody: that is, its strings must produce no notes except those of the composer of the melody being played; small intervals should not be combined with large, nor quick temp with slow, nor low notes with high. Similarly, the rhythms must not be tricked out with all sorts of frills and adornments... conflict and confusion makes learning difficult..." (*Laws*, 812d, e).

²³¹ *Timaeus*, 80b. Italics mine.

²³² *Laws* VII, 815c.

²³³ *Laws*, 816a.

²³⁴ Ibid., 816b.

changing and wild movement.²³⁵ Because young people are already distractible,²³⁶ and novel things excite immoderate desires, the Athenian insists that "we must do everything we possibly can to distract" them from presenting/performing "new subjects, either in dance or song" and from those "pleasure-mongers" who try to seduce them into it.²³⁷ When dance is instead the systematically training rhythm in the body, it is called "gymnastics."²³⁸

Even games should be standardized, traditional, and unimprovised: "I maintain that no one in any state has really grasped that children's games affect legislation so crucially as to determine whether the laws that are passed will survive or not;"²³⁹ introducing new elements into games "inevitably" changes children profoundly, prompting them to "demand a different kind of life" – including "new institutions" that damage the polis – "but not a single legislator takes fright at the prospect."²⁴⁰ "Change... except in something evil, is extremely dangerous. This is true of seasons and winds, the regimen of the body and the character of the soul..." (*Laws*, 797d-e).

This conditioning of habit in childhood is merely the beginning of establishing a moderate, orderly subjectivity. Once childhood education is over, men must take charge of their own education. This also included their sexual activity, as Michel Foucault demonstrates, in an analysis that underscores Plato's concerns with the cultivation of dispositions, and treats Plato's metaphysical-conceptual oppositions as just one part of this larger, more

²³⁵ Ibid., 815e-816a.

²³⁶ Ibid., 797b.

²³⁷ Ibid., 798e. Italics mine. "[M]usical representations" with rhythms and harmonies should be presented and sung "to the community at large... [on the basis of] the emotions aroused by them... so as to charm the souls of the young people, encouraging each and every one of them to let these representations guide them along the path that leads to virtue" (Ibid., 812c).

²³⁸ Ibid., 672e-673a.

²³⁹ Ibid., 797a.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 798e.

consequential project – rather than, as Derrida does, the "major decision" through which philosophy institutes and maintains its authority, or, as Dodds does, constituting intractable and delegitimizing problems for Plato's system. As opposed to Dodds' assumption that Plato could not systematize his valorization of philosophy with his observations on eros, Plato, Foucault indicates, saw the desires leading to *aphrodesia* (pleasurable acts) as "among the most natural and necessary,"²⁴¹ but in need of control. Lust was not the mere experience of pleasure, but rather of being "driven to distraction" by "'pleasures and pains in excess.'"²⁴² In classical Greek thought, "sexual activity was associated with a force, an *energeia*... that was potentially excessive by nature, and the moral question was how to confront this force, how to control it and regulate its economy in a suitable way."²⁴³ The education of the guardians, in the *Republic*, aims at moderation (*sophrosyne*) – mastery of the pleasures of drink, sex, and food. Moderation rather than mere health was what the judicious man aimed at. Physical regimen was not to be cultivated for its own sake, but rather for his soul's consonance.²⁴⁴ To become moderate, the Athenian says, one must assume an agonistic relation, exert effort (through "'speech, deed and art [*logos, ergon, technē*] in games and serious pursuits'"²⁴⁵) aimed at the domination of oneself by oneself (*enkrateia*). The tyrannical man was one "'in whose soul dwells the tyrant Eros who directs everything,'"²⁴⁶ whereas the self-controlled man can abstain from sexual relations with boys and women

²⁴¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 48.

²⁴² *Timaeus* 86c-e; cited in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 45.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁴⁴ *Gorgias*, 491d.

²⁴⁵ *Laws* I, 647d; cited in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 66.

²⁴⁶ *Republic* IX, 573d.

alike.²⁴⁷ Similarly, the moral problematization of relations with boys was preoccupied with the question of moderation²⁴⁸ – whether one could transform “ephemeral love into a mutual, egalitarian, and lasting friendship,”²⁴⁹ which carries both lovers towards truth.

Foucault indicates that the care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*) – i.e., proper self-government – was prerequisite to caring for or governing others. And this self-government required exercise / practice (*askesis*)²⁵⁰ – an “aesthetics of the self.” Self-government had to be contained in the free man’s thought, deliberation and prudence. The free man’s doctor did not merely prescribe without explanation; he instructed and persuaded his patient, providing him with nothing less than a “rational framework for the whole of his existence.”²⁵¹ Not all in the state can be equally self-controlled; *sophrosyne* would characterize “but few people who are the best by nature and the best educated”²⁵² whose desires are “simple and measured and directed by reasoning with intelligence and right belief.”²⁵³ In the moderate state / city, these few who ruled themselves would also have to rule the passions of the unprincipled children, women, slaves, and inferior majority. The moderation that is achieved through self-government involves a harmonization. While Plato clearly did not aim at the annihilation of eros, the body, writing, the demos, neither did he prescribe a simple balancing of forces. His harmonization involves the agonistic subordination of what he designates as eros, body, writing, demos, to what he

²⁴⁷ *Laws* VIII, 840a.

²⁴⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 231.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 233.

²⁵⁰ See Plato, *Alcibiades*, 123d, on the relationship between exercises and the care of the self.

²⁵¹ *Timaeus* 89d, cited in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 107.

²⁵² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 61-2.

²⁵³ *Republic* IV, 431c-d, cited in *Ibid.*, 61.

claims to be reason, soul, speech, philosopher. The desires, like the lowborn, must be kept in check to avoid their agitation and rebellion.²⁵⁴ The craftsman, for example, since the best part of his soul "is naturally weak and cannot rule the animals within but pampers them and can learn nothing but ways to flatter them... he must be enslaved to the best man, who has a divine ruler within himself."²⁵⁵ "Individual virtue," writes Foucault, "needed to be structured like a city."²⁵⁶

In fact, however, Plato indicates that it is the individual himself – his body – that is structured like a city. Virtue – the agonistic relationship of the individual with himself – was a *physiological* relationship and condition. The immortal soul is located in the head, which rides upon the body, but in the body there is "another kind of soul" – mortal, containing "those dreadful but necessary disturbances: pleasure, first of all, evil's most powerful lure; then pains, that make us run away from what is good;" boldness and fear, "foolish counselors both;" anger, "hard to assuage;" and expectation, "easily led astray,"²⁵⁷ which are "fused with unreasoning sense-perception and all-venturing lust, and so, as was necessary, they constructed the mortal type of soul."²⁵⁸ The divine soul is therefore given a different home from this mortal soul, because of the latter's desires. The mortal soul is further subdivided: the ambitious, manly, spirited part sits in the heart (the "guardhouse"), "so that it might listen to reason and together with it restrain by force the part consisting of appetites, should the latter at any time refuse outright to obey the dictates of

²⁵⁴ *Laws* III, 689a-b.

²⁵⁵ *Republic* IX, 590c.

²⁵⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 72.

²⁵⁷ *Timaeus*, 69c-d.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

reason coming down from the citadel;"²⁵⁹ in that case, spirit will "boil over" and "every bodily part that is sensitive may be keenly sensitized, through all the narrow vessels," so it can hear and follow reason's "exhortations or threats."²⁶⁰ This physiological relation between the immortal and mortal soul, which Dodds' account neglects, would allow the immortal soul – "the best part among them all" – to "be left in charge."²⁶¹ If the mortal soul's courageous part reacts excessively (pounding of heart with fearful expectation or arousal of spirit), the lungs can also calm it; soft and without blood, porous, by breath they can drink and cool the heart's fire, "bringing it respite and relaxation in the heat."²⁶²

The appetitive soul is located above the pubis, where it is "tied... down like a beast," a wild but necessary one, "as far as possible" from the immortal soul/reason – in the head. The appetitive soul (with which the liver is associated),²⁶³ is "enticed by images and phantoms night and day," and has no innate regard for reason's "deliverances."²⁶⁴ When the body, especially this appetitive part, is poorly cared for in the present or in the past, because of poor education, it affects the soul;²⁶⁵ it can cause the excessive pursuit of pleasure or extreme avoidance of pain; in this condition, the body's "acid and briny phlegms... bitter and bilious humors wander up and down" with no vent, instead mixing their vapor with and confounding the soul.²⁶⁶ Excesses of the

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 69e-70b.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid., 70c.

²⁶³ Ibid., 72b.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 70e-71a.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 86e. This holds not just for the physical body but also for the city: "when men whose constitutions are bad in this way have bad forms of government where bad civic speeches are given, both in public and in private and where, besides, no studies that could remedy this situation are at all pursued by people from their youth on up, that is how all of us who are bad come to be that way – the products of two causes [corrupt bodily condition and uneducated upbringing] both entirely beyond our control. It is the begetters far more than the begotten, and the nurturers far more than the nurtured, that bear the blame for all this" (*Timaeus*, 87b).

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 86e.

body thus infect all three regions of the soul,²⁶⁷ and in each region creates a variety of "bad temper and melancholy... recklessness and cowardice... forgetfulness and stupidity."²⁶⁸

Given the soul's location and subdivision within the body, its dependence for its proper operation on the condition of the body, it should not be surprising that Plato recommends caring for the body as part of caring for the soul, and vice versa: a proper balance of exercise of the body (as home of the immortal soul) and exercise of the soul (in the head, connected with the mortal soul through neck) – a moderation of each to achieve the right proportion; "In determining health and disease or virtue and vice no proportion or lack of it is more important than that between soul and body."²⁶⁹ Diseases of the body affect the soul,²⁷⁰ but the soul also affects the body; this mutual dependence means that one should deal moderately with each. A "vigorous and excellent soul" attached to "a too frail and puny frame" is out of proportion:

When within... that combination of soul and body which we call a living thing... there is a soul more powerful than the body and this soul gets excited, it churns out the whole being and fills it from inside with diseases,

²⁶⁷ Plato's division of the soul (*psuche*) in the *Republic* corresponds to that given in the *Timaeus*: the *logistikon*—the calculating and reasoning part; the *epathumutikon*—the loving, hungering, thirsting part which is stirred by other desires; the *thumoeides*—the spirited part which feels angry at injustice and strives to right wrongs (*Republic*, 439d-440e).

²⁶⁸ *Timaeus*, 86e.

²⁶⁹ "[W]hen a vigorous and excellent soul is carried about by a too frail and puny frame, or when the two are combined in the opposite way, the living thing as a whole lacks beauty, because it is lacking in the most important of proportions" (*Ibid.*, 87c-88c).

²⁷⁰ Here, it would follow here that Plato means the soul as a whole – both its mortal and immortal parts. Diseases of the body (which ultimately houses the entire soul) affect the soul (which is housed in the body). The indistinguishability of the body and soul here seems either entirely careless, a sign of an irreducible tension in Plato's thought (Dodds' thesis), or possibly a merely rough/relative opposition, whose absoluteness Plato was not as concerned with establishing, as Derrida thinks.

and when it concentrates on one or another course of study or inquiry, it wears the body out....²⁷¹

The soul engaged in "disputes and contentions" when teaching or debating "fire[s] the body up and rock[s] it back and forth," causing discharges that prompt medical misdiagnosis; conversely, a large body attached to a "puny and feeble mind" makes the soul's functions forgetful, stupid, dull, and ignorant. Measured exercise of each is necessary for the balance of each by the other; the mathematician and intellectuals generally should do gymnastics, and the athlete should do "exercises of the soul" – "the arts and... every pursuit of wisdom."²⁷²

This is especially important, as Foucault has noted, for the "free man" in the leading classes, where too much physical training creates "savagery and toughness," while too much music and poetry creates "softness and overcultivation."²⁷³ This self-cultivation requires constant vigilance – "a *life devoted* to the cultivation of every physical perfection *and* every moral virtue (the only life worth the name)."²⁷⁴ One must always "take the proper food and exercise" and be engaged in "mental and moral training;" "To follow this regimen and to get the maximum benefit from it, the whole day and the whole night is scarcely time enough;"²⁷⁵ "[E]very gentleman must have a timetable prescribing what he is to do every minute of his life, which he should follow at all times from the dawn of the day until the sun comes up at the dawn of the next."²⁷⁶ This constant self-surveillance, then, is a persistent refusal to rest, a

²⁷¹ *Timaeus*, 87c-88c.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ *Republic*, 410c, d.

²⁷⁴ *Laws* VII, 807c, d.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 807e.

continual and measured agitation of the entire body (and soul), which brings "order and regularity" to the individual's "disturbances and elemental parts."²⁷⁷

The leading classes' self-cultivation is nevertheless not an open experiment or exercise in spontaneity, Foucault's interpretation notwithstanding.²⁷⁸ The guardians' constant vigilance in all things are intended to establish a particular, *moderate* (measured) disposition, one that could continue restraining itself, limiting its diet, sexual activity, and thought to the proper, *conventional* activities and arts (even if Plato often justifies these guardians' authority by opposing their rational soul's autonomy²⁷⁹ from merely cultivated/persuaded morality to the demos' merely cultivated/persuaded morality – their mere "habit" of obedience, which relies ultimately on the guardian's good laws).²⁸⁰ Thus, the legislator's instructions apply both to guardians and the people, the former expected to regulate themselves according to existing law and tradition, creating their own habits, but also to regulate others, establishing habitual obedience.

In the privacy of family life, you see, a great many trivial activities never get publicity, and under the stimulus of feelings of pleasure or pain or desire they can all too easily fly in the face of the lawgiver's recommendations and

²⁷⁷ *Timaeus*, 88e.

²⁷⁸ See my Chapter 1.

²⁷⁹ In a formulation disturbingly similar to Kant's, Rawls,' and Habermas,' Plato's authoritarianism is, in this sense, instructive, illustrating more blatantly some of the disturbing implications of the thought of Kant and his heirs.

²⁸⁰ As Plato indicates in the final myth of the *Republic*, where a soul, returning from the heavens, having lived its previous life in "a well-ordered city and participated in virtue by strength of habit without philosophy" (*Republic*, 619c), chooses his next life in "the mightiest of tyrannies, out of stupidity and greed... without checking carefully" (619b), and later eating his own children and suffering other evils. See Samuel Scolnicov, "Plato on education as the development of reason." *Proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy*, (Boston: Paideia: Philosophy Educating Humanity, 1998), <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Anci/AnciScol.htm>.

produce citizens whose characters are varied and conflicting, which is a social evil. Now although these activities are so trivial and so common that one cannot decently arrange to punish them by law, they do tend to undermine the written statutes, because men get into the habit of repeatedly breaking rules in small matters.²⁸¹

This technique of continual and measured agitation produces an ordered and regular subject, one who will observe – whether he understands the reality and reason behind it or not – the rhythm and moderation of tradition, as established in the laws and everyday practices.

What will establish acceptance of, or acquiescence to, Platonic conceptuality and authority, then, even according to Plato, is an extensive psycho-physiological project of conditioning the subject – the strict confinement of everyday activity to produce moderation and obedience, a subjectivity that habitually "harmonizes" one's gestures/ actions with the laws of the legislator. To be sure, in the case of the philosopher this includes formal training in dialectical reasoning, in which the subject, as Derrida indicates, will be introduced to all the metaphors that are supposed to establish the superiority of the soul/ speech/ philosopher and the inferiority of the body/ writing/ demos. But this dialectical training, though it does reinforce a subjectivity that is habituated to harmonization is nevertheless only a part of a much broader cultivation project in which the subject learns from the start to hate what he ought to and love what he ought to. Plato maintains *both*: a) that knowing good laws and practices is a rational rediscovery, thus legitimizing the philosopher's authority to prescribe and survey the observance of good laws and practices to

²⁸¹ *Laws*, 788a-c.

achieve good habits – in himself and in the people; *and b*) that the foundation of knowing is *established* in the first place through the obedience of good laws and practices. The ultimate measure of the citizen is, then, his observance of good laws and practices – i.e., his measured and moderate observance of *tradition* in his relations with himself and others.²⁸²

The psycho-physiological project in Plato that is much broader than (but includes) the system of philosophical oppositions that Dodds and Derrida examine and deconstruct. Derrida is right that Plato resorts to metaphor to establish the superiority of speech and all its allied terms. Moreover, it is true that the whole project of subjectivation relies on signification. But the process by which signification achieves subjectivation needs also to be understood as a physiological process, of the effect of specific practices – in the metaphors of philosophical discourse, but also in childrearing, music, movement, and the general measured observation of tradition in all things, big and small. Insofar as Derrida's analysis remains tied to his own metaphor-ization – as "play" and "writing" – of real humans' material practices, he reinforces existing Platonic tendencies in our "philosophical" thought. Like Plato, Derrida, for the appeal of his argument, relies on the "instinctive" or conditioned, habitual, affective evaluation and identification of the good and the bad, of what one ought to love, and hate – in Derrida's case, the love of "democracy," the hate of "authoritarianism," and the evaluation of other terms by their association or dissociation with these in our own acculturation.

²⁸² "When the laws under which the people are brought up have by some heaven-sent good fortune remained unchanged over a very long period, so that no one remembers or has heard of things ever being any different, the soul is filled with such respect for tradition that it shrinks from meddling with it in any way. Somehow or other the legislator must find a method of bringing about this situation in the state" (*Laws*, 798b).

If Derrida is right that Plato (or Platonism) *has* set the terms of a western metaphysical consciousness that must violently subject the "bad," the "demos," the "body," "sophistry" and so on to the rule of the "good," the "philosopher," the "soul," "philosophy," and if this subjection is *not* legitimate but rather legitimized, as Foucault argues (and even Plato admits), through an acculturation of the subject, by means of pleasure and pain attached to "the good" and "the bad," what one ought to love and hate, then – if we want to change this consciousness – we must attend *in our time* to the psychophysiological project/ techniques that condition us. Techniques that condition us to habitually maintain traditional arrangements of power, in part by directing our attention to mere metaphors and away from the everyday practices that establish and sustain forms of authoritarianism in our day, in our own subjectivation – the moments in which perception, judgment, and behavior occurs and is reinforced or transformed in our daily techniques.

4. Kant's Dispositional Techniques: Chains in the Limbs

Affect produces a momentary loss of freedom and self-control. Passion surrenders both, and finds pleasure and satisfaction in a servile disposition. But because reason does not desist from its summons to inner freedom, the unfortunate victim is suffering under the chains from which he cannot free himself, because they have already grown into his limbs, so to speak.²⁸³

Kant proclaimed the purpose of his critical philosophy in “What is Enlightenment?” as the development of a system of human freedom, in theory and in practice. The key to the realization of this freedom was reason’s autonomous action. Indeed, rationality is only valuable because it is our means of achieving freedom. Though his opus is far from consistent, Kant devotes a great deal of energy to establishing the *purity* of reason’s “legislative” control over the passions of the body. Moreover, Kant establishes *techniques* (without calling them that) that are supposed to produce reason’s autonomy – the autonomy necessary for creating a universally legitimate morality, which would realize the freedom of all humans in society.

Much of mainstream democratic theory is consciously indebted to Kant, employing Kantian formulations of, and means for obtaining, justice. This is especially evident in Kant’s most famous and influential recent heirs – John

²⁸³ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, tr. Victor Lyle Dowdell, ed. Hans H. Rudnick, (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 174.

Rawls and Jürgen Habermas. Though Kant, Rawls and Habermas rely upon and employ Kantian techniques to encourage acceptance of a Kantian conception of justice, these techniques succeed in large part by disguising themselves – as accomplishments issuing from practical reason itself – in its respective formulations: pure practical reason, reasonableness, and communicative rationality.

But Kant's assertion of reason's autonomy from bodily passion and affect is untenable, even in terms of Kant's own theory. Kant's techniques, and their adaptations in Rawls and Habermas, accomplish not Kantian rational autonomy and universal human freedom but what in Kantian terms is a disposition of "passions" to the "uncritical" acceptance of a Kantian version of justice. In the effort to establish a subject free from the "irrationality" of "passion," Kant prescribes techniques that rely upon and cultivate this very "passion... into his limbs," as his habitual and automatic allegiance to an allegedly universal but actually particular traditional morality. If these techniques continue to be employed in our institutions and relations of political power to achieve our acquiescence, then it is incumbent on us to recognize them and their means of operation.

This chapter therefore proceeds by analyzing Kant's, and the next chapter Rawls's and Habermas's assumptions about reason, calling attention to the unavowed techniques – in the form of both sedimented, acculturated habits and their own reformatory exercises – each relies on and prescribes for obtaining a universally legitimated moral disposition. I then turn to examine the consequences of their techniques. First, Kant.

Enlightenment, says Kant, is what differentiates and frees human beings from mere animal nature. This freedom has its source in reason. Kant attempts to establish the limits and freedom of man's reason, what kind of access it has to truth and what legitimate moral principles it can establish to govern our action. Reason's freedom and moral law are opposed to natural inclinations and sensation – the phenomenal world, which is the source of our self-deception, error, and leads us to immorality and unfreedom/self-imposed immaturity. Kant sets out to establish reason's autonomy theoretically – its absolute separability from the heteronomy of nature – as a basis for demonstrating the validity of the subjection of all maxims to the categorical imperative, which is for Kant the only valid method of determining universally legitimate forms of justice/morality.

Sensibility, Understanding, Reason

According to Kant, the human mind is composed of sensibility, the understanding, and reason. Our minds do not know objects-in-themselves, but rather representations of them. Sense/sensibility imposes its own *a priori* form (specifically, space and time) on the matter of experience. Things-in-themselves are not, therefore, given to us in themselves but rather as representations, as "sensation" – i.e., syntheses/intuitions of things-in-themselves.²⁸⁴ By applying its own *a priori* categories/concepts, the understanding further synthesizes the data of sense intuition, unifying the different sensations into objects of knowledge. These two syntheses of things-in-themselves into sensations and objects of knowledge take place automatically; the object about which we reflect

²⁸⁴ "The effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by the object, is sensation" (*Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's, 1965), 65).

is already given and thought in a particular form through its prior subjection to the structure of the sensibility and the understanding. And there can be no object of thought without unifying sensibility and the understanding. "Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without the understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind.... These two powers or faculties cannot exchange their functions. The understanding is incapable of intuiting, and the senses are incapable of thinking. It is only from the united co-operation of the two that knowledge can arise."²⁸⁵

Kant defines pure reason in its theoretical application as the faculty of syllogistic reasoning / deduction. Its logical maxim is to unify more and more knowledge, moving always towards the unconditioned. Accepting the concepts and judgments of the understanding, theoretical reason seeks to unify them under the aegis of a higher principle. It thus unifies a wider and wider range of judgments under other judgments that are themselves conditioned and can be confirmed by experience.²⁸⁶

But theoretical reason does not stop with conditions that can be confirmed by the understanding and sensation – i.e., experience. Theoretical reason seeks an unconditioned – a noumena (thing-in-itself). It seeks a transcendental Idea, which cannot be confirmed by experience. At the same time, the transcendental Idea cannot be disconfirmed by experience. Noumena remain an "unknowable something"²⁸⁷ – nonparticular, nonphenomenal. Pure reason in its theoretical application cannot say that what it concludes is

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 93.

²⁸⁶ "[T]he understanding is an object for reason, as sensibility is for the understanding. To produce a systematic unity in all possible empirical operations of the understanding is the business of reason, just as the understanding unites the manifold of phenomena by means of concepts and brings them under empirical laws" (Ibid., B 672).

²⁸⁷ Ibid., B 312.

unconditioned actually exists. Noumena are thus a possibility. We can neither rule them out nor conclude that they exist.

In thus seeking the unconditioned, pure reason concludes that in order for the representation to exist as an object, it must exist as an object *for me*, and therefore must be accompanied by a unified consciousness, an *I think*.²⁸⁸ This unified consciousness is a permanent, *a priori* condition of all experience/objects of knowledge; it is therefore a transcendental unity of consciousness/ego (as opposed to a merely empirical ego, which is as disunited and manifold as the representations it accompanies). Thus, theoretical reason infers a transcendental ego, an unconditioned thinking self/subject.

Pure reason also works back from all particular causes, inferring behind them an unconditioned/uncaused (noumenal) cause responsible for the conditioned phenomena of the world. It infers spontaneous causality, or freedom. And like the transcendental ego, while we cannot prove that the free will of the transcendental ego exists, neither can we prove its impossibility, since it is not phenomenal. The laws of nature apply only to phenomenal appearances; reason is not bound by the laws of nature,²⁸⁹ and therefore as rational beings, that is, as transcendental egos/subjects, we are free. But reason can only express its freedom by providing general maxims/laws that do not

²⁸⁸ "The *I think* must be capable of accompanying all my representations. For otherwise, something could be represented in me which could not be thought at all. And this is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible or at least would be nothing to me.... Therefore every manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the *I think* in the same subject in which this manifold is found" (Ibid., B 132).

²⁸⁹ "Pure reason, as a purely intelligible faculty, is not subject to the form of time, nor consequently to the conditions of succession in time. The causality of reason in its intelligible character does not, in producing an effect, *arise* or begin to be at a certain time. For in that case it would itself be subject to the natural law of appearances, in accordance with which causal series are determined in time; and its causality would then be nature, not freedom." *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's, 1965) B (2nd ed.), 551-2.

depend on natural causality – the particularity of experience in the phenomenal world of appearances.

Kant thus establishes the possibility of the freedom of the transcendental rational ego / will, and this is the basis of reason in its practical application. Practical reason, or the rational will, is the source of moral principles / laws that are not subject to the heteronomous, empirical / phenomenal will which is under the influence of nature;²⁹⁰ it is the source of an “ought” to our action, what we *should do* (as opposed to gaining knowledge of what *is*). “[T]he ground of obligation here is to be sought not in the nature of the human being or the circumstances of the world in which he is placed, but a priori solely in concepts of pure reason.”²⁹¹ Kant’s pure ethics “borrows not the least bit from knowledge about him (anthropology), but it gives him as a rational being [transcendental ego] laws a priori.”²⁹² The study of the subjective conditions for realizing moral principles is called moral / practical anthropology – empirical truths about natural human inclinations based on experience. Kant’s moral principles, on the other hand, are provided by pure practical reason. They are in fact capable of providing an *ought* precisely because they fall outside of the phenomenal world, outside of the anthropology of what *is*. The metaphysics of morals, the ought, is meant to be *applied to* anthropology, what is. As Kant writes in “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent:”

²⁹⁰ “Moral philosophy... cannot commence with the ends man may design, and from them determine... the maxims he has to take; for in this latter event the grounds of his maxims would be experimental, which we know beget no obligation, the idea Duty and its categorical imperative taking their rise in pure reason only. Nor could we even talk of duty, were the will’s inward principles based on tentative and experimental ends, these being all selfish and egotistical” (Immanuel Kant, “Book IV.: The Metaphysical Elements of the Doctrine of Virtue” in *The Metaphysics of Ethics*, tr. J.W. Semple, ed. Rev. Henry Calderwood (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886) (3rd edition), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1443/56222>).

²⁹¹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Allen Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 5.

²⁹² Ibid.

Man is an animal that . . . has need of a master. For he certainly abuses his freedom in relation to his equals, and although as a rational creature he desires a law that establishes boundaries for everyone's freedom, his selfish animal propensities induce him to except himself from them wherever he can. He thus requires a master who will break his self-will and force him to obey a universally valid will, whereby everyone can be free. Where is he to find this master? ... The supreme guarantor should be just in himself and still be a man.²⁹³

Reason discovers the unifying/universal maxim/principle (the *a priori* element) that lies behind the moral choices of a rational being²⁹⁴ – “the supreme principle of morality,”²⁹⁵ that is, “the source of the practical principles lying *a priori* in our reason.”²⁹⁶ Kant concludes in the *Grounding* that only a will/rational freedom that acts for the sake of duty, out of reverence for this supreme/universal principle (as opposed to merely following his natural inclinations/desires, which are not motivated by law even if they happen to lead one to do good) is good.²⁹⁷ This principle can only be supreme if it admits of no particular exceptions, if it can act universally – in other words, if it is categorical. “Since I

²⁹³ Immanuel Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent,” in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, tr. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 33-4.

²⁹⁴ The moral philosopher’s task, then, is to expose the *a priori* and universal element in moral law (by inferring from common moral law), that element which can be said to characterize the morality of all noumenal/rational beings, extracting it from the phenomenal and therefore conditioned, experiential element, so that it can act as a regulative/guiding principle for all rational beings in all situations. “[T]he necessity of my actions from pure respect for the practical law is what constitutes duty, before which every other motive must give way because it is the condition of a will that is good in itself, whose worth surpasses everything. Thus in the moral cognition of common human reason we have attained to its principle” (Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Allen Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 19.

²⁹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Allen Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 8.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁹⁷ “There is nothing it is possible to think of anywhere in the world, or indeed anything at all outside it, that can be held to be good without limitation, excepting only a good will” (*Ibid.*, 9).

have robbed the will of every impulse that could have arisen from the obedience to any law, there is nothing left over except the universal lawfulness of the action in general which alone is to serve the will as its principle, i.e., I ought never to conduct myself except so that I could also will that my maxim become a universal law."²⁹⁸ Because our subjective wills as empirical/phenomenal subjects can be inconsistent with universality, which is the objective principle of morality, universality presents itself as an imperative/obligation, by which we may judge our particular maxims. Since this principle comes from reason alone, it is valid and binding for the will of all rational beings. When the categorical imperative is followed it leads to Kant's ideal community, his "kingdom of ends" – a "systematic combination of rational beings through communal objective laws,"²⁹⁹ a kingdom that "would actually be brought about through maxims, the rule of which is prescribed by the categorical imperatives of all rational beings, if they were universally followed."³⁰⁰

The categorical imperative is thus an expression of our freedom/autonomy as rational wills; the autonomy of the will is, for Kant, "the supreme principle of morality,"³⁰¹ "sole principle of all moral laws and of duties in keeping with them."³⁰² The rational will must "be regarded by itself as free, i.e., the will of a rational being can be a will of its own only under the idea of freedom and must therefore with a practical aim be attributed to all rational beings."³⁰³ The phenomenal sphere is thus left under the law of nature, of

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 18.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 51.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 56.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 58.

³⁰² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 30.

³⁰³ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Allen Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 65.

causality. Freedom on the other hand applies only to the intelligible world, things in themselves. The subject is both conscious of himself as determined in the time conditions of the mechanical system of nature *and* “conscious of himself as a thing in itself, also views his existence also *insofar as it does not stand under conditions of time* and himself as determinable only through laws that he gives himself by reason.”³⁰⁴ The empirical, heteronomous will, on the other hand, is “opposed to the principle of obligation”³⁰⁵ and “the source of all ungenue principles of morality.”³⁰⁶ In other words, because freedom of the will/practical reason’s ability to give a law to itself is precisely noumenal and not phenomenal, morality (acting according to a principle provided by pure practical reason) must be derived from the general (abstract, negative, limit) concept of a free rational being, and *not* from consideration of actual phenomenological, “anthropological” persons. Kant says in *The Metaphysical Elements of the Doctrine of Virtue*, “the instincts of man’s physical nature give birth to obstacles which hinder and impede him in the execution of his duty.”³⁰⁷ Likewise all particular differences; pure reason is universal and can therefore provide a principle of morality that is universally valid; it is what every one, employing his pure reason, should arrive at. Even the critique that Kant carries out is therefore not the product of his own particular and situated mind – the phenomenological, physical person, Immanuel Kant, but rather what universal pure reason in everyone should produce. “Reason” itself dictates a categorical imperative for moral action, an imperative that identifies the operation of pure

³⁰⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 82.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁰⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Allen Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 58.

³⁰⁷ Immanuel Kant, “Book IV: The Metaphysical Elements Of The Doctrine Of Virtue” in *The Metaphysics of Ethics*, tr. J.W. Semple, ed. Rev. Henry Calderwood (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886) (3rd edition), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1443/56222>.

reason as the same in everyone: "Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law."³⁰⁸

The individual rational being's abstraction from his own and others' particularity thus guarantees, for Kant, that he will adopt principles and laws that are valid for every rational being – defined in terms of his universal rational quality and *not* in the phenomenal particularity of his own body and environment. The individual can legitimately assume that any maxim that he would will to be a universal law is valid for everyone, since that is what he as a rational being would have arrived at himself.

In fact, however, despite Kant's claims that morality can only legitimately be founded on reason's autonomy, he admits that reason needs help from outside, that it is not in fact autonomous. It has its prerequisite techniques. Paul Saurette, in *The Kantian Imperative*, discusses how in his lectures on education Kant treats education not as the discovery of the inherent rationality of beings, and therefore of *a priori* knowledge, as the rest of his critical project would lead us to expect, but rather "a process of experimentation in modes of cultivation and learning."³⁰⁹ Man, Kant writes, is "not by nature a moral being. He only becomes a moral being when his reason has developed ideas of duty and law."³¹⁰ But this development is not a question of "recognition" by reason, but a process of *cultivation* so that these ideas become *second nature*, automatic. According to Kant, "Providence has not placed

³⁰⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Allen Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 37.

³⁰⁹ Paul Saurette, *The Kantian Imperative: Humiliation, Common Sense, Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 126-7.

³¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Education*, tr. Annette Churton (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 89.

goodness ready formed in [children], but merely as a tendency and without the distinction of the moral law.”³¹¹ Since children do not automatically recognize the moral law, the teacher must guide the student, framing the terms of the dialogue – supplying both the questions and the answers, which must be “committed to the pupil’s memory.”³¹² Not only does the student not automatically recognize the moral law, the fact that the student does not know what questions to ask to discover it makes Socratic dialogue insufficient as a pedagogy of this law.³¹³ Virtue, Kant admits, “cannot be *taught* merely by concepts of duty or by exhortations... but must instead be *exercised* and cultivated by efforts to combat the inner enemy [of inclinations].”³¹⁴

Cultivating the Disposition

But Kantian cultivation combats the inner enemy of inclinations not by means of autonomous reason but through other inclinations, as Saurette points out. Cultivation, according to Kant, is only permanently effective – only creates a second nature – when it uses affective forces in particular, the “child’s desire to be loved and respected.”³¹⁵ Here, humiliation is a particularly effective technique for cultivating the child’s habit/memory: “for instance, when we humiliate the child by treating him coldly and distantly.”³¹⁶ For Kant, there is

³¹¹ Ibid., 11.

³¹² Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 222.

³¹³ In addition to the evidence of the *Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Lectures on Education*, we must note that Kant also makes this point in *The Metaphysical Ethics*, where Kant’s moral catechism has the instructor questioning “out of the reason of his scholar what he wishes to teach him; and if, by hazard, this last cannot answer, then the other dexterously suggests to him the responses” (“Book IV: The Metaphysical Elements Of The Doctrine Of Virtue” in *The Metaphysics of Ethics*, tr. J.W. Semple, ed. Rev. Henry Calderwood (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886) (3rd edition), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1443/56222>.

³¹⁴ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 221.

³¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Education*, tr. Annette Churton (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 89.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 87-8.

not in children a “pre-existing recognition of the moral law that necessarily humiliates them and inspires the moral will.”³¹⁷ Only by taking advantage of the child’s affective forces, that is, by taking advantage of the parent’s and then teacher’s phenomenal/empirical position of authority over the child, can one transform the child’s undisciplined and wanton desire into the stable recognition of the moral law required for humiliation to function automatically in adult society.

Besides coldness and distance from parent to child, Saurette indicates how for Kant the practice of Christian prayer is particularly useful in cultivating humiliation. In general the practices of Christianity are related “to dispositions conformable to” the moral concepts of practical reason.³¹⁸ Prayer as a means of informing the omniscient of one’s inner condition is of course useless; God knows everything already. Instead, what is important is

the heartfelt wish which is the spirit of prayer... [that is, in] the contemplation of the profound wisdom of the divine creation in the smallest things, and of its majesty in the great... this contemplation is a power which cannot only transport the mind into that sinking mood, called adoration, *annihilating men*, as it were, in their own eyes; it is also, in respect of its own moral determination, so *soul-elevating* a power....³¹⁹

In prayer, as in education, children should be taught to memorize set forms – in specific language that will aid the imagination in “quickenings” the disposition to humility:

[I]t is therefore the more necessary to inculcate set forms of prayer in children (who still stand in need of the letter) even in their earliest years, so

³¹⁷ Paul Saurette, *The Kantian Imperative: Humiliation, Common Sense, Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 128.

³¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (New York: Harper, 1960), 182.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

that the language (even the language spoken inwardly, yea, even the attempts to attune the mind to the comprehension of God, which is to be brought nearer to intuition) may possess here no value in itself, but may be used to *quicken the disposition to a course of life well-pleasing to God*, those words being but an aid to the imagination.³²⁰

This quickening of the mind occurs by means of affects (in this case, pleasure) consonant with the sensations produced in the contemplation of an object connected to a rational/moral idea.³²¹ Kant alleges that the object, here God, of contemplation affects the imagination to bring up a wealth of thoughts associated with the rational idea of God. But Kant also makes clear that these thoughts are first circumscribed by and associated with each other by the "cultivation" (i.e., mechanical memorization) of specific language in memory – even though memory is, being heteronomous and not purely rational, one of "the inferior mental faculties... the inferior powers of the understanding."³²² As opposed to the wealth of thoughts that Kant says are supposed to be "quickened" in the imagination by the moral/rational idea, the "very lively" imagination of children is to be "curbed and brought under rule," "confine itself to certain figures," and precisely *not* be "expanded or made more intense."³²³

³²⁰ Ibid., 182. Italics mine.

³²¹ The non-beautiful (i.e., immoral) object, on the other hand, "leaves nothing behind as an [I]dea and makes the spirit dull, the object gradually disgusting, and the mind dissatisfied with itself and moody because it is conscious that in reason's judgment its attunement is contrapurposive" (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, tr. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1987), 196).

³²² Immanuel Kant, *Education*, tr. Annette Churton (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 78. Memory, which preserves the mental impressions that first guide the understanding, has best retention when things are learned mechanically, and so language should be learned mechanically (Ibid., 72).

³²³ Ibid., 78.

Thus, the moral / rational disposition is accomplished not by the autonomous action of reason, but by the fear-motivated mechanical memorization of set forms with specific language involved in prayer and education in general – specific linguistic signs that evoke a passion that humiliates men (children and adults) to the point of “annihilation” as particular, phenomenal men, while “elevating” them as noumenal souls, as rational beings.

Kant argues that once these techniques have taken hold in the subject, once the subject has been attracted “by means of its own advantage or to alarm it by fear of harm,” *then* the soul may be motivated by the “pure moral motive” – “the motive which – not only because it is the only one that can ground a character (a consistent practical cast of mind in accordance with unchangeable maxims) but also because it teaches the human being to feel his own dignity – gives his mind power, unexpected even by himself, to tear himself away from all sensible attachments so far as they want to rule over him.”³²⁴ Saurette makes the plausible argument that what Kant here, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, defines as a pure moral incentive so as to make it fit within the Kantian moral system is in fact merely a “semi-conceptualization” of the cultivated / coerced feeling of humiliation – now conditioned to habitually / automatically recognize the moral law, and in addition moral exemplars, as a reference for evaluating our own actions, and ultimately the source of a feeling of “respect for ourselves” as rational beings. Thus when Kant writes that in the young pupil’s catechism, “it is of the most vital moment that the behests of duty be not based on any advantages or inconveniences springing from their observance... no, not

³²⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 126.

even on the good results accruing to others; but that abstraction being made from all such, those behests be immediately grounded on the pure moral law itself," he immediately adds that "It is the *shame*... that is at all points to be insisted on."³²⁵ (Perhaps, for example, in the manner in which that professor I discuss in the "Introduction" above seemed to insist upon it for those 300 or so students, some of whom I was teaching assistant to.)

Thus, humiliation (on the basis of fear) does not cease to play a role in the cultivation of morality with the end of childhood. The uncultivated mind *in general* needs "some preparatory guidance... to attract it by means of its own advantage or to alarm it by fear of harm."³²⁶ Even once the feeling of "respect for ourselves" – the moral feeling – has become second nature (by conditioning through Kantian techniques of humiliation), it continues to operate on the basis of fear: "when a human being dreads nothing more than to find, on self-examination, that he is worthless and contemptible in his own eyes, then every good moral disposition can be grafted onto it because this is the best, and indeed the sole, guard to prevent ignoble and corrupting impulses from breaking into the mind."³²⁷ According to Saurette, in Kantian cultivation, "since respect for ourselves relies on a disciplined and cultivated fear of humiliation, it is intimately connected with the force of humiliation not only for its conditions of possibility, but for its motivational force *every time it is called forth*."³²⁸ Fear as humiliation is thus ubiquitous – in its direct, coercive application from outside,

³²⁵ Immanuel Kant, "Book IV: The Metaphysical Elements Of The Doctrine Of Virtue" in *The Metaphysics of Ethics*, tr. J.W. Semple, ed. Rev. Henry Calderwood (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886) (3rd edition), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1443/56222>.

³²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 126.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

³²⁸ Paul Saurette, *The Kantian Imperative: Humiliation, Common Sense, Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 134.

as a cultivated second nature, or as signs applied to this second nature to elicit its habitual "moral" passions – in the creation and maintenance of Kantian morality. Though Kant differentiates between them, his catechetic didactics (which "interrogat[es] out of the pupil notions of duty... from his memory, when he has been previously taught how to answer") – established ultimately in defenseless fear (turned into mechanical memory) – appears to supply the notions of duty that are supposed in Kant's dialogic/Socratic didactics to be merely "developed" from their already "latent" presence in the pupil's mind.

The Imperative

Kantian techniques of humiliation/respect (catalogued by Saurette above), then, achieve the cultivation of what in Kant's schema are certain sensations, impulses, inclinations, redefined by Kant as noumenally/purely morally motivated (on the one hand) and the repression of other inclinations, defined by Kant as the particular and phenomenal – "ignoble and corrupting impulses." Beginning from childhood, Kant's techniques are meant to cultivate a will to obey, a disposition of docility. In this sense, Kantian techniques are fundamentally conservative (and amenable to authoritarian systems of power) – they, as Kant says of prayerful adoration, work by "annihilating men," or, more precisely, annihilating those parts of men that would question existing authority and therefore power relations. The lesson of humiliation is that if one wants to exercise power, it is only legitimate to exercise it as would a noumenal/rational being – repressing those particular phenomenal desires/concerns that might undermine existing relations of power. Thus, at the very moment power relations are to be determined, the subject is humiliated, or humiliates himself, adopting an attitude that automatically (i.e., autonomically,

through fear) delegitimizes consideration/ expression of particular desires that might undermine existing relations of power – between parent and child, and in general between whatever can be made to appear as the form of universality and rationality (on the one hand) and whatever can be made to seem by juxtaposition mere particular inclination and desire (on the other).

Man, as part of a physical system (homo phenomenon, animal rationale), is an animal of very little moment, and has but a common value with beasts, and the other products of the soil. Even that he is superior to those by force of his understanding, gives him only a higher external value in exchange, when brought to the market along with other cattle, and sold as wares. But man considered as a person, *i.e.*, as a the subject of ethico-active reason, is exalted beyond all price... he is invested with an internal dignity... in name of which he extorts reverence for his person from every other finite Intelligent throughout the universe, and is entitled to compare himself with all such, and to deem himself their equal... The consciousness and feeling of one's little worth, when compared with the law, is ethical humility.³²⁹

The invocation of the categorical imperative works in the same way as humiliation and prayer, reinforcing the subject's conditioning to habitual docility. Rather than being the action of autonomous reason, it is another technique of humiliation. Kant ends up founding the moral disposition consonant with the categorical imperative and rational subjectivity through what in his terminology must be defined as heteronomic technique – *i.e.*, by relying on fear invested in techniques of self-humiliation as the foundation of

³²⁹ "Book IV: The Metaphysical Elements Of The Doctrine Of Virtue" in *The Metaphysics of Ethics*, tr. J.W. Semple, ed. Rev. Henry Calderwood (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886) (3rd edition), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1443/56222>.

what was supposed to issue from pure practical reason.³³⁰ The "pure moral motivation"³³¹ that was to issue from noumenal selfhood as the ground of practical rational autonomy – and Kant is emphatic on this point³³² – remains forever elusive. And this appears to undermine the legitimacy of the Kantian moral-ethical project of achieving rational autonomy – i.e., the realization of human freedom, man's emergence from his own self-imposed immaturity. Kant clearly states that when readiness to act virtuously "degenerates into habit, i.e., when the uniformity of custom slides into mechanical necessity, by the too frequent iteration of an act, such inveterate aptitude is no product of freedom, and is by consequence no ethical facility;"³³³ "were the exercise of virtue to become habit, the agent would thereby undergo the loss of freedom."³³⁴ Indeed, Kant's reliance on heteronomic techniques that make habitual a deferential relationship to authority strikes an odd and contradictory figure when held up

³³⁰ Compare Kant's words in "Book IV: The Metaphysical Elements Of The Doctrine Of Virtue": "Ethics must comprehend duty, to observe which, no one can be constrained physically by others... it being absurd to talk of force, when question is made of the practical autonomy of the agent himself" (Ibid.).

³³¹ "THE MORAL SENSE. This feeling is the susceptibility for pleasure or displacency, upon the bare consciousness of the harmony or of the discrepancy of our actions with the law. Now there can be no duty either to have or to acquire any such feeling; for all consciousness of obligation presupposes it... and everyone must, as a moral being, have such originally within him: an obligation in regard to it can only ordain that this sensible effect of the law be cultivated and invigorated by the admiration of its unknown and inscrutable original, which can be effected by showing that this emotion, when separated from all admixture of pathognomic attractions, is then most enlivened by the naked energies of reason" (Ibid.); The "duty owed by man to himself of advancing his ethical perfection... consists... in the purity of his moral sentiments, where, freed from all admixture of sensitive excitement, the law is itself alone the spring of conduct..." (Ibid.).

³³² "It is, then, a duty incumbent upon mankind... to develop himself more and more from the animal characters stamped upon him by his brute nature... to carry the culture of his will to the purest grade of ethic sentiment, a state and tone of soul where the law itself is the immediate *mobile* of the will, and where duty is discharged because it is so. And this state and tone of the soul is an inward ethical perfection, and is called THE MORAL SENSE, because it is a feeling of the effect wrought by legislative reason upon man's active power of conforming to the law" (Ibid.). And, further, "man is under an obligation to virtue, AS ETHIC STRENGTH; for although the power of mastering every opposing excitement of the sensory may, and indeed must, be absolutely postulated – the will's causality being free – nevertheless this power is in its strength a matter of acquisition, viz., where the force of the ethical spring has been advanced by the contemplation of the dignity of our pure rational law..." (Ibid.).

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid.

beside his entirely negative discussion of the dogmatic and formulaic restrictions of man's reason.

Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why so great a proportion of men, long after nature has released them from alien guidance (*naturaliter maiorennnes*), nonetheless gladly remain in lifelong immaturity, and why it is so easy for others to establish themselves as their guardians... The guardians who have so benevolently taken over the supervision of men have carefully seen to it that the far greatest part of them (including the entire fair sex) regard taking the step to maturity as very dangerous... Thus, it is difficult for any individual man to work himself out of the immaturity that has all but become his nature.³³⁵

Kant *himself* thus points to precisely the danger involved in habitual techniques that aim to create in the subject a permanent state of humiliation and shame. "Habit," he writes in *The Metaphysical Elements of the Doctrine of Virtue*, "is the establishment of a continual and permanent appetite, apart from any maxim, and springs from abandonment to repeated gratification, and is merely a mechanism of the sensory, and not any principle of cogitation; and to wean one's self from it, is usually more difficult than to bring it forth."³³⁶ Further, Kant says that while "affect" (e.g., shock or rage) is passing, immediate, and indicates merely a lack of virtue, "passion" is conditioning to habitually act

³³⁵ Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, tr. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1983), 41.

³³⁶ "Book IV: The Metaphysical Elements Of The Doctrine Of Virtue" in *The Metaphysics of Ethics*, tr. J.W. Semple, ed. Rev. Henry Calderwood (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886) (3rd edition), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1443/56222>.

"according to a purpose prescribed... by... inclination,"³³⁷ and thus "properly evil."³³⁸

If affect is a delirium, then passion is an illness that abhors all medication.

Therefore, passion is by far worse than all those transitory affects, which stir themselves at least to the good intention of improvement; instead passion is an enchantment which also rejects improvement... Passions are cancerous sores for pure practical reason, and most of them are incurable because the sick person does not want to be cured and avoids the dominion of the principles by which alone a cure could be effected.³³⁹

Passion surrenders both "freedom and self-control," and "finds pleasure and satisfaction in a servile disposition... the unfortunate victim is suffering under the chains from which he cannot free himself, because they have already grown into his limbs."³⁴⁰

But though Kant says passions are evil and along with affect constitute an "illness... of mind," the techniques of humiliation that Kant recommends appear to aim at precisely the conditioning of feeling into the habitual passions that characterize the disposition of a morally lawful subject. Kantian techniques of humiliation work by the same route as the conditioning of the passions. According to Kant, in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, the process leading to human action takes the following path: The subject experiences a feeling of pleasure/pain. Pleasure gives rise via feeling to a "habitual desire" or

³³⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, tr. Victor Lyle Dowdell, ed. Hans H. Rudnick, (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 173.

³³⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 208.

³³⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, tr. Victor Lyle Dowdell, ed. Hans H. Rudnick, (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 172-3; 7:265-66.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 174.

inclination³⁴¹ of desire for that pleasure (i.e., the object associated with pleasure). Third, the connection of the pleasure and habitual desire/inclination for it (on the basis of the understanding's judgment that the pleasure of the object as a rule brings about this desire)³⁴² constitutes an "interest." This interest (habitual desire for a particular pleasure-giving object) leads to a consciousness of one's power to act or not act according to desire – i.e., choice. Finally, the subject can then exercise his human will, his free will; though "affected by sensuous impulse or stimulus... [he] is not *determined* by them... The Freedom of the act of volitional Choice, is its independence of being *determined* by sensuous impulses or stimuli."³⁴³ In the case of passion, this freedom is barely or perhaps not at all exercised; "the inclination that can hardly, or not at all, be controlled by reason is passion."³⁴⁴ Passion "*hinders* the use of reason to compare, at a particular moment of choice, a specific inclination against the sum of all inclinations."³⁴⁵ Kant maintains that passion involves reason in a sense: because "it always presupposes a maxim of the subject, namely to act according to a purpose prescribed for him by his inclination, passion is always associated with the purposes of reason, and one cannot attribute passions to mere animals any more than to purely rational beings."³⁴⁶ But the passionate and therefore not purely rational being is the mere conditioning of *habit* to act according to a desire because it achieves a certain pleasure for the empirical ego; the *purely*

³⁴¹ "Habitual desire... constitutes Inclination," (Immanuel Kant, "Chapter III. Introduction to the Metaphysic of Morals; and Preface to the Metaphysical Elements of Ethics," in *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, trans. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, B.D., Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Dublin, 4th revised ed. (London: Kongmans, Green and Co., 1889), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/360/61860>).

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid., 4.

³⁴⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, tr. Victor Lyle Dowdell, ed. Hans H. Rudnick, (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 155.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 172. Italics mine.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 173.

rational being, on the other hand, chooses according to the principles of practical reason.

But, though Kant insists on the absolute distinction between practical reason and passion, the moral disposition he says results from practical reason ends up coming from turning inclination into habitual passion. The fact that passion provides the motivation that practical reason was supposed to at least suggests that practical reason is not autonomous or necessarily distinguishable from passion. Passion possesses the stability that was supposed to characterize pure practical reason: "since the passions can be coupled with the calmest reflection, one can easily see that they must neither be rash like the emotions, nor stormy and transitory; instead, they must take roots gradually and even be able to coexist with reason."³⁴⁷ (Or, perhaps, even to *be* reason?) It would seem to follow, then, that principles, insofar as they are defined as the creation of practical reason, are also not necessarily distinguishable from maxims, which were supposed to be the product of mere understanding, rather than reason. This interpenetration of reason and passion, principle and maxim, and the ultimate reliance of moral dispositions on techniques that create habits in the subject, suggests that the Kantian system distracts from and conceals those techniques which are the actual ground of our conceptions and practices of justice, including the technical work of conditioning habits this system itself carries out.

Kant's techniques of humiliation, including the invocation of the categorical imperative, create what Kant must call a "passionate," heteronomous subject, but a subject who is nevertheless simultaneously (again, in Kant's

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 172.

terms) precisely Kant's "rational being." These techniques cover the whole life of the subject – at first in childhood by means of "the child's desire to be loved and respected,"³⁴⁸ in general on the unformed mind "by means of its own advantage or to alarm it by fear of harm,"³⁴⁹ and, at whatever age, by means of specific language (for example, in prayer, but also including the language of the categorical imperative) associated with – i.e., on the foundation of – this primary conditioning in humiliation during childhood. It appears that, from a Kantian psychological perspective, the Kantian moral terminology exerts its effect by means of habitual inclinations – the understanding's gradual pairing of desire with the pleasure (initially of parental love and affection) associated with terms such as "duty," "respect," "reason," "soul," "good," and conversely of aversion with displeasure with terms such as "inclination," "passion," "affect," "body," "evil." The categorical imperative – the command/imperative to evaluate and choose one's practices according to preestablished moral principles – is just such a series of signs prompting the conditioned behavior (acquiescence to authority) associated (through prior conditioning) with these signs. The invocation of the principles prompts the habitual desire/inclination/passion which guides judgment and therefore choice regarding the behavior/practice in question. Insofar as these commands/imperatives successfully prompt the conditioned behavior, they reinforce it and therefore act as techniques in their own right (even though the conditioning they effect is subsequent to and dependent for its effect on prior conditioning).

³⁴⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Education*, tr. Annette Churton (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 89.

³⁴⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 126.

In other words, by making inclinations into habits, pleasure (the rewards that come with love and acceptance; the removal of punishing coldness and distance) comes to be associated with a desire for and disposition of humility – i.e., with what is called good, with reason, self-respect, universal, obedience. Whereas, aversive feelings (punishments) come to be associated with what is called evil, passion, self-abuse, merely particular, disobedience. The moral sensibility / disposition required by the categorical imperative is thus made into habit at a dangerous price – the price of autonomy,³⁵⁰ and thus also of critique – the very freedom that was to guard against man's self-imposed immaturity and self-enslavement / docility.

The silence and coldness of Kantian rationalism, as embodied in the invocation of the categorical imperative, toward the "particular" concerns of "phenomenal" life ensures, at the very moment relations of power are being determined, that attention will be turned away from those heteronomic / phenomenal (and anthropological) techniques (and the pre-existing relations of domination, as opposed to our alleged noumenal equality, prerequisite to these techniques' application) which in fact lay the ground for its acceptance. The invocation of the categorical imperative thus achieves its own acceptance – its domination of the procedural terms of the determination of morality, of the acceptable forms of power relations – by diverting attention from both the techniques of humiliation that are its foundation (i.e., that create habit in the obedient subject) as well as itself as just such a technique. Just as Kantian prayer requires memorization of the supremacy and legitimacy of God,

³⁵⁰ That the moral principles and disposition toward them that Kant purports to be the product and characteristic of pure practical reason appear to have their foundation rather in the very passion that Kant projects as opposed to pure practical reason has deep ramifications for Kant's project in general... and suggests a different definition of reason than the one he exerts so much energy to retain. (We shall see below whether the same is not true for Rawls' and Habermas' iterations of the Kantian project.)

the categorical imperative works by memorization of one's own legitimacy / recognizability as a loved and respectable being only as a rational, noumenal self, and thus by delegitimation and repression of one's phenomenal, desiring self. In other words, the invocation of the categorical imperative is successful to the extent that it conceals the concealment it carries out.

The Kantian procedure for determining power relations, then, works precisely upon the body, harnessing the power of fear to condition its docility, its automatic obedience, while at the same time holding out the fantasy of power in the form of self-identification with ideal noumenal rationality and therefore political autonomy, with absolute control of unacceptable "inclinations." The practice of this identificatory fantasy is the moment of "annihilation" of the particular / phenomenal self, of particular desires that might disrupt existing relations of power, particular desires that are identified discursively (through techniques of humiliation) with the "body," "sense," "passion." Ironically, the Kantian technique relies precisely on palpable fear to achieve and perpetuate its own operation in the form of the invocation of the categorical imperative.

The Kantian and neoKantian concealment of its own bodily technique does not mean that this technique does not continue to operate, but simply that its operation and its effects remain opaque. If we are to judge Kant's project in its own terms, in other words, in terms of its ability to achieve freedom as reason's self-legislation, then it seems clear that it fails to do so. In Kantian oppositional terms, reason, it appears, remains rather in the grip of fear. If this is true, then Kant's technique (the practice of self- and other- judgment according to the categorical imperative) effects precisely *less* "critical" self-legislation, in other words, less of Kant's goal – human freedom.

If in fact it is techniques that account for the creation of subjects' habits and their perception, that structure our sensibility and understanding, and even our reason (which can no longer therefore be conceived in Kantian terms),³⁵¹ then we must come to a different understanding of reason than the one Kant provides, one which heeds technique as an important determinant of thought, and therefore of our perspective on what is moral, on what arrangement of political power is acceptable.

³⁵¹ That is, ruling out ahead of time the reality of and objectivity about the phenomenal realm, on the one hand, and simultaneously assuming, on the other, the reality and freedom of an inaccessible noumenal realm, thereby subordinating the examination and application of techniques to the tyranny of a fantasy of absolute control by pure practical reason.

5. Rawls' "Inexplicable Inhibitions" and Habermas' "Motivational Deficit"

Kant's admonition to transcend and dominate the heteronomy of bodily inclinations and affects with pure and practical reason, in order to achieve freedom, is taken up by Rawls and Habermas in their moral / rational projects. An examination of each illustrates the way in which mainstream democratic theory, still in the hold of the Kantian paradigm, continues to conceal the political significance / effect of techniques that work on the body to condition the subject's habits while simultaneously using these techniques to achieve a subject who habitually accepts and endorses their theories – theories that establish the justice of Kantian arrangements of power, in the name of freedom.

Rawls' "Inexplicable Inhibitions"

It is probably safe to say that John Rawls' writing is indicative of and has simultaneously helped determine the mainstream in contemporary democratic theory. It has, at least since the publication of *A Theory of Justice*, "come to define a substantial portion of the agenda for Anglo-American political philosophy, and increasingly influence political philosophy in the rest of the world."³⁵²

Rawls' project is self-consciously inspired by Kantian procedures for arriving at a conception of justice. Rawls' writes that his conception of justice is "highly Kantian in nature."³⁵³ Like Kant, Rawls believes that to be just / legitimate (to achieve democratic freedom and equality), the basic

³⁵² Samuel Freeman, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

³⁵³ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005), viii-xviii. (Hereafter cited as *TJ*.)

structure of society³⁵⁴ – must express the basic moral principles (principles of justice) of free and equal rational persons. The “starting points” (which are commonly accepted by free and equal citizens) of Rawls’ constructivist procedure for determining the “substantive principles specifying the content of political right and justice” are “the basic conceptions of society and person, the principles of practical reason, and the public role of a political conception of justice.”³⁵⁵ These all owe their inspiration to Kant’s idea of autonomous practical reason: “Political constructivism accepts [Kant’s] view that the principles of practical reason originate... in our moral consciousness as informed by practical reason. They derive from nowhere else. Kant is the historical source of the idea that reason, both theoretical and practical, is self-originating and self-authenticating.”³⁵⁶

And, as in Kant, the free, rational being for Rawls is governed by autonomous practical reason – i.e., a noumenal self, motivated by the universal moral law as evinced in his moral intuitions. It is the autonomy of this reason, which can arrive independently at principles to live by, that makes society stable, since it is free of “those contingencies which set men at odds and allow them to be guided by their prejudice.”³⁵⁷ In *Theory*, “the morality of principles” is the proper basis of the principles of justice because of its freedom from the contingencies of the moralities of authority and association. In the preceding stage of “morality of authority,” the child “is not in a position to assess the

³⁵⁴ The basic structure includes the constitution, legal and trial procedures, property, laws governing markets and economic production and exchange, and the family (as the site of reproduction and education. Because the the rules and practices constituting the basic structure strongly affect the personality, desires, plans, and future prospects of everyone who lives in them and ultimately their capacities to exercise their basic rights and liberties, the basic structure is the “primary subject of justice” (*TJ*, 7/6 rev.).

³⁵⁵ John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 104. (Hereafter cited as *PL*.)

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

³⁵⁷ *TJ*, 19.

validity of the precepts and injunctions addressed to him by those in authority, in this case his parents."³⁵⁸ His actions are "motivated initially by certain instincts and desires, and his aims are regulated (if at all) by rational self-interest (in a suitably restricted sense)."³⁵⁹ His love of his parents is "unconscious and instinctive," based on his attachment to whatever "contributes to his preservation."³⁶⁰ He "accepts their judgment of him and he will be inclined to judge himself as they do when he violates their injunctions."³⁶¹

The "collection of precepts" that constitutes the morality of authority is superceded by the "moral standards appropriate to the individual's role in the various associations (e.g., family, school, occupational group, society, and nation) to which he belongs" and which constitute the "morality of association." These standards require "increasingly greater intellectual judgment and finer moral discriminations" (e.g., the ability to take another's point of view and perspective), involving attachment (and therefore guilt in relation to) other association members. But these standards, or ideals (of justice, fairness, trust, integrity, etc.), are still, like the precepts of the morality of authority, "impressed upon him by the approval or disapproval of those in authority, or by the other members of the group."³⁶²

It is when "a *person* becomes attached to these highest-order principles [of justice, fairness and so on] themselves"³⁶³ that he displays the morality of principles, and is truly morally free.

Individuals in their role as *citizens*³⁶⁴ with a full understanding of the content of the principles of justice may be moved to act upon them largely because

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 463.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, Fn 9.

³⁶¹ Ibid, 465.

³⁶² Ibid, 467-8.

³⁶³ Ibid, 473.

of their bonds to particular persons and an attachment to their own society. Once a morality of principles is accepted, however, moral attitudes are no longer connected solely with the well-being and approval of particular individuals and groups, but are shaped by a conception of right chosen *irrespective of these contingencies*. Our moral sentiments display an independence from the accidental circumstances of our world.³⁶⁵

The morality of principles dictates respecting each other as *persons* (as in Kant), recognizing each other as ruled by autonomous practical reason, which gives a universal moral law, and thus avoids the instabilities that plague mere citizens – individual consciences motivated by their particular attachments to other individuals: "We are not literally to respect the conscience *of an individual*. Rather we are to respect him *as a person* and we do this by limiting his actions, when this proves necessary, only as the principles we would both acknowledge permit... There is no violation of our autonomy so long as [the] principles [belonging to the conception of justice] are properly followed."³⁶⁶ (Persons are predictable, individual citizens are not.)

Rawls' procedure for arriving at these principles and the corresponding perspective of the Kantian noumenal self, or rational being, is called "reflective equilibrium."³⁶⁷ In reflective equilibrium, a person as a rational being examines his considered judgments – his intuitions/sense of justice (or moral

³⁶⁴ Italics mine.

³⁶⁵ *TJ*, 475. Italics mine. Rawls continues, "the meaning of this independence being given by the description of the original position and its Kantian interpretation" (*TJ*, 475).

³⁶⁶ *TJ*, 519. Italics mine.

³⁶⁷ See Sharon Krause, "Desiring Justice: Motivation and Justification in Rawls and Habermas," *Contemporary Political Theory* 4, no. 4 (November 2005), 363-385. Rawls, Sharon Krause notes, called *Theory* a "theory of moral sentiments... setting out the principles governing our moral powers, or, more specifically, our sense of justice," which, in the form of "our considered judgments," is supposed to provide the reference point against which "conjectured principles can be checked" through the practice of "reflective equilibrium" (*TJ* 51).

consciousness) - to *discover* the regulative principles and the conception of justice³⁶⁸ that lie behind them. The original position realizes this; in it, we all have equal power and freedom to realize our interests, and we take the position of the Kantian noumenal self, the universal rational being, abstracted from our phenomenal particularity; the

description of the original position interprets the point of view of noumenal selves, of what it means to be a free and equal rational being... The original position may be viewed... as a procedural interpretation of Kant's conception of autonomy and the categorical imperative. The principles regulative of the Kingdom of ends are those that would be chosen in this position, and the description of this situation enables us to explain the sense in which acting from these principles expresses our nature as free and equal rational persons.³⁶⁹

Rawls writes in *Political Liberalism* that the participants are "rationally autonomous representatives of citizens in society," constrained by a "veil of ignorance:" "[T]he veil of ignorance' means that the parties do not know the social position, or the conception of the good (its particular aims and

³⁶⁸ *First Principle*: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all. *Second Principle*: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity. *First Priority Rule* (The Priority of Liberty): The principles of justice are to be ranked in lexical order and therefore liberty can be restricted only for the sake of liberty. There are two cases: (a) a less extensive liberty must strengthen the total system of liberty shared by all; (b) a less than equal liberty must be acceptable to those with the lesser liberty. *Second Priority Rule* (The Priority of Justice over Efficiency and Welfare) The second principle of justice is lexically prior to the principle of efficiency and to that of maximizing the sum of advantages; and fair opportunity is prior to the difference principle. There are two cases: (a) an inequality of opportunity must enhance the opportunities of those with the lesser opportunity; (b) an excessive rate of saving must on balance mitigate the burden of those bearing this hardship. *General Conception*: All social primary goods – liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect – are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advantage of the least favored" (TJ, 302-3).

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 255-56.

attachments), or the realized abilities and psychological propensities, and much else, of the persons they represent."³⁷⁰

In representing the abstract, rationally autonomous being, our self-interest in the original position is universalized and noumenalized, by removing us from the particular interest of our own and others' lives ("those contingencies which set men at odds and allow them to be guided by their prejudice"³⁷¹) and taking on as our goal the abstract interest of all individuals as autonomous rational beings, "[u]ncumbered by the singularities of the circumstances in which we find ourselves."³⁷²

The veil of ignorance prevents us from shaping our moral view to accord with our own particular attachments and interests. We do not look at the social order from our situation but take up a point of view that everyone can adopt on an equal footing. In this sense we look at our society and our place in it objectively: we share a common standpoint along with others and do not make our judgments from a personal slant.³⁷³

Rawls writes, "[W]e cannot reasonably expect our views to fall into line when they are affected by the contingencies of our different circumstances." We are autonomous insofar as we act on the basis of principles that express our common nature as free and rational beings, in other words, principles that are *not* based on our particular circumstances, abilities, goals, allegiances, or attachments;³⁷⁴ "if knowledge of particulars is allowed, then the outcome is biased by arbitrary contingencies."³⁷⁵ By employing our practical reason and

³⁷⁰ *PL*, 305.

³⁷¹ *TJ*, 19.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 516.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 516-7.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 252, 515-6.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

abstracting from the specifics of our lives, we “express... our freedom from contingency and happenstance.”³⁷⁶ As in Kant, the exercise of practical reason thus expresses our rational autonomy. “This sentiment [of justice] reveals what the person is, and to compromise it is not to achieve for the self free reign but to give way to the contingencies and accidents of the world.”³⁷⁷

Thus the veil “simplif[ies] political and social questions so that the resulting balance of justice, made possible by the greater consensus, outweighs what may have been lost by ignoring certain potentially relevant aspects of moral situations.”³⁷⁸ The mutual disinterestedness – the fact that we treat others in terms of their “rights and claims”³⁷⁹ without regard to their particular interests – ensures our benevolence; in the original position, we “evaluate principles solely on the basis of general considerations.”³⁸⁰ We act so as to maximize the minimum share of primary goods that any rational being can receive in society to put in the service of realizing his freely chosen goals/ interests; “The agreement of the parties on certain definite principles and the conception of the person is represented by the original position. In this way the content of fair terms of cooperation for persons so conceived is ascertained.”³⁸¹

Like Kant's *a priori* moral principles, Rawls' two principles are used to guide the discipline of our empirical practices – what Kant called our “anthropology.” Reflective equilibrium is reached when our intuitions (as evinced in our judgments/ decisions) and the perspective of the original

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 574.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 575.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 517.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 148.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 137.

³⁸¹ *PL*, 305.

position – the rationally autonomous person - are harmonized. But the direction of this harmonization, once the principles of justice have been reached, is from principles to practices. That is, Rawls himself thus carries out the step of rational reflection to discover those principles that found our moral intuitions – "the point of view of noumenal selves." The rational being is one motivated by a morality of principles, as opposed to a morality of authority or association. We do not have to worry about the particular, cultural source of the dispositions and moral sentiments that supply our intuitions: "Any doubts that its members may entertain about the soundness of their moral sentiments when they reflect upon *how these dispositions were acquired* may be dispelled by seeing that their convictions match the principles which would be chosen in the original position or, if they do not, by *revising their judgments so that they do*."³⁸²

Rawls maintains his commitment to the original position as the device for realizing the point of view of the noumenal self – i.e., for realizing the principles of justice that guide the rational being – through both *Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*. What is new in *Political* is Rawls' concession that, given the pluralism which is supposed to characterize a liberal democracy, it is not reasonable to expect that reflective equilibrium will lead all rational beings to a comprehensive liberalism – i.e., the Kantian conclusion that they intuitively hold rational/moral autonomy as a regulative ideal, recognize each other as Kantian "persons" who should and must follow a universal moral law provided by practical reason. Given the basic liberties of freedom of thought, conscience, and association implicit to a well-ordered society, one should expect instead a

³⁸² *TJ*, 520. Italics mine. This was Kant's stated purpose in the metaphysics of morals—to move from anthropological observation to the principles of pure reason in its theoretical application and then to legislate from these principles.

variety of comprehensive doctrines – for example, utilitarianism, perfectionism, pluralism, moral relativism – many of which have their own non-liberal conceptions of justice, the ideal person and society. These persons are unlikely to be motivated by the ideal of rational autonomy that Rawls had made prerequisite to the exercise of reflective equilibrium, as embodied in the original position. To the degree that Rawls had made acceptance of the principles of justice contingent upon a Kantian "comprehensive moral view in which the ideal of autonomy has a regulative role for all of life,"³⁸³ he risked alienating potential adherents³⁸⁴ from the original position and the principles of justice it arrives at, thus undermining the *stability* of the principles. In *Political*, therefore, the conception of justice does not follow from a comprehensive liberalism's belief in moral and rational autonomy as a regulative ideal, but rather we "begin from shared fundamental ideas implicit in the public political culture in the hope of developing from them a political conception that can gain free and reasoned agreement in judgment, this agreement being *stable* in virtue of its gaining the support of a consensus of reasonable comprehensive doctrines."³⁸⁵

This political conception of justice is "freestanding" in that, even though it achieves the "overlapping consensus" of all reasonable comprehensive doctrines, it is "expounded apart from, or without reference to"³⁸⁶ any of them. We do not, says Rawls, have to rely upon the comprehensive liberal ideal of the (Kantian) moral person or any particular comprehensive doctrine's version of the person; the political conception of justice as fairness is grounded rather in our role as "citizens." Citizens "engage, not merely in activities coordinated by orders from a central authority, but in activities guided by publicly recognized

³⁸³ *PL*, 99.

³⁸⁴ Represented by his critics, notably Michael Sandel.

³⁸⁵ *PL*, 100-1. Italics mine.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

rules and procedures that those cooperating accept and regard as properly regulating their conduct.”³⁸⁷ In this way, regardless of which reasonable comprehensive doctrine they hold, citizens demonstrate their moral-rational autonomy – i.e., their possession of the two Kantian moral powers,³⁸⁸ their capacity for self-government by principle- and concept-dependent desires – to the degree required³⁸⁹ to achieve an overlapping consensus on the political conception of justice. “Citizens who affirm the political conception, and who have been *raised in and are familiar with* the fundamental ideas of the public political culture [i.e., that it will provide basic rights and the material means for their effective use³⁹⁰], find that, when they adopt its framework of deliberation their judgments converge sufficiently so that political cooperation on the basis of mutual respect can be maintained.”³⁹¹ To the extent that their comprehensive doctrines come into conflict with the political conception, the principles of justice tend to take priority:

many if not most citizens come to affirm the principles of justice incorporated into their constitution and political practice without seeing any particular connection, one way or the other, between those principles and their other views. It is possible for citizens to appreciate the good those principles accomplish both for themselves and those they care for, as well as

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 108.

³⁸⁸ Namely, 1) reasonableness: “a capacity for a sense of justice that enables them to understand, apply and to act from the reasonable principles of justice that specify fair terms of social cooperation”; and 2) rationality: “a capacity for a conception of the good... of the ends and purposes worthy of our devoted pursuit, together with an ordering of those elements to guide us over a complete life” (Ibid., 103-4).

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 109.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 156-7.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 156. *Italics mine.* (Both the religious and those with different philosophical views – utilitarians, perfectionists, etc. – *will in general still* endorse Rawls’ principles of justice on their own grounds – as natural laws of God, or on their own philosophical grounds – even if they reject that they are good because they are a realization of our moral autonomy, as Kant and Rawls (in *TJ*) would have had it.)

for society at large, and then to affirm them on this basis. Should an incompatibility later be recognized between the principles of justice and their wider doctrines, then they *might very well adjust or revise these doctrines rather than reject those principles... These adjustments or revisions we may suppose to take place slowly over time as the political conception shapes comprehensive views to cohere with it.*³⁹²

Their allegiance does not therefore appear to depend on a conscious awareness of the way that the political conception is consequential for their comprehensive doctrine or vice versa: "the comprehensive doctrines of most people are not fully comprehensive, and this allows scope for the development of an independent allegiance to the political conception that helps to bring about a consensus."³⁹³

Rawls thus gives up *Theory's* more stringent Kantian requirement of *conscious self-subjection* to moral autonomy as a regulative ideal in order to achieve acceptance of the principles of justice and therefore the justice of a liberal democratic society, and instead, in *Political*, says just the *practice* of accepting and adhering to a liberal political conception of justice (which for Kant would have constituted a merely anthropological and therefore contingent rather than autonomous basis for morality) indicates this moral-rational autonomy and ensures the justice of this society. As citizens in liberal democracies we, regardless of our comprehensive doctrines, are *accustomed* to taking the perspective of the original position, that is, we accept *in practice* the principles of justice that constitute the original position. The citizen's *acculturation* in a liberal democratic political culture ensures, as in the original

³⁹² Ibid., 156; and 156, Fn26. Italics mine.

³⁹³ Ibid., 168.

position, that his own view represents “the point of view of certain appropriately defined reasonable and rational agents,” who have learned and mastered “the concepts and principles of practical reason as well as the principles of right and justice that issue from the procedure of construction” so that they arrive at the same conclusions in the judgment of particular cases, not the contingent and therefore unstable conclusions and “the point of view of any particular agent, individual or corporate, or of any particular group of agents, at any particular time.”³⁹⁴

But there are signs that this acculturation process does not succeed in reaching its goal – the citizen's rational/ moral freedom (his "morality of principles") and, therefore, a just society. This failure becomes apparent in examining Rawls' account, in *Political*, of the "education" of individuals/ groups who are party to a "modus vivendi" to an "overlapping consensus" of citizens. This "educational" (acculturation) process shares some similarities with Rawls' developmental account of the progress from the morality of authority to the morality of principles in *Theory*, and some of the same disturbing implications.

A "mere" modus vivendi is a compromise observed by competing individual or group interests, and is only stable as long as circumstances make it advantageous for its contracting parties not to violate it;³⁹⁵ if circumstances change, one of them will violate it to better its own interests, at the expense of the other individual/ group. This modus vivendi resembles the establishment of "precepts" of a "morality of authority" that Rawls says children reluctantly,

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 111.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 147.

unconsciously, and instinctively accept, only because these precepts end strife with one's parents.³⁹⁶

How might a constitutional consensus come about? Suppose that at a certain time, because of various historical events and contingencies, certain liberal principles of justice are accepted as a mere *modus vivendi*, and are incorporated into existing political institutions... in much the same way as the acceptance of the principle of toleration came about as a *modus vivendi*³⁹⁷ following the Reformation: at first reluctantly, but nevertheless as providing the only workable alternative to endless and destructive civil strife.³⁹⁸

Like the parties to the *modus vivendi*, the child acts out of instinct and desire, and narrow self-interest.³⁹⁹ Rawls cites Rousseau's *Emile* as the source of this "psychological law:" "we like from the start *what contributes to our preservation*, this attachment is quite unconscious and instinctive."⁴⁰⁰

The transition to a constitutional consensus occurs gradually, as the *modus vivendi*, embodied in an initially only temporary constitutional government: 1. guarantees basic rights and liberties – removing them from the political agenda, and the "shifting circumstances of time and place" – and thereby decreases the "insecurity and hostility of public life"⁴⁰¹ that otherwise results from a pluralist society⁴⁰² by establishing "democratic procedures for

³⁹⁶ "The child's having a morality of authority consists in his being disposed without the prospect of reward or punishment to follow certain precepts that not only may appear to him largely arbitrary but which in no way appeal to his original inclinations" (*TJ*, 466).

³⁹⁷ Literally, this term means "way of living," which implies a practical compromise between disputing parties to reduce conflict.

³⁹⁸ *PL*, 159.

³⁹⁹ *TJ*, 463.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 463, Fn 9.

⁴⁰¹ *PL*, 161.

⁴⁰² "The deep divisions latent in society" (*Ibid.*, 161).

moderating... political rivalry, and for determining issues of social policy;"⁴⁰³ 2. explicates the liberal principles of justice (the guidelines of public inquiry and rules for assessing evidence) – as "public reason" – "in terms of common sense" accepted by citizens in general;⁴⁰⁴ 3. ensures its basic political institutions guarantee these basic rights and liberties and provide the accepted "public reason" in applying the liberal principles of justice, thus encouraging "the cooperative virtues of political life."⁴⁰⁵ These three achievements work upon our "moral psychology" – i.e., the fact that we can conceive of "the good," accept and want to act on "reasonable political principles of justice," will act on them if everyone will, as a result develop trust in each other, which merely grows with more general recognition that our basic political institutions meet our needs.⁴⁰⁶ But our stable allegiance to the liberal principles embodied in the constitution, out of the self-interested and temporary acquiescence to a *modus vivendi*, is also made possible by "a certain looseness in our comprehensive views, as well as their not being fully comprehensive," as, for example, in the consensus worked out over toleration between Locke's religious argument, Kant's or Mill's comprehensive liberalisms, and a pluralist view (with a "freestanding political conception of justice").⁴⁰⁷ This looseness guarantees that we will prioritize the political conception of justice where it comes into conflict with some part of our comprehensive doctrine.

From this foundation of stable constitutional consensus, political groups appeal to citizens from different comprehensive doctrines, thereby forcing them

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 163.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 162.

⁴⁰⁵ "The virtue of reasonableness and a sense of fairness, a spirit of compromise and a readiness to meet others halfway, all of which are connected with the willingness to cooperate with others on political terms that everyone can publicly accept" (Ibid., 163).

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 163.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 145.

to formulate political conceptions of justice (165), defining the terms of common political discussion; new problems require definition of principles behind constitutional consensus to guide new decisions; to avoid "conflict," legislation guaranteeing liberty of conscience, freedoms of thought, association, and movement, and basic welfare⁴⁰⁸ must be enacted – "there are forces tending to amend the constitution in certain ways to cover further constitutional essentials, or else to enact the necessary legislation with much the same effect"⁴⁰⁹ – "groups" will develop political conceptions covering these basic structural requirements. Again, since most people's comprehensive doctrines are "not fully comprehensive,"⁴¹⁰ they can and do become independently committed to a consensus-making political conception, act on the basis of that conception as embodied in the constitution, and gradually develop trust in it – i.e., "an independent allegiance to the political conception that helps bring about [an overlapping] consensus."⁴¹¹

But when Rawls discusses the transition from the contingent, only "fortunate" modus vivendi to constitutional consensus, he leaves behind the example of the circumstances of the Reformation – i.e., simple (rather than reasonable) pluralism between individuals/ groups with unreasonable comprehensive doctrines that exclude allegiance to the principles of fair and just cooperation, and lead to "endless and destructive civil strife."⁴¹² His

⁴⁰⁸ "Below a certain level of material and social well-being, and of training and education, people simply cannot take part in society as citizens, much less equal citizens" (Ibid., 166).

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 167.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 168.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 168.

⁴¹² Ibid., 159. "In general both states (or groups or individuals) are ready to pursue their goals at the expense of the other... Social unity is only apparent, as its stability is contingent on circumstances remaining such as not to upset the fortunate convergence of interests" (Ibid., 147).

example for this transition from *modus vivendi* is instead the development of the happier consensus (around toleration) more than a century later. This historical jump takes for granted the transition from the *modus vivendi* to the accomplishment of the "reasonable pluralism" – in other words, the very transition he was supposed to be explaining. *Now*, "the crucial [historical] *fact*," or foundation, is not the simple pluralism – of possibly unreasonable doctrines – of the *modus vivendi*, but "reasonable pluralism, itself the outcome of the free exercise of free human reason under conditions of liberty... an enduring background of free institutions."⁴¹³ Instead of the emergence of a constitutional consensus, Rawls has shifted to discussing an *overlapping* consensus, and the simple pluralism of the *modus vivendi* no longer exists. The Lockean, Kantian/Millian, and pluralist views, whether they are fully comprehensive or not, are *reasonable* doctrines. Whereas Rawls was attempting to explain their *emergence*, now *loosely held*, reasonable comprehensive doctrines seem to exist at the moment of the (now redundant) *modus vivendi*.

Rawls appears to employ this same strategy – importing the essence of the subsequent stage to explain the transition from the preceding – in discussing the moral development of the person, in *Theory*. Rawls says that the "second stage of moral development" – the "morality of association" – is not merely "a collection of precepts" like the "child's morality of authority" within the family. The defenseless child (as we noted above) "does not have his own standards of criticism, since he is not in a position to reject precepts on rational grounds;"⁴¹⁴ His "prized virtues are obedience, humility, and fidelity to authoritative persons; the leading vices are disobedience, self-will, and

⁴¹³ Ibid., 144.

⁴¹⁴ *TJ*, 464.

temerity. We are to do what is expected without questioning, for not so to act expresses doubt and distrust, and a certain arrogance and tendency to suspicion."⁴¹⁵ But, Rawls says, in the second stage, "morality of association," "the family... is [already] a small association, normally characterized by a definite hierarchy, in which each member has certain rights and duties,"⁴¹⁶ just like the school, the company / corporation, citizenship. This is because they all involve living up to corresponding ideals (the good son / daughter, brother / sister, student, worker, citizen) – i.e., "moral standards appropriate to the individual's role in the various associations to which he belongs." Even this stage "quite naturally leads up to a morality of principles."⁴¹⁷ In the morality of association, one becomes attached to others who live up to the ideals, fulfilling their respective duties, and displaying the cooperative virtues ("justice and fairness, fidelity and trust, integrity and impartiality"⁴¹⁸) and feels guilt oneself when he neglects his own duties.

On this account, it is as if the morality of principles were present during the morality of association, and the morality of association in the morality of authority. But if this suspicion arises, we can simply observe, Rawls says, that it is difficult to tell: "As far as possible each stage foreshadows in its teaching and explanations the conception of right and justice at which it aims and by reference to which we will later recognize that the moral standards presented to us are justified."⁴¹⁹ For example, during the first stage – morality of authority – the child feels "*(authority)* guilt,"⁴²⁰ a feeling that is also supposed to develop in

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 466.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 467.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 468.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 472.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 515.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 465. *Italics mine.*

the morality of *association*,⁴²¹ or possibly fear of punishment, when he disobeys; "it is sometimes difficult to distinguish feelings of guilt from the fear of punishment, and especially from the dread of the loss of parental affection."⁴²² But if it is difficult to tell, then how do we know it is *not* fear of punishment, even in the later, association stage?

Rawls assumes that in the acculturation process a legitimate political arrangement/ distribution of power is ensured, in *Theory*, by the morality of principles of all free and equal rational persons, and, in *Political*, by free and equal citizens' overlapping consensus in the liberal political conception. But his accounts of moral development and the evolution of overlapping consensus suggest that the power relations characterizing the morality of authority and *modus vivendi* may continue through the moralities of association and principles and the constitutional and overlapping consensus – as a learned habit of acquiescence to existing political and moral authority and convention, now embodied in an allegiance to principles and political conceptions.

Though the development of characteristics – e.g., love and trust (of association), and independent allegiance (to principles) – characterizing the later stages of moral development are supposed to occur during the earlier stages (authority and association), this achievement appears to remain doubtful, even in Rawls' account. In the transition from authority to association morality, children, Rawls says, will learn to *love* rather than simply acquiesce to their parents if their parents are loving towards them. But he also (following Rousseau) accepts that providing mere preservation is enough to secure the child's love.⁴²³ Similarly, children's trust of their guardians, adherence to their

⁴²¹ Ibid., 470.

⁴²² Ibid., 465.

⁴²³ Ibid., 463.

precepts, desire to emulate them, and self-judgment and guilt according to their standards, are supposed to depend on the fact that their guardians are "indeed worthy of esteem," not too harsh, and lead by example, that is, upon the parents' embodiment of principles of justice, rather than simply upon their children's dependence upon them for satisfaction of their needs. But, Rawls admits (as we have seen above), guilt (allegedly based on a failure to live up to moral principles) is not easily distinguished from "the dread of the loss of parental love and affection."⁴²⁴ Likewise, in the association stage, shame, "evoked by shocks to our self-respect," is supposed to be moral insofar as a principle of right is "cited to account for it"⁴²⁵ – i.e., insofar as it is a preparation for the morality of principles. But shame is simultaneously caused by one's "apprehens[ion]" that his associates "reject him and find him contemptible, an object of ridicule."⁴²⁶

The transition to the morality of principles happens when our compliance with the principles of justice becomes *no longer dependent*, as it was during association stage, *on the approval and disapproval of the group*;⁴²⁷ "we realize how social arrangements answering to [the principles of justice] have promoted our good and that of those... for whom we care," and this engenders "a desire to apply and act upon the principles of justice"⁴²⁸ that is "*irrespective of... [their effect on] the well-being and approval of particular individuals and groups*."⁴²⁹ We now explain both guilt and emotions by reference not to the

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 465-66.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 443.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 445.

⁴²⁷ "It would seem that while the individual understands the principles of justice, his motive for complying with them, for some time at least, springs largely from his ties of friendship and fellow feeling for others, and his concern for the approbation of the wider society" (Ibid., 473).

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 473-4.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 475. Italics mine.

particular individuals or groups but rather to the relevant principles. But Rawls *also* admits not only that these particular attachments help strengthen our allegiance to moral principles⁴³⁰ but that they are *necessary* for moral motivation even in the final stage, the morality of principles, when a just political society is supposed to have been achieved.

In general moral principles are affirmed for various reasons and their acceptance is normally sufficient for the moral feelings. To be sure, on the contract theory principles of right and justice have a certain content, and as we have just seen, there is a sense in which acting in accordance with them can be interpreted as acting from a concern for mankind, or for the good of other persons. Whether this fact shows that one acts in part from certain natural [i.e., potentially contingent] attitudes, especially as these involve attachments to particular individuals, and not simply the general forms of sympathy and benevolence, is a question that I shall leave aside here.

Certainly the preceding account of the development of morality supposes that affection for particular persons plays an essential part in the acquisition of morality. But *how far these attitudes are required for later moral motivation can be left open, although it would, I think, be surprising if these attachments were not to some degree necessary.*⁴³¹

If the development of an allegiance to principles (i.e., a morality of principles) is not in fact independent of but relies on an attachment to particular individuals or a group (i.e., a morality of association), and the motive for this associative morality appears to be supplied by the child's dependent relation to his authority, then the achievement of a liberal political society is not a real (on

⁴³⁰ "When the natural ties of friendship and mutual trust are present, however, these moral feelings are more intense than if they are absent." (Ibid., 475).

⁴³¹ Ibid., 486.

Rawls' definition) morality of principles. Instead, Rawls may inadvertently indicate a conditioning in acquiescence to established forms of authority, in our societal institutions, moral principles and political conceptions.

But Rawls retains his faith in the achievement of this morality of principles and its corresponding just distribution of power in our democratic liberal societies. Maintaining this faith, however, in both *Theory* and *Political*, appears to require exclusions and rejection/repression of signs that might indicate that the liberal conception is not just and does not achieve our freedom, just as Rawls' faith in the "fact" of our longstanding and "free exercise of free human reason under... free institutions"⁴³² requires excluding/repressing the possibility of a reasonable comprehensive doctrine that rejects the liberal political conception of justice). Rawls explicitly rules out the possibility that the moral sensibility of the morality of principles might turn out to be a mere "compulsive psychological mechanism cleverly installed by those in authority in order to ensure his unswerving compliance with rules designed to advance their interests;"⁴³³ the morality of authority is justified⁴³⁴ because of its ultimate reference to the supposed *pre-existence* of autonomously chosen principles of justice. For this reason, we should *not suspect* that our moral disposition is not free, even if we experience ourselves as unnecessarily acquiescent. The fact that we may find in our moral sense "inexplicable inhibitions which *for the moment*

⁴³² *PL*, 144.

⁴³³ *TJ*, 515. That an acculturation/habituation to docility might happen not "cleverly" or premeditatively but rather unconsciously and automatically needs to be addressed rather than passed over as a mere conspiracy theory, as it seems to be in Rawls' text here.

⁴³⁴ The morality of authority has "but a restricted role in fundamental social arrangements and can be justified only when the unusual demands of the practice in question make it essential to give certain individuals the prerogatives of leadership and command" (*Ibid.*, 467). When and where the legitimacy of the morality of authority is allowed to exist *should* be determined entirely by the principles of justice.

[we are] unable to justify," is not because the morality of authority that established them was in error; "in a well-ordered society" we can trust that our moral education itself has been regulated by the principle of right and justice to which [we] would consent in an initial situation in which all have equal representation as moral persons. As we have seen, the moral conception adopted is independent of natural contingencies and accidental social circumstances; and therefore the psychological processes by which [our] moral sense has been acquired conform to principles that [we ourselves] would choose under conditions that [we] would concede are fair and undistorted by fortune and happenstance.... Nor can someone in a well-ordered society object to practices of moral instruction that inculcate a sense of justice.⁴³⁵

And, even though our moral education is supposed to "eliminate the conditions that give rise to disruptive attitudes,"⁴³⁶ sometimes the individual does not aspire to be a good citizen, instead irrationally (and inexplicably) ignoring the imperative to reflective equilibrium. There can still exist the "bad character" who commits "acts proscribed by penal statutes,"⁴³⁷ "just arrangements do not fully answer to their nature, and therefore, other things being equal, they will be less happy than they would be if they could affirm *their* sense of justice. But

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 515.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 144. For example, envy, to which the rational individual is not subject. Instead, envy results from a "lack of self-confidence in our own worth combined with a sense of impotence. Our way of life is without zest and we feel powerless to alter it" (Ibid., 535); whereas self-respect implies "a person's sense of his own value, his secure conviction that his conception is good, his plan of life, is worth carrying out. Second, self-respect implies a confidence in one's ability, so far as it is within one's power to fulfill one's intentions" (Ibid., 440). Since justice as fairness eliminates the conditions for envy and fulfills those for self-respect, envy must be interpreted by the individual as a sign of the need for further self-examination and reform/discipline.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 315.

here one can only say: *their nature is their misfortune*."⁴³⁸ And when this occurs, when acculturation of the ideal citizen fails – and these cases can be *numerous* – more extreme measures are justified:

It can even happen that there are many who do not find a sense of justice fits their good; but if so, the forces making for stability are weaker. Under such conditions penal devices will play a much larger role in the social system. The greater the lack of congruence, the greater the likelihood... of instability with its attendant evils. Yet none of this nullifies the collective rationality of the principles of justice; it is still to the advantage of each that everyone else should honor them.⁴³⁹

This applies just as legitimately to criminals and unruly children as it does to comprehensive doctrines (in *Political*) that are held too tenaciously, rather than "loosely," whose particulars are not brought into line with the principles of justice. "As Berlin has long maintained... there is no social world without loss: that is, no social world that does not exclude some ways of life that realize in special ways certain fundamental values. The nature of its culture and institutions proves too uncongenial."⁴⁴⁰ Where the principles of justice *fail* to take hold of the individual, his/her child, shape his doctrine, or *inhibit the individual from applying it in determining his behavior*, the most explicit and coercive form of the morality of authority is close behind.

Finally, we should not, Rawls writes, doubt the liberal conception of justice, even though our moral feelings can be irrational and injurious, "incorporating many of the harsher aspects of the authority situation in which they were first acquired... often [taking] perverse and destructive forms...

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 576. Italics mine.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 576.

⁴⁴⁰ *PL*, 197.

blunt[ing] without reason human spontaneity and enjoyment... [and] liable to be[ing] unreasonable and capricious,"⁴⁴¹ we can still rest assured that "since arbitrary authority has disappeared" the well-ordered society's "members suffer much less from the burdens of oppressive conscience"⁴⁴² than they otherwise would.

But if arbitrary authority has *not* disappeared, as seems apparent from our discussions of *Theory's* moral education and *Political's* history of liberal democratic overlapping consensus, but is instead institutionalized in relations of coercion and techniques (applied to us and by us) that condition and reinforce our habit of acquiescence and inhibition, then Rawls' faith and his exclusions (of signs of the failure of our moral education - our experience of liberal democracy - to produce freedom and justice) seem complicit. Indeed, in *Political*, Rawls says that the "political conception" has "a wide role as educator;"⁴⁴³ having *been* realized in the political culture, *including its articulation* by its institutions, the political conception brings up the individual from childhood "irrationality" and dependence to the citizen's "principle-dependent desires," connecting these to a "concept-dependent desire"⁴⁴⁴ to "realize a political ideal of citizenship,"⁴⁴⁵ as Rawls describes in his account of the development of overlapping consensus (above);⁴⁴⁶ "[N]ot only are citizens

⁴⁴¹ *TJ*, 489-90.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 489-90.

⁴⁴³ *PL*, 86.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁴⁴⁶ In *PL*, the moral psychology that motivates the transition from constitutional consenses to overlapping consensus gives him an independence from mere "object-dependent desires"—i.e., "bodily desires," the "desire to engage in pleasureable activities of innumerable kinds... status, power and glory... property and wealth... attachments and affections, loyalties and devotions..." (*Ibid.*, 82)—are governed by "the psychological strength of the desire itself," rather than "any moral conceptions, or reasonable or rational principles" (*Ibid.*, 82-3, Fn 31). As their names imply, principle-dependent and concept-dependent desires are given their "force, or weight... entirely by the principle (or concept) to which the desire is attached... A person with a good will, to use Kant's term, is someone whose principle-dependent (and concept-dependent)

normal and fully cooperating members of society, but further they want to be, and be recognized as, such members... they want to realize in their person, and have it recognized that they realize [the] ideal of citizens."⁴⁴⁷ As an influential, institutional articulation of the liberal democratic political conception (of "justice as fairness"), Rawls' refigured categorical imperative – i.e., reflective equilibrium ("the study of principles which govern actions shaped by self-examination,"⁴⁴⁸ as embodied in the original position⁴⁴⁹), his selective history of liberal democracy, and his exclusions and repressions seem, as in the *modus vivendi*, to take certain questions (about the extent of our unnecessary inhibitions), complaints, and comprehensive views "off the political [conceptual] agenda." (We are reminded that the liberal constitution puts a

desires have strengths in complete accordance with the force, the priority, of the principles to which they are attached" (Ibid., 82-3, Fn 31). (Rational-principle-dependent desires "guide a single agent in rational deliberation," reasonable-principle-dependent desires "regulate how a plurality of agents... are to conduct themselves in their relations with each other," while concept-dependent desires derive from "a certain rational or reasonable conception, or a political ideal" (Ibid., 83-4). In the latter, "for example, we may desire to conduct ourselves in a manner appropriate to someone who is rational, whose conduct is guided by practical reasoning. Desiring to be this kind of person involves having and acting from these principle-dependent desires, and not only from object-dependent desires governed by custom and habit" (PL, 84). As stated above, because we can conceive of "the good," accept and want to act on "reasonable political principles of justice," will act on them if everyone will, we, as a result, develop trust in each other, which merely grows with more general recognition that our basic political institutions meet our needs (Ibid., 163). Through normal political processes in the public culture and the articulation of the political conception, we become attached to an independent political conception and its embodiment in the ideal of citizen.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 84. Citizens have a "higher-order interest" in the exercise and development of their moral powers (Ibid., 106).

⁴⁴⁸ TJ, 49.

⁴⁴⁹ Rawls, as Bonnie Honnig notes, writes that the point of the original position is to "clarify and order our thoughts," to present us with questions about justice that we "feel sure must be answered in a certain way" (Ibid., 20). This operates to make the potentially disruptive moment of the founding of justice "into an act of maintenance, the choice of principles domesticated into an acknowledgment of them" (Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 134). It doesn't matter who submits themselves to the exercise of the original position, or when they do it. They "can at any time adopt its perspective, [i]t must make no difference when one takes up this viewpoint, or who does so[;] the same principles are always chosen" (TJ, 139).

tenuous end to "endless and destructive civil strife,"⁴⁵⁰ *but only as long as it continues to be observed.*)

"How might it happen that over time the initial acquiescence in a constitution satisfying these liberal principles of justice develops into a constitutional consensus in which those principles themselves are affirmed?"⁴⁵¹ Possibly, through the (on Rawls' definition) *illegitimate* imposition of the liberal political conception, born from and perpetuating an unequal distribution of power, exercised first as crude, coercive authority and, once conditioned through the various associations and institutions, a *habitual* voluntary consensus in "citizenship," with its practices of exclusion and repression – its norms of political participation, cooperation,⁴⁵² discussion/interpretation,⁴⁵³ and a political agenda as represented by existing political parties.

Kant's more patent and explicit prescription of humiliation techniques, aimed at the automatic functioning of the categorical imperative as second nature, attests to his realization that the prohibitions of the liberal political education were not yet assured to function automatically as habitual inhibitions. Rawls' reflective equilibrium and overlapping consensus, on the other hand, assume an already acculturated, stabilized Kantian rational subject (who may in fact be an obedient, docile subject), the alleged achievement of more than two centuries of moral "education" by the liberal democratic political

⁴⁵⁰ *PL*, 159.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁴⁵² "Virtues... are," after all, "sentiments and habitual attitudes leading us to act on certain principles of right" (*TJ*, 436-7).

⁴⁵³ "The two moral powers and their normal capacities" are "educated to" the political ideal of citizenship "by the public culture and its historical traditions of interpretation" (*PL*, 85-6).

conception and institutions.⁴⁵⁴ An achievement which nevertheless is not entirely stable, as evinced in Rawls' exclusions and repressions (aimed at achieving the habitual inhibition of those particulars that conflict with the liberal democratic political conception, particular desires that might aim to reintroduce excluded issues into the political agenda).

Habermas's "Motivational Deficit"

The goal of Habermas's critical theory is a "form of life free from unnecessary domination in all its forms."⁴⁵⁵ As was true with Kant and Rawls, Habermas concludes that, given the plurality of definitions of the good life (the different conscious motivations of people to live a specific kind of life) characterizing modern existence, if the general/ democratic will were to be given jurisdiction over definition of the good life (the particular ends of citizens), modern liberties would have to be sacrificed – either in the course of conflict over political power between various groups whose definition differs or in the systematic oppression of one group by another. Habermas, like Rawls

⁴⁵⁴ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 222: "Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the eighteenth century the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the organization of a parliamentary, representative régime. But the development and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms constituted the other, dark side of these processes. The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. And although, in a formal way, the representative regime makes it possible, directly or indirectly, with or without relays for the will of all to form the fundamental authority of sovereignty, the disciplines provide, at the base, a guarantee of the submission of forces and bodies. The real, corporal disciplines constituted the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties. The contract may have been regarded as the ideal foundation of law and political power; panopticism constituted the technique, universally widespread, of coercion. It continued to work in depth on the juridical structures of society, in order to make the effective mechanisms of power function in opposition to the formal framework that it had acquired. The 'Enlightenment,' which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines."

⁴⁵⁵ Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 273.

and Kant, says that political theory, if it aims at the realization of liberal democracy, cannot therefore be involved in trying to define the “the good life” – i.e., the *truth* about what it consists of. Like Rawls, he takes up the Kantian problematic of how to achieve political freedom and equality – universal autonomy – by way of universal moral principles.⁴⁵⁶

But Rawls' reflective equilibrium, according to Habermas, though it is supposed to stabilize his universal principles of justice by grounding them in the practices of the “citizen,” relies upon a public culture that cannot but be particular to specific communities and traditions, therefore contingent and incapable of universalization in the conditions of modern pluralism. Specifically, with his conception of the person or citizen who embodies the two Kantian moral powers implicit in the public culture, Rawls, says Habermas, imports “normative contents into the very procedures of justification.”⁴⁵⁷ To achieve true universality, one needs instead a “procedural conception of practical reason free of substantive connotations by developing it in a strictly *procedural* manner”⁴⁵⁸; it must “shift... from what each can will without contradiction to be a general law” - Rawls' (and Kant's) “monological”⁴⁵⁹ method⁴⁶⁰ for arriving at principles of justice - “to what all can will in agreement

⁴⁵⁶ Kant, Rawls and Habermas all set out to achieve preservation of *both* the liberties of the ancients (democratic self-determination) and the liberties of the moderns (individual protection from the political/general determination), and therefore ask the same question: What legitimate limits can be put on the democratic will; what universal limits would free and equal individuals choose to put on themselves?

⁴⁵⁷ Jürgen Habermas, “Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism.” *The Journal of Philosophy* 92, no. 3 (1995), 59, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2940842>.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 117, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2940842>. Italics mine.

⁴⁵⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, tr. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990), 65-7.

⁴⁶⁰ According to Habermas, in “the so-called method of reflective equilibrium. The philosopher arrives at the basic concept of the moral person and the adjunct concepts of the politically autonomous citizen, of fair cooperation, of the well-ordered society, and so forth, via a rational reconstruction of proven intuitions, that is, intuitions actually found in the practices and traditions of a democratic society. Reflective equilibrium is achieved at the moment when the philosopher has attained the assurance that those involved can no longer reject with good

to be a universal norm."⁴⁶¹ The universal acceptability of moral principles can only be established *socially*, through the actual (rather than merely hypothetical) collective deliberation of everyone that will be affected by them. Only those "norms are valid to which all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational discourse."⁴⁶²

The pure proceduralism of Habermas' rational discourse is *stable* because, unlike Rawls' reflective equilibrium, it is based only on *universal* and not culturally contingent features of the person and his communicative action. According to Habermas, the universal features of the person result from a socialization process that occurs in all normal individuals. The normal "socially competent" subject is socialized to take into account the needs, interests, and feelings of others and give them equal weight to their own; "Kant's Kingdom of Ends must be *supposed* here and now as a context of interaction and as a communication community in which everyone is capable of taking up the perspective of everyone else and is willing to do so."⁴⁶³ This socialization consists of "the complete internalization of [the] few highly abstract and universal principles" required for norm justification.⁴⁶⁴ The subject's competency consists in his having identified himself with and having come to base his self-respect on his living up to the norms of communicative rationality, and therefore to the principles of justice that result from this procedure. Communicative rationality is, for Habermas, basic to the everyday speech acts

reasons intuitions reconstructed and clarified in this manner" (Jürgen Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other*, ed. Ciaran P. Cronin and Pablo De Grieff (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 60).

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 67.

⁴⁶² Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 107. This establishes Habermas's conception of justice as procedural rather than substantive.

⁴⁶³ Jürgen Habermas, "Individuation through Socialization," in *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. William Mark Hohengarten, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 162.

⁴⁶⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 183.

of everyone; in his inaugural lecture at Frankfurt University in 1965, Habermas states, "the human interest in autonomy and responsibility [Mündigkeit] is not mere fancy, for it can be apprehended a priori. What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we can know: language. Through its structure autonomy and responsibility are posited for us. Our first sentence expresses unequivocally the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus."⁴⁶⁵ As Habermas's student, Thomas McCarthy notes, "The very act of participating in a discourse involves the supposition that genuine consensus is possible."⁴⁶⁶ Speech acts are characterized by an abstract core of norms, represented by four validity claims – claims that the speaker necessarily makes: by uttering something, the speaker claims, in addition to its a) grammatical comprehensibility, b) its truth (in "constative" speech acts), c) its rightness (appropriateness) in relation to a recognized normative context (in "regulative" speech acts), and d) that his apparent/manifest intentions are truthful (in "representative" speech acts).⁴⁶⁷ Action according to these validity claims is prerequisite to valid rational consensus. The social reality of the entire human species is constructed⁴⁶⁸ through communicative rationality⁴⁶⁹ – that is,

⁴⁶⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, tr. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), Appendix, 314.

⁴⁶⁶ Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 306.

⁴⁶⁷ Jürgen Habermas, "Was heisst Universalpragmatik?" in *Sprachpragmatik und Philosophie*, ed. K.-O. Apel, (Frankfurt, 1976), 254-55; cited in *Ibid.*, 286-7.

⁴⁶⁸ Habermas accepts the "radically anti-Platonic insight that there is neither a higher nor a deeper reality to which we could appeal—we who find ourselves already situated in our linguistically structured forms of life" (Jürgen Habermas, "Contribution to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy" in *The New Social Theory Reader*, eds. Steven Seidman and Jeffrey C. Alexander (New York: Routledge, 2001), 30).

⁴⁶⁹ To arrive at deliberative justice, according to Habermas, one's reason must be communicative rather than instrumental. Whereas instrumental rationality decides only upon the means to achieving the norms we take for granted, norms that define our goals, communicative rationality reflects upon these norms. Functional rationality characterizes the capitalist welfare state, and is directed towards achieving the economic and political stability of the political body. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984; Suhrkamp Verlag (German edition), 1981), 285-6.

communication between participants who are trying to reach a rational consensus, mutual understanding.⁴⁷⁰ Thus the abstract core of norms that guarantee legitimate morality develop in the basic conceptual structure of experience of every individual.⁴⁷¹

In this way, Habermas, like Kant and Rawls, is committed to the operation of an autonomous/ free practical reason in the subject – free from "contingent, subjective determinations... [and] every trace of compulsion[;] moral obligations acquire an unconditional or categorical validity only when they proceed from laws that emancipate the will... from all contingent determinations and in a sense assimilate it to practical reason itself."⁴⁷²

Habermas' procedure and the norms that result from it are *stable* insofar as the subject is constituted in this way, acting only from "practical reason" as embodied in the procedural norms. Since this socialization is a *universal* feature of psychological development, it can provide a secure basis for Habermas' procedure for arriving at universally acceptable norms. As McCarthy puts it,

When fundamental differences in beliefs and values block the initiation or continuation of communicative relations, the possibility of discursively resolving these differences [and thus arriving at universal norms of justice] takes on a particular significance. It represents the possibility of instituting or reinstituting a consensual basis for interaction without resort to force in any of its forms from open violence to latent manipulation; it represents the

⁴⁷⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 3.

⁴⁷¹ "It seems likely that this basic conceptual structure of possible experience developed phylogenetically and that it arises anew in every normal ontogenesis. Thus developmental studies of the type pursued by Piaget will have to be integrated into any adequate analysis of the "a priori of experience." (Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 297).

⁴⁷² Jürgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays*, tr., ed., Max Pensky (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 32.

possibility of reaching agreement through the use of reason and thus by recourse to, rather than violation of, the humanity of those involved.⁴⁷³

Habermas criticized Rawls for basing universal consensus around his liberal political conception upon a particular (i.e., non-universal) public culture, thus undermining its universal validity in a modern pluralist society. And, as we have noted, although Rawls makes clear that the legitimate application of the morality of authority (in which differences of power determine obedience) must be governed by pre-existing, legitimated principles, the morality of authority that is to characterize only the first stage of the acquisition of the moral disposition of the citizen seems to provide a large part of the motive force – as both the "latent manipulation" involved in the conditioning of liberal political cultural habits as well as open coercion when necessary – behind the citizen's acceptance of Rawls' principles and conception of justice as legitimate. But it is not clear that Habermas' discursive resolution of differences – i.e., the discursive establishment of norms - does not also have to resort to force as open violence and latent manipulation. As we will see below, the success of what Habermas first presents as a universal socialization to norms governing communication turns out to be (as in Rawls' case) culturally contingent, rather than the legitimate result of a universal propensity toward mutual understanding and respect. Competent subjectivity – i.e., freedom from early stage, affective attachments to particular and contingent objects and social relations, and reliance solely upon abstract norms proves – to be, on Habermas' own account, an impossible and dangerous fantasy. Habermas' project ends up,

⁴⁷³ Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 291.

like Rawls,' relying upon a socialized affective attachment of (i.e., "latent manipulation") and enforced capitulation (i.e., "open [but legitimized] violence") to Habermasian norms of communication – norms whose validity was supposed to have resulted from a preceding universal, rational consensus of competent subjects. This latent manipulation in the Habermasian project takes the form of an imperative to abide by the validity claims of communicative rationality, that works secondarily upon a subject already more or less successfully conditioned by techniques of socialization that he is powerless to resist. This conditioning of the subject requires, at the moment of impasse between conflicting interests/ views, a (patient) capitulation (and thus further conditioning of habits) to the norms governing discursive relations and therefore the laws and institutions allegedly established by a fictional universal consensus of competent subjects.

According to Habermas, the universal socialization of communicative rationality creates the competent subjects necessary for acceptance of the norms governing discourse, and thus for the decisions/laws that result from it. Language is of course crucial in this process: "self-consciousness forms itself on the path from without to within, through the symbolically mediated relationship to a partner in interaction. To this extent it possesses an intersubjective core; its eccentric position attests to the tenacious presence of language as the medium through which one recognizes oneself in the other...."⁴⁷⁴ By the time the child is capable of intersubjective recognition in language, he has gone through the first two stages of ego development –

⁴⁷⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. William Mark Hohengarten, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 178.

symbiotic and egocentric⁴⁷⁵ (and the corresponding "natural" identity is formed⁴⁷⁶) - and entered the third: "sociocentric-objectivistic"⁴⁷⁷ (thus forming a "personal" identity⁴⁷⁸). At the end of this third stage of ego development, "cognitive development has led to an objectivation of outer nature, linguistic-communicative development to the mastery of a system of speech acts, and interactive development to the complementary connection of generalized behavioral expectations."⁴⁷⁹ Linguistically, this development relies on "taking the attitude of the other toward oneself," which "fastens... upon the positive or negative sanctions" that a "reference person" (B), who "fulfills the social role of

⁴⁷⁵ In stage 1, "symbiotic," the child apparently makes no subjective distinction between subject and object; "the symboisis between child, reference person and physical environment is so tight and we cannot meaningfully speak of a demarcation of subjectivity in the strict sense" (Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 100–101). In stage 2, "egocentric," the child "learns to perceive permanent objects in its environment"; it differentiates between self and environment, "but without yet clearly differentiating the environment into physical and social domains. Moreover, the demarcation [of the self] in relation to the environment is not yet objective. This is shown by the manifestations of cognitive and moral egocentrism. The child cannot perceive, understand and judge situations independently of its own standpoint—it thinks and acts from a body-bound perspective" (Ibid., 101).

⁴⁷⁶ In this first of three stages in identity formation, the child's "natural" identity depends on the temporal continuity and physical boundaries of his/her body.

⁴⁷⁷ The ego is decisively demarcated in the third stage, "sociocentric-objectivistic," in which the child "differentiates between perceptible and manipulable things on the one hand, and intelligible subjects and their utterances on the other; and it no longer confuses linguistic signs and their references and meanings." The child learns to "demarcate its subjectivity in relation to outer nature and society," and "to distinguish between fantasy and perception, between impulse and obligation."

⁴⁷⁸ In stage two of identity formation, the child gains a "personal" identity through his self-location in the social life-world. Here the continuity that secures identity is provided by "intersubjectively recognized, temporally stable expectations" (Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 341). "The unity of the person . . . rests on membership in, and demarcation from, the symbolic reality of a group and on the possibility of localization within it. The unity of the person is formed through the internalization of roles that are tied in the beginning to concrete reference persons and later detached from them—primarily sex and generation roles that determine the structure of the family. This role identity, centered around sex and age and integrated with one's own bodily image, becomes more abstract and simultaneously more individual to the extent that the growing child appropriates extra-familial systems of roles" (Jürgen Habermas, "Development of Normative Structures," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 109).

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 101.

an educator outfitted with parental authority,"⁴⁸⁰ "announces when he utters an imperative to" the child (*A*). Imperatives, unlike validity claims which can "be criticized and defended with reason," are "power claims[;] they... need, if they are to have any effect, to be externally connected with the hearer's empirical motives."⁴⁸¹ These sanctions have their binding power as a result of the "differences in competence and authority" between *A* and *B*, *B* being in a position of authority and power over *A*. *B* makes clear to *A* that *A*'s response to the imperative will be followed by sanctions: obedience with positive sanctions, disobedience with negative. Thus *A* is able to connect obedience with satisfying an interest of his own (i.e., his own pleasure), and an interest of *B*.⁴⁸² In this way, the child's "dispositions to behavior" undergo "symbolic structuring."⁴⁸³ (Behaviors – i.e., obedience – that result in positive sanctions are symbolized as "good;" behaviors – i.e., disobedience – that result in negative sanctions are symbolized as "bad.")

"*A*, on the way to symbolically restructuring his action orientations and dispositions, forms an identity as a member of a social group."⁴⁸⁴ First, *A* sees his obedience to the imperatives of *B* as satisfying (not yet norms but rather) *B*'s interests, just as this obedience satisfies *A*'s interests. *A* interprets *B*'s sanctions as obedience to *A*'s desires, and these desires as imperatives. In this way *A* comes to understand this mutual satisfaction of interests as an expected pattern of reciprocal behavior. "In uttering [*A*'s desire/imperative], *A* has to anticipate that *B* will fulfill this imperative in the expectation that *A* will in turn follow [*B*'s

⁴⁸⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 31.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 31.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 33.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 33.

imperative]."⁴⁸⁵ From *A*'s perspective, *B* "no longer connects his announcement of sanctions only with individual imperatives but with the generalized expectation that *A* will exhibit a willingness to obey under the condition of the care [i.e., satisfaction of *A*'s needs/imperatives] he receives from *B*. *A* anticipates this threat and takes up *B*'s attitude toward himself when following *B*'s imperative... This is the basis of the internalization of roles."⁴⁸⁶ The imperative of obedience is thus internalized as a role for *A* to fulfill in relation *B* in general (across time and variable situations), in the expectation that *B* will likewise fulfill his role in obeying the imperatives of *A*.

Habermas makes clear that "If one considers the sociocognitive side of this process in isolation, one could get the mistaken impression that the child has a certain space for negotiation in pursuing his interests, whereas in fact it is only in this process that he learns to interpret his needs and to articulate his desires. Expectations come to the child as something external, behind which... stands the authority of the reference person," who has an "unequal disposition over the means of sanction."⁴⁸⁷ In this process is established a relationship of the child to itself; he relates to himself as "the authority of a suprapersonal will."⁴⁸⁸ This will issues imperatives, specifically the generalized imperative of obedience, to the child. The child thus identifies himself as a subject having desires that are now defined as either appropriate or inappropriate according to the initial sanctions and now generalized expectations of *B*. Habermas emphasizes that *A* now perceives that both "*A* and *B* subordinate their

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 34.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 34. "From the structure of language comes the explanation of why the human spirit is condemned to an odyssey—why it first finds its way to itself only on a detour via a complete externalization in other things and in other humans" (Jürgen Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. William Mark Hohengarten, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 153).

⁴⁸⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 34.

particular wills to a combined choice that is... delegated to the... generalized pattern of behavior."⁴⁸⁹ This combined choice is an incipient norm.

The second step in the child's process of identification as a member of a group is the generalization of his pattern of behavior with *B*, the parental authority figure, so that it applies to all members of a group, and not just to interactions between *A* and *B*. *A* objectifies the pattern of behavior, seeing it from the perspective of a third person ("neutral") observer, rather than that of a participant. Now the pattern can be seen as applying between not just himself and *B* but between any two individuals in the group. Thus, the "concept of a concrete pattern of behavior can be generalized into the concept of a norm or action."⁴⁹⁰ *A* now understands that the collective will of the group is realized whenever anyone in the group utters or obeys the imperatives that *A* previously perceived only as governing the particular wills between *A* and *B*. This collective will and "imperativistic authority" of the group gains the authority of a norm for the individual only when, "by anticipating the sanctions [executed by the power of institutions] that come from violating a generalized imperative," he takes on the attitude of these institutions, structuring himself "in a system of internal, that is, moral, behavioral controls." From this point, "generalized behavior patterns acquire for him the authority of a 'thou shalt!' – no longer in an imperativist sense – and thus that kind of normative validity in virtue of which norms possess binding force."⁴⁹¹

The crucial difference between this authority of the "generalized other" as normative in one's own will and "authority based only on disposition over means of sanction" is that the former rests instead "on assent."⁴⁹² The "social

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 35.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 38.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 38.

control exercised via norms" and the institutions that embody them is "not repressive" insofar as one can answer "yes" to "the question of whether an institution or a norm is worthy of being recognized in the interest of all involved."⁴⁹³ Habermas admits that "[f]or the growing child this question has already been given an affirmative answer before it can pose itself to him *as a question*" because of his initial powerlessness in relation to the means to sanction. But this question also "already contains the claim... that a norm deserves to be valid only insofar as... it takes into account the interests of everyone involved... embodies the will that all could form in common, each with his own interest, as the will of the generalized other."⁴⁹⁴ This is embodied in the four validity claims that are the basis of communicative rationality. They come to be raised, according to Habermas' account of identity formation, in the transition to adolescence.

The adolescent lets go of his merely conventional/role identity and establishes a postconventional or "ego identity" when, faced with new and contradictory role systems, "the ego can no longer identify with itself through particular roles and existing norms." The adolescent must therefore "retract [his] identity... behind the line of all particular roles and norms." The norms governing each role system cannot but now "appear as mere conventions." The ego identity "stabilize[s] itself through the abstract ability to present itself in all situations as the one who can satisfy the requirements of consistency even in the face of incompatible role expectations and in the passage through a life-historical sequence of contradictory role systems [and their corresponding identities]." He now distinguishes "between norms, on the one hand, and

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 39.

principles according to which we can generate norms, on the other." Insofar as an ego identity is achieved, it is because it has learned to identify itself with and act according to principles that remain the same across different normative systems. "Such principles can serve as standards for criticizing and justifying existing norms."⁴⁹⁵ With them, the subject frees himself from the "dogmatism of the given and the existing."⁴⁹⁶ His identity formation therefore becomes "reflexive;"⁴⁹⁷ in the formation of new identities in new normative situations / groups, he claims validity for his identification on the basis of *principles*, that is through rational discourse. He is therefore capable of increasingly abstract group membership identity – i.e., in status or occupational groups, communities, nations, political orders, or in cultural-linguistic groups. This ability to identify with an abstract group identity – i.e., abstracted from "all particular roles and norms" – allows the identification (referred to above) with a "communication community in which everyone is capable of taking up the perspective of everyone else and is willing to do so."⁴⁹⁸ In terms of ego development, the adolescent achieves the "universalistic" stage.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁵ "Zur Einführung," in R. Döbert, J. Habermas and C. Nunner-Winkler, eds., *Die Entwicklung des Ichs* (Köln, 1977), 10-11, cited in Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 342.

⁴⁹⁶ Jürgen Habermas, "Development of Normative Structures," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 102.

⁴⁹⁷ He can "generalize and carry over to other situations the ability to overcome old identities and construct new ones. The particular cores of surrendered identities are then only the biographical traces of a learning process through which identity formation has become reflexive; and in every critical situation, this process is brought anew into motion" ("Zur Einführung," in R. Döbert, J. Habermas and C. Nunner-Winkler, eds., *Die Entwicklung des Ichs* (Köln, 1977), 10-11, cited in Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 342).

⁴⁹⁸ Jürgen Habermas, "Individuation through Socialization," in *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. William Mark Hohengarten, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 162.

⁴⁹⁹ This final stage of the formation of identity corresponds to the "universalistic" stage of ego development. In this stage, the ability to think hypothetically allows freedom from the "dogmatism of the given and the existing... Until then, the epistemic ego, bound to concrete operations, confronted an objectivated nature; and the practical ego, immersed in group perspectives, was dissolved in quasi-natural systems of norms. But as soon as the youth no longer naively accepts the validity claims contained in assertions and norms, he can transcend the objectivism of a given nature and explain the given from contingent boundary conditions in

Raising Validity Claims

Once the subject has achieved ego identity (or "universalistic" ego development), within which he can differentiate between principles and mere conventions – a full ego identity capable of abstract group identity – he is competent to be aware of and raise the validity claims [i.e., principles] that universally govern communication, as opposed to those merely particular claims that constrain the "given and existing" norms whose authority was based upon the "contingent boundary conditions"/"sociocentrism" of the "traditional order" he was socialized into. Insofar as he is aware of the universal norms governing communicative rationality, the competent subject/ social actor recognizes where speech is valid and thus aimed at achieving understanding - the immanent telos of speech⁵⁰⁰ – and where it is not – i.e., where the norms

the light of hypotheses; and he can burst the sociocentrism of a traditional order and can understand (and if necessary criticize) existing norms as mere conventions in the light of principles" (Jürgen Habermas, "Development of Normative Structures," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 102). On pp. 16ff., Habermas suggests certain "homologies" between this pattern of ego development and the evolution of world views.

⁵⁰⁰ "[I]n action oriented to understanding, language finds the use for which it is fundamentally designed" (From an unpublished reply to Ernst Tugendhat, "Zu Tugendhats kritischen Bemerkungen," (spring 1976), in Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 287-8). Universal pragmatics thus has first to reconstruct "the general presuppositions of consensual speech actions" (Jürgen Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?" in *On the Pragmatics of Communication*, ed. Maeve Cooke (MIT Press, 2000), 21), and then to move to analysis of strategic and deformed/ defective modes of speech, which are parasitic on ideal speech ("In the end, the non-communicative [strategic] use of speech in action oriented to success presupposes the communicative use of language" (From an unpublished reply to Ernst Tugendhat, "Zu Tugendhats kritischen Bemerkungen," (spring 1976), in Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 287-82), relying upon the operation of validity claims but not complying with them; "[U]nderstanding is the immanent telos or function of speech. This does not, of course, mean that every actual instance of speech is oriented to reaching understanding. But Habermas regards 'strategic' forms of communication (such as lying, misleading, deceiving, manipulating, and the like) as derivative; since they involve the suspension of certain validity claims (especially truthfulness), they are parasitic on speech oriented to genuine understanding" (Ibid., 287). Moral theory must therefore reconstruct the normative presuppositions of social interaction of competent social actors in any society. (Critical theory is meant to draw attention to the ways in which system (the market and state institutions) colonize lifeworld and displace social integration (rational will- and opinion-formation) based on communicative rationality (i.e., lifeworld). The competent subject, having reached the universalistic stage of ego

governing it are mere particular conventions "given and existing" in a group. In communicative rationality (or rational discourse), there is thus a "'virtualization of the constraints of action'—a putting out of play of all motives except that of a willingness to come to a rationally grounded agreement—and a 'virtualization of validity claims'—a willingness to suspend judgment as to the existence of certain states of affairs (they may or may not be the case) or as to the rightness of certain norms (they may or may not be justified)."⁵⁰¹ Where this occurs, it is called an "ideal speech situation," characterized by rational discourse. This discourse explicitly thematizes the validity claims that are normally (but usually only implicitly) raised in every speech act in normal interaction, and holds in suspension judgment as to their validity. Discourse thus provides Habermas's ground for achieving uncoerced and therefore legitimate consensus – the "unforced force of the better argument"⁵⁰² – when there is a dispute over the validity of problematic claims. Participants in discourse assume that the agreement they reach constitutes a "rational consensus" – that is, that it does not result from or have therefore an applicability / legitimacy limited to the peculiarities or situation of the participants. Rather, the agreement is accepted as "objectively" valid; valid for all rational subjects (as potential participants).

Thus, the accomplishment of the universalistic ego identity rationally able to raise validity claims appears to provide the basis for Habermas' later proposal of the "competent social actor's" "postconventional" identification with

development, and gained the ability to abstract from "all particular roles and norms," appears to have this critical ability.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 292.

⁵⁰² Thomas McCarthy, "Kantian Constructivism and Reconstructivism: Rawls and Habermas in Dialogue," *Ethics*, 105, No. 1 (Oct., 1994), 45. Though this is exactly what Habermas criticizes Rawls for assuming he can establish to govern decisions about norms.

the abstract concept of "constitutional patriotism" as a *stable* source for non-homogenizing and non-exclusionary solidarity and co-existence.⁵⁰³

Doubts

But Habermas himself comes to express doubt, at least indirectly, about the competence of his social actor and as a result the rationality and therefore legitimacy of the consensus that should ideally issue from communicative deliberation.

The key to the "abstractive" reflexivity allegedly achieved by the competent subject is that "moral knowledge becomes detached from moral motivation"⁵⁰⁴ – i.e., those particular attachments of the lifeworld that, according to Habermas, necessitate and motivate communicative rationality and provide its context in the first place. As Sharon Krause indicates, "the 'rational assent' required to establish validity [in the ideal speech situation] is infused with values from the 'lifeworld,' which forms the context of discourse and includes 'cultural traditions, social orders, and personal identities.'"⁵⁰⁵ But if it is these particular, "conventional" identificatory attachments that motivate subjects, then the ego's retraction from them seems to leave it – allegedly assimilated to practical reason as it is – with what Habermas calls a "motivational deficit."⁵⁰⁶ On its own, Habermas admits, reason can only motivate subjects "weakly."⁵⁰⁷ If

⁵⁰³ See Patchen Markell, "Making Affect Safe for Democracy?," *Political Theory* 28, no. 1 (2000), 38-63, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/192283>. See also my discussion of Markell's article below.

⁵⁰⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays*, tr., ed., Max Pensky (Cambridge: MIT Press), 34.

⁵⁰⁵ Sharon Krause, "Desiring Justice: Motivation and Justification in Rawls and Habermas," *Contemporary Political Theory* 4, no. 4 (2005), 376-7, citing Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 23.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 374, citing Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 95.

⁵⁰⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, transl. C. Lenhardt and S.W. Nicholsen, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 107.

this is true, then even when the subject imagines itself as part of an "unlimited communication community," it remains practically just as identified with/ attached to those conventional norms that first formed its subjectivity.

Patchen Markell⁵⁰⁸ notes that in a 1974 essay ("Can Complex Societies Form a Rational Identity?"⁵⁰⁹) Habermas realizes the difficulty posed by universalistic norms: on the one hand, universalistic norms undermine identity-formation on the basis of "families, tribes, cities, states, and nations"⁵¹⁰ in opposition to alien groups; on the other, Habermas admits that if the "place from which socially effective bonds issue, previously occupied by these traditional identificatory attachments is not filled," then "universalistic morality, in the same way as the ego structures consistent with it, would remain a mere postulate."⁵¹¹ Habermas's solution to the "motivational deficit" at the time of this essay was that modern individuals could form affective relations with, and thus a new kind of collective identity based on, the "basic norms of rational discourse" (the idealized "unlimited communication community"⁵¹²) as embodied in an "anticipated" or "projected" community of autonomous subjects who recognize each other in terms of their autonomous identities.⁵¹³ This new form of identification corresponded to Habermas's theorization of the passage developmentally from conventional identification (i.e., the individual's

⁵⁰⁸ Patchen Markell, "Making Affect Safe for Democracy?," *Political Theory* 28, no. 1 (2000), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/192283>.

⁵⁰⁹ Jürgen Habermas, "Can Complex Societies Form a Rational Identity?" in *Toward the Reconstruction of Historical Materialism* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), abridged in "On Social Identity," *Telos* (Spring 1974), 94.

⁵¹⁰ Patchen Markell, "Making Affect Safe for Democracy?," *Political Theory* 28, no. 1 (2000), 41, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/192283>.

⁵¹¹ Jürgen Habermas, "Can Complex Societies Form a Rational Identity?" in *Toward the Reconstruction of Historical Materialism* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), abridged in "On Social Identity," *Telos* (Spring 1974), 94.

⁵¹² Habermas, Jürgen, "Individuation through Socialization: On Mead's Theory of Subjectivity," in *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. William Mark Hohengarten (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 186.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, 184-8.

“blind subjugation” to the “fixed contents” of traditional social expectations/ roles, and a collective identity attached to the fixed and given attributes of kinship, ethnicity, territory, objects imagined as existing “independent of and prior to the political opinion and will-formation of the citizens themselves”⁵¹⁴) into the maturity of postconventional identification: the individual’s autonomous and critical relation to social expectations,⁵¹⁵ and a collective identity grounded in a shared “consciousness of universal and equal opportunity to participate in value and norm-forming learning processes,”⁵¹⁶ a “self-determining political community.”⁵¹⁷

During the 1980s, Habermas proposed precisely this kind of “constitutional patriotism”⁵¹⁸ as a way of achieving social integration while avoiding recourse to revisionist, normalizing attempts to reformulate German identity. The mobilization in such (latter) attempts of a fantasy of a homogeneous community resulted, he observed, in intolerance and ethnic cleansing.⁵¹⁹ In this way, Markell argues, Habermas hoped to “bring the sustaining energy of affective identification into politics while avoiding the possibility of conflict between citizens’ passionate attachments and their rationally grounded moral and political obligations.”⁵²⁰ According to Mead, whom Habermas cites in this regard, “A person may reach a point of going

⁵¹⁴ Jürgen Habermas, “The European Nation-State: On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship,” in *The Inclusion of the Other*, ed. Ciaran P. Cronin and Pablo De Grieff (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 117.

⁵¹⁵ Habermas, “Individuation through Socialization,” in *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. William Mark Hohengarten, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 182-3.

⁵¹⁶ Jürgen Habermas, “On Social Identity,” *Telos* (Spring 1974), 100.

⁵¹⁷ Jürgen Habermas, “Citizenship and National Identity,” Appendix II to *Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 496.

⁵¹⁸ Jürgen Habermas, “Apologetic Tendencies,” in *The New Conservatism*, ed. and tr. Shierry W. Nicholsen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 227.

⁵¹⁹ “The European Nation-State: On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship,” in *The Inclusion of the Other*, ed. Ciaran P. Cronin and Pablo De Grieff (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 115.

⁵²⁰ “Making Affect Safe for Democracy?” *Political Theory* 28, no. 1 (2000), 43-4.

against the whole world about him...."⁵²¹ But," Habermas comments, "he will not be able to sustain himself as a solitary being in vacuo, even in this extreme isolation, except as he constitutes himself [as] a member of this wider commonwealth of rational beings."⁵²² Political affect and identification must be connected not to a concrete historical community but instead to a community of rational beings who hold universal norms that provide a basis for valorization by a "diversity of cultural life-forms, ethnic groups, religions, and world-views."⁵²³ Such an "independent affective connection to moral principles," Habermas proposes, will provide a solid foundation from which to decide "which of our traditions we want to continue and which we do not."⁵²⁴

Habermas' proposal of constitutional patriotism and postconventional identification is merely an extension of a process that is allegedly universally achieved in the competent social actor/ subject; this subject, as we have seen above, is competent in that he achieves a universalistic ego, able to "retract its identity... behind the line all particular roles and norms," instead identifying itself abstractly and reflexively/ critically as *stable* in light of this autonomy. But a Kantian kingdom of ends as an imaginary ideal speech situation or an imaginary communication community retains practical reason and its universalistic norms at the core – and is therefore still only weakly motivating, if at all. Just as Rawls relied on a "looseness" of comprehensive doctrines to

⁵²¹ George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967).

⁵²² Jürgen Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. William Mark Hohengarten, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 184-5.

⁵²³ Jürgen Habermas, "The European Nation-State: On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship," in *The Inclusion of the Other*, ed. Ciaran P. Cronin and Pablo De Grieff (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 117.

⁵²⁴ "Historical Consciousness and Post-Traditional Identity," in *The New Conservatism*, ed. and tr. Shierry W. Nicholsen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 262.

achieve the acculturation of the "citizen" (even though it was the fact, Habermas says, that these comprehensive doctrines contained "deeply held" convictions that necessitated the priority of justice / right in the first place), so Habermas relies on the simple giving up of strong affective ties and their replacement with the weak motivating force of "reason." If the strong affective ties could be replaced so easily with the weak motivating force of a reason achieved in the competent social actor, then there would be in the first place no conflicts to resolve, no need for the ideal speech situation.

Habermas ultimately, in his later writings and interviews, admits at least that particular affective (conventional) identifications in the lifeworld *do* continue to exert their effect long after his image of moral development say they are overcome. The "identity of a person, of a group, or of a region is always something concrete, something particular," requiring an "image;" it can never "consist merely in general moral orientations and characteristics, which are shared by all alike."⁵²⁵ On this later view, the earlier solution of constitutional patriotism with its abstract idea of "the people" (which Habermas thought would "filter" out the other-creating elements of national pride and historical consciousness that characterize nationalism), because it fails to correspond to any "*visibly identifiable* gathering of autonomous citizens,"⁵²⁶ offers no image in which the people can identify themselves.⁵²⁷ Such an image can never accurately represent the shifting, changing demos and its democratic will. But it is nevertheless necessary – if we want to stabilize society, securing it from the conflicts that result from citizens' passionate attachments.

⁵²⁵ Peter Dews, ed., "The Limits of Neo-Historicism," in *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas* (London: Verso, 1992), 239.

⁵²⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 136.

⁵²⁷ "Popular Sovereignty as Procedure," Appendix I to *Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 486.

Habermas thus later reformulates constitutional patriotism as “ties to [universal moral] principles” but now “nourished by a heritage of cultural traditions that is consonant with them.”⁵²⁸ Constitutional patriotism is now a *particular*, cultural achievement, not unlike the later Rawls (whom Habermas criticized on precisely this point) would have put it; it can “enduringly link” universal principles “with the motivations and convictions of citizens” but only by situating them “within the historical context of a legal community,”⁵²⁹ or “shared political culture.”⁵³⁰ In this respect, the transition from childhood instrumental rationality to communicative rationality, in which it is decided whether and how much an existing order is undermined or reconstructed / reinforced, is a “particularly dangerous” time because not only family communication structures but also “cultural traditions contain different potentials for stimulation according to their formal [developmental-logical] levels; they can, for instance, offer and stimulate the transition to a post-conventional identity, or hold the restructuring of role identity at the conventional level.”⁵³¹

This “shared political culture,” however, as Markell observes, is a prepolitical artifact that the demos did not rationally choose in an ideal speech situation but is nevertheless attached to. In making universality a part of a particular culture, Habermas undermines the legitimacy of this political culture

⁵²⁸ “Historical Consciousness and Post-Traditional Identity,” in *The New Conservatism*, ed. and tr. Shierry W. Nicholsen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 262.

⁵²⁹ “Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State,” in *The Inclusion of the Other*, ed. Ciaran P. Cronin and Pablo De Grieff (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 225.

⁵³⁰ “The Limits of Neo-Historicism,” in *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas* (London: Verso, 1996), 499-500.

⁵³¹ “Zur Einführung,” in R. Döbert, J. Habermas and C. Nunner-Winkler, eds., *Die Entwicklung des Ichs* (Köln, 1977) 15, cited in McCarthy, Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 343.

from the universalistic perspective of the competent subject it is supposed to achieve. If the abstract core of socialized universal norms does not suffice as a source of attachment for consensus (in, e.g., the political problem of German reunification after 1989), even when these norms are made explicit as per Habermas' argument, then, his image of "universal" moral psychological development must also be wrong.⁵³² Instead, it seems, the early, particular production of conventional subjectivity continues to exert its effect in ways ignored by the fantasy of a universalistic ego or "competent social actor." The "competent social actor" is not just "culturally contingent" but something altogether different than a universalistic ego. He is, instead, an only apparently "practically rational" individual whose particular attachments remain hidden behind and/or masquerade as universal norms, a universal/normal psychological development, and an ideal "citizen." The fact that Habermas' competent social actor as universalistic ego does *not* exist, that the "moral standpoint" has not been accomplished,⁵³³ means that the (particular) norms

⁵³² Habermas must rely not on the critical rationality which is supposed to be established, according to his developmental schema, with the transition from natural and personal identity to ego identity. Instead, the transition to ego identity seems in reality to turn out to be an extension of what Habermas sees as the personal identification process, which is characterized by the "internalization of roles that are tied in the beginning to concrete reference persons and later detached from them—primarily sex and generation roles that determine the structure of the family. This role identity, centered around sex and age and integrated with one's own bodily image, becomes more abstract and simultaneously more individual to the extent that the growing child appropriates extra-familial systems of roles" ("Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston: Beacon, 1979), 109). The movement to "more abstract" forms of identification does not seem to secure identification from the more dangerous—because not critically rational—less questioning forms of identification that were supposed to precede them. Adolescence would, rather than necessarily marking the transition to critical rationality (i.e., an identity based on abstraction from accepted norms, an ego that can sustain itself in abstraction from particular identifications and thus decide impartially between them), as Habermas argues in most of his writing, instead involve the extension of previous "natural" and "personal" identifications to forms that are nonfamilial but nevertheless just as uncritical.

⁵³³ Krause ("Desiring Justice: Motivation and Justification in Rawls and Habermas," *Contemporary Political Theory* 4, no. 4 (2005), 383, Fn 18) notes that Habermas alternatively assumes that the moral disposition of the competent social actor a) has already been accomplished historically (*Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 95), b) belongs to all subjects universally insofar as they are linguistically

that constitute communicative rationality must include legal compulsion; Habermas argues that the

subsystem "law," as a legitimate order that has become reflexive, belongs to the societal component of the lifeworld. Just as this reproduces itself only together with culture and personality structures through the flow of communicative actions, so legal actions, too, constitute the medium through which institutions of law simultaneously reproduce themselves along with intersubjectively shared legal traditions and individual competences for interpreting and observing legal rules. As part of the societal component, these legal rules constitute a higher level of legitimate orders; at the same time, however, they are also represented in the other two lifeworld components, as legal symbolism and as competences acquired via legal socialization. All three components share cooriginally in the production of legal actions.⁵³⁴

But this legal compulsion as part of the inherited culture is *not* itself legitimately structured by competent social actors – i.e., by the reflexive reason that was supposed to lend legitimacy to legal force, to make it the product of the free will of the demos. This legal force is, rather than "a higher level of legitimate orders," the product of the normally operative culture- and tradition-bound psychology of individuals (perhaps, specifically, individuals who have more control over the "means of sanction").

competent (*Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, transl. C. Lenhardt and S.W. Nichol森, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 82-98; *Justification and Application*, transl. C. Cronin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 31, 76f, 114), but also c) *not* accomplished and a radical departure from the normally operative, culturally bound, object-oriented moral psychology of people (*Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 4f, 25, 113f; *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, transl. C. Lenhardt and S.W. Nichol森, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 109, 179).

⁵³⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, transl. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 80-1.

So, despite his contention that discursive rationality can legitimately provide a "consensual basis for interaction without resort to force in any of its forms from open violence to latent manipulation"⁵³⁵ Habermas ends up relying on force in its two forms: open coercion in compliance with the ruling culturally inherited norms; and latent manipulation in the form of socialization – primary, in a culturally specific, moral psychological upbringing, and secondary, in raising the validity claims.⁵³⁶

Socialization of the "universal" norms by the conditioning of habit, occurs through bodily, personal identification processes, as Habermas himself states, rather than in opposition to or rational abstraction from them. If, as Habermas clearly holds, affective identificatory connections to the arbitrary authority of traditional identity *survive* and continue to be dangerous to communicative rationality, then his account of socialization needs to be modified. The early socialization of the subject to acquiesce to traditional authority seems to retain its hold on the subject long after this authority first takes hold. That is, if Habermas is right that the individual cannot "go... 'against the whole world about him'... sustain himself as a solitary being in vacuo" merely on the strength of post-conventional identification, but "can only assure itself of itself if it is able to return to itself from the perspective of others as their alter ego," then Habermas must be mistaken about the possibility of a post-conventional ego that "does not return to itself as the alter ego of some other alter ego from among its own concrete group (as the 'me')... [that] now

⁵³⁵ Thomas McCarthy, Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 291.

⁵³⁶ That is, raising them as universal achievements when they are, as Habermas himself attests, *not* achieved and are rather held as ideals of a particular culture (and perhaps even only part of that culture's population); strategic speech and ideal speech are not ultimately distinguishable.

comes upon itself as the alter ego of all others in every community — specifically, as a free will in moral self-reflection and as a fully individuated being in existential self-reflection."⁵³⁷

Habermas' later argument that particular (i.e., liberal democratic) cultures "offer and stimulate the transition to a post-conventional identity,"⁵³⁸ suggests that even liberal democratic subjectivity relies upon the conditioning of affective attachment. His simultaneous observation that even in liberal democratic cultures "constitutional patriotism" does not offer sufficient affective motivating force to achieve post-conventional identity,⁵³⁹ and needs the supplement of the law, suggests that competent subjectivity assimilated to the commands of practical reason is a persistent liberal fantasy (a fantasy in which Kant, Rawls and Habermas all participate), and that this fantasy is one into which the liberal democratic subject is – more or less successfully – socialized. This fantasy of reciprocal and general (i.e., universal) rational consensus about governing norms⁵⁴⁰ is one that, as Habermas himself indicates, the child is powerless (because he has no access to the "means of sanction") to resist; "for the growing child" any "institution or... norm" that the parental or other authority commands as an imperative "is worthy of being recognized [as] in the interest of all involved."⁵⁴¹ In this fantasy-imperative, the image of the

⁵³⁷ Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. William Mark Hohengarten, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 187.

⁵³⁸ "Zur Einführung," cited in McCarthy, Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 343.

⁵³⁹ Seen in this light, Habermas's argument that individual identity entirely depends on the individual's relation to others—"Not only as an autonomous being but also as an individuated being, the self of the practical relation-to-self cannot reassure itself about itself through direct reflection but only via the perspective of other" (Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. William Mark Hohengarten, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 186)—suggests that his primary affective relations exert an influence on his actions far more powerful than does his imaginary relation with an ideal "communication community" (Ibid., 185).

⁵⁴⁰ A fantasy/projection altogether as monological as what Habermas criticizes as Rawls's and Kant's projections.

⁵⁴¹ Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, tr. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981), 39.

competent social actor provides the ideal for the subject's self-examination and measurement. The continued reinforcement of this fantasy, in his education and the (Kant-inspired) political thought of his culture, ensures his obedience to and therefore the conservation of existing (status quo) liberal norms and institutions precisely because he has been conditioned to accept that these have resulted from the free will of all competent liberal democratic subjects. In the identificatory attachment to this fantasy, language, as Habermas has demonstrated, is crucial. The Habermasian liberal terminology and argument – "pure proceduralism," "neutrality," and "reciprocal" respect of "universal," "principles," "communicative rationality" and "practical reason" – work upon the already socialized / conditioned liberal subject, directing him back in his moment of doubt.

To the extent that this fantasy is not adopted, and this socialization fails, the other form of force is employed: the subject is constrained by the law. Habermas' account of moral psychological development amounts, then, to a prescription and standard against which to test for normal development of the subject. The raising of the validity claims is a mere continuation of this examination technique, applied to the subject either by himself or others, depending on how successful their preceding socialization has been. The raising of validity claims appears to work the way the invocation to Kant's categorical imperative and Rawls' reflective equilibrium do – i.e., upon a more or less successfully already-socialized / conditioned subject, in Kant's case via the imperative addressed to the "rational being" to exercise techniques of humiliation upon himself and others, in Rawls' by one's constant self-examination as "citizen."

6. Agonistic Respect and Ambivalent Tension

This chapter examines the neuroscientific understanding of the way the human organism is conditioned, its limits and possibilities in perceiving and acting, in order to determine its general amenability to change via the application of techniques – that is, to determine the reality/truth of what Foucault observes as "basic human capacities to remark, describe, and remember."⁵⁴² I *begin* to answer the questions posed by Foucault's observations of both the disciplinary corporealization of docile bodies and techniques of the self aimed at freedom – how can we be free, and how free can we be? But I begin with a discussion of the work of a political theorist who also attends to these limits and possibilities, specifically in our Euro-American subjectivity, suggesting a techniques of the self for our time.

William Connolly's discussion of those moments in which perception/judgment occurs and is conditioned, reinforced or transformed in our everyday practices, our daily techniques, is aimed at encouraging an acceptance of the fundamental uncertainty of existence, rather than its rejection – by the ressentimental, punitive, liberal morality we Euro-Americans are conditioned to reproduce. Over the course of his work, Connolly comes to see that though genealogization of accepted moral conventions is important, to change our moral dispositions we must also re-cultivate them through techniques that work directly upon "the visceral register" – i.e., a "neuropolitics" – by way of the neurophysiological mechanisms and sites that recent neuroscience suggests are the basis of all of our behavior, including both the habits that account for most of our action and the innovative, less common,

⁵⁴² Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 385, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

spontaneous departures from habit. Given his observation of the ubiquity of habit in behavior, and the ubiquity of the conventional disciplinary techniques that produce habit, Connolly's almost exclusive focus on the cinematic experience as a transformative technique needs supplementation by attention to other techniques that can be applied in more of our everyday activities. In addition, we need a more complete understanding of our neurophysiology than the one Connolly provides to be able to evaluate and adjust our dispositional techniques. This chapter aims, therefore, to provide an examination of Connolly's important contribution and direction, and provide a more comprehensive understanding of our neuropsychology, in order to further the mostly neglected but crucial question of how the dispositions (or habit) that makes most of our decisions gets formed and can be changed.

Liberal Subjectivation

"Being" in the world, Connolly observes, is wonderful, but it is also tragic. This basic reality cannot be cheated. We are constituted by forces within and outside our own and each other's bodies, forces whose effects we enjoy and suffer but cannot ultimately master. Our fundamental vulnerability creates anxiety, and this anxiety prompts us to react. The authoritarian reaction to this vulnerability attempts to manipulate, control, and coerce the world's (including, importantly, the human organism's) mostly uncontrollable "diversity of forces and energies,"⁵⁴³ to create an order that will eventually conform to the power of a ruler. This project of mastery, however, as much of Connolly's work has shown, is not just an authoritarian or ancient one; it is also

⁵⁴³ William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 72.

the project of liberals and recent prominent Anglo-American political theory. (We have already seen the forms this project takes in Kant, Rawls, and Habermas). They “compensate for the loss of transcendental or teleological reassurance by loading secular thought with a [concealed] faith that the world itself is predisposed to be mastered in support of the identities they favor.”⁵⁴⁴ This liberal, Anglo-American project attempts to create a subject who experiences and treats herself as fully responsible and culpable for her own joy and suffering, who assumes that obedience to a benevolent authority (or benevolent organization of authority) will be rewarded with security from vulnerability.⁵⁴⁵

But if it is impossible to secure the human organism from its vulnerability to the internal and external forces which animate and effect it, then the attempt to achieve a liberal identity for it will inflict additional violence and suffering upon it – as an organism constituted by precisely these forces. This characteristic of Anglo-American liberal thought – the absolute necessity of making oneself culpable, responsible, and obedient to an authority

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid. For example, Habermas contends that his communicative rationality is universal, Rawls that the citizen is autonomously rational.

⁵⁴⁵ “A drive circulates... in Western culture... to look for someone to hold responsible when utopian hopes are shattered by hard realities” (William Connolly, *The Augustinian Imperative* (Newbury Park, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1993), 100). Connolly owes this insight ultimately to Nietzsche. Nietzsche explicitly and repeatedly indicates in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that the *origin* of resentment is fear, even if this fear becomes an avoidance: “Here precisely is what has become a fatality for Europe – together with the fear of man we have also lost our love of him, our reverence for him, our hopes for him, even the will to him” (*On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1989), 44). This loss occurs with the *birth of resentment as a reaction to fear* - “That lambs dislike great birds does not seem strange” (Ibid.). Only later is our “suffering” of man “not fear” (Ibid., 43) – because the triumph of slave morality leaves nothing to fear (or admire) in domesticated, docile man. But, Connolly says, the “fluid mood of estrangement from an uncertain object” – i.e., the anxiety – occasioned by the uncanny is interpreted in the Augustinian case as a sign of one’s failure or guilt and a prompt to “reinstate more intensely the conviction of identity or morality... just disrupted” (*The Augustinian Imperative* (Newbury Park, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1993), 137). This obedience constitutes an avoidance of the uncertainty or ambivalence of the uncanny, a “suppression” of it. This will be discussed, below, as learned behavior – i.e., the avoidance of fearful stimuli in order to reduce the pain/fear it elicits. That is, resentment is a specific avoidance response to a reaction to a stimulus.

capable of securing us from vulnerability – Connolly calls “the Augustinian Imperative,” after the celebrated saint, who interprets the world in this manner. Augustine's interpretation of the myth of Genesis⁵⁴⁶ is one we Euro-Americans share; the predominance of the Augustinian imperative in our culture – its “infiltration into contemporary practices of identity, production, responsibility, guilt, punishment, confession, and faith”⁵⁴⁷ – is evinced in our automatic, unquestioned assignment of sole responsibility to the perfectly free will of the man and woman (and the snake) for the Edenic tragedy, and the absolute goodness/perfection of an all-powerful, all-knowing God, who can save us from tragedy.⁵⁴⁸ Our cultural conditioning/acculturation leads us to interpret⁵⁴⁹ punished acts as “bad” acts, to assume culpability for the actions for which we're punished and to take responsibility for our future obligation and obedience to the punishing authority; the Augustinian imperative, in the various forms of humiliation exercised in our families, schools, corporations, political and social institutions, lays the ground for an interpretation of the Genesis story along Augustinian lines. And this interpretation reinforces this conditioned imperative, deepening the reach of its command.⁵⁵⁰ Augustine's

⁵⁴⁶ “It exercises so much cultural power that it is difficult to read those old words without immediately projecting Augustine's meanings into them” (Ibid., 94).

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 101. This move, from the Augustinian perspective, would secure for the Augustinian God's favor. By doing God's will, as opposed to following one's fallen, selfish will – the one that Augustine says is fallen as a result of the original fall... the split-off will that diverged from god's will at the moment of Adam's choice (whereas in reality this will is merely free choice, the responsibility that humans must take on for their choices) – one reduces vulnerability to minimum or, (increases security to a maximum) by eliminating choice, by subsuming all choices under God's law.

⁵⁴⁹ But with interpretive direction/instruction from the various institutional authorities, not simply punishment, delineating good and bad, along the lines discussed by Habermas in *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, tr. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981).

⁵⁵⁰ Even where the voice of doubt appears – as to the goodness of a god who with omnipotence and omniscience (including prescience) wills a situation for which Augustine gives him no responsibility – it is silenced by an imperative to obey, a fear of death... which is visceral and has greater pull on our morality than our “logic.”

account/interpretation reminds us of our own past actions – actions that seemed to us at first of ambiguous or no consequence, but that – when punished by some patriarchal authority – we come *after the punishment* to judge as if they were clear and intentional ‘crimes,’ deserving of punishment.

This unformulated shock of recognition by adults of the retroactive character of their own judgments, and the pressures to repress this experience in the interests of treating themselves as moral agents, contributes to the magnetic power of Genesis. Adults [in our Euro-American culture] have an uncanny recollection of how the story goes even before Augustine tells them how to read it.⁵⁵¹

The earliest Genesis account,⁵⁵² on the other hand, leaves open another interpretation: that not only the humans and the snake but also Yahweh, because he made the man, woman, and snake and their dispositions, *share* responsibility for the tragedy.⁵⁵³ This god cannot be omnipotent and omniscient but rather “an energetic, active, impatient god who has things to learn about the effects of its interventions”⁵⁵⁴ – not unlike a parent or other human authority. This latter non-Augustinian response to (interpretation of) the shock of tragedy – “the terror that seems to accompany the initial experience of a tear or rift in the fabric of being”⁵⁵⁵ – implies an awareness (explicit consciousness) of oneself as not only subject but object, vulnerable to both enjoyment and suffering that one does not control; we can be “used, exploited, abused, dominated, killed” by each other, and “harmed, damaged, hurt, and

⁵⁵¹ William Connolly, *The Augustinian Imperative* (Newbury Park, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1993), 134.

⁵⁵² The book written by J (referred to as J because the author calls the god figure Yahweh, or Jehovah).

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

destroyed" by nature or god/s, but we can also be "helped, loved, nurtured, and befriended by others and blessed by nature/god."⁵⁵⁶

The repression of this awareness of oneself as object is what creates the uncanny. The Genesis story is uncanny⁵⁵⁷ because it recalls for us our past

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁵⁷ As opposed to Connolly's stricter definition, Freud says that the term "uncanny" tends to refer to "what excites fear in general," and in particular to "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" – i.e., what modern psychology refers to as anxiety, as opposed to fear. Freud notes the term's ultimate ambiguity: "among its different shades of meaning the word 'heimlich' exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, 'unheimlich.' What is heimlich thus comes to be unheimlich." (Gutzkow, Freud writes, comments, 'We call it "unheimlich"; you call it "heimlich."'") "In general we are reminded that the word 'heimlich' is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which, without being contradictory, are yet very different: on the one hand it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight. 'Unheimlich' is customarily used, we are told, as the contrary only of the first signification of 'heimlich,' and not of the second" ("The Uncanny," in *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume 17, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1974), 224-25). Freud says that what is familiar also contains what is concealed: "heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich. Unheimlich is in some way or other a sub-species of heimlich." Jentsch observes the "uncanny effect of epileptic fits, and of manifestations of insanity, because these excite in the spectator the impression of automatic, mechanical processes at work behind the 'ordinary appearance of mental activity' – that is, the hidden mechanical automatic functioning of something that is supposed to be autonomous. (In this sense, the enlightenment uncanny is the automaton concealed behind reason.) Connolly (though he might have examined the culturally inflected fear of death specific to our time and place) follows Freud in allowing primary narcissism a role in determining the uncanny but drops out Freud's explanation – the castration complex. Freud, roughly, argues that the ego's doubling (as a result of the prohibitions of primary narcissism, its repression of specific desires and its self-identification with acceptable desires) creates an agency that pushes away those desires, and anything associated with them; an other is created alongside this new agency. An unfamiliar other, a stranger, who is nevertheless ultimately the repressed desire at the core of oneself – and therefore intimately familiar. "The idea of the 'double' does not necessarily disappear with the passing of primary narcissism, for it can receive fresh meaning from the later stages of the ego's development. A special agency is slowly formed there, which is able to stand over against the rest of the ego, which has the function of observing and criticizing the self and of exercising a censorship within the mind, and which we become aware of as our 'conscience.' In the pathological case of delusions of being watched, this mental agency becomes isolated, dissociated from the ego, and discernible to the physician's eye. The fact that an agency of this kind exists, which is able to treat the rest of the ego like an object – the fact, that is, that man is capable of self-observation – renders it possible to invest the old idea of a 'double' with a new meaning and to ascribe a number of things to it – above all, those things which seem to self-criticism to belong to the old surmounted narcissism of earliest times." (In other words, those things that persist as latent/repressed desires... which to the conditioned conscience/perception appear as other, in need of constraint and punishment, because of the conscience/perception's "punitive orientation to difference." According to Freud, "When all is said and done, the quality of uncanniness can only come from the fact of the 'double' being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since surmounted – a stage, incidentally, at which it wore a more friendly aspect. The 'double' has become a thing of terror, just as, after the collapse of their religion, the gods turned into demons." It is "possible to recognize the dominance in the unconscious mind of a 'compulsion to repeat' proceeding from

experiences of "the contingency of life and the fragility of things;"⁵⁵⁸ it reminds us of the limits of our power. Familiar because we have experienced it, unfamiliar because we have repressed the experience. In our Euro-American case, this repression is profound: the anxiety that results from the experience of contingency is used to elicit further repression. In fact, the Augustinian morality elicits the uncanny (for example, in the retelling of the Augustinian account of Genesis) – the anxiety it occasions⁵⁵⁹ – in order to colonize it, turn it into revenge against the very figure this morality presents to elicit the uncanny⁵⁶⁰ (in Augustine's Genesis account – the snake, the man's doubt/curiosity, his and Eve's eating of the apple). We interpret our anxiety as guilt; the anxiety that the uncanny occasions "readily becomes translated into those pangs of guilt through which a moral economy reinstates the equivalences that had just been disturbed" by the uncanny.⁵⁶¹ Augustine's reading of Genesis "subdues the uncanny *within* morality" – that is, subdues the awareness of contingency, the vulnerability/possibility of reality - by making

the instinctual impulses and probably inherent in the very nature of the instincts — a compulsion powerful enough to overrule the pleasure principle, lending to certain aspects of the mind their daemonic character, and still very clearly expressed in the impulses of small children; a compulsion, too, which is responsible for a part of the course taken by the analyses of neurotic patients. All these considerations prepare us for the discovery that whatever reminds us of this inner 'compulsion to repeat' is perceived as uncanny;" "if psycho-analytic theory is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which recurs. This class of frightening things would then constitute the uncanny." Freud reiterates, "this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression;" "The uncanny effect of epilepsy and of madness has the same origin. The layman sees in them the working of forces hitherto unsuspected in his fellow-men, but at the same time he is dimly aware of them in remote corners of his own being" "The Uncanny," in *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume 17, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1974), 238-41).

⁵⁵⁸ William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 25.

⁵⁵⁹ The feeling of anxiety is the "most productive and dangerous effect" of the uncanny (William Connolly, *The Augustinian Imperative* (Newbury Park, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1993), 135).

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 132–33.

its source an omnipotent, benevolent (moral) god, and the uncanny within identity by repressing and oppressing otherness (one's vulnerability / possibility) wherever it appears, within oneself and others.

Whereas Augustinians highjack the anxiety elicited by the uncanny with ascetic techniques upon oneself and others to repress it, Connolly would have us accept with gratitude our vulnerability to contingency as also open-ended possibility – less terrifying, less in perceived need of repression and control. Instead of the Augustinian imperative for responsibility as absolute control / command over ourselves and others in keeping with the law of God, we might see moral responsibility as a constantly renegotiated and “indispensable social practice that typically contains elements of injustice in it, as a necessary activity (which is, because of anxiety) inherently susceptible to inflation by those who impose utopian dreams of unity, salvation, freedom, or agency onto [inherently heteronomous] life.”⁵⁶²

In *Identity/Difference* (1991), Connolly had already indicated how this utopian drive to self-reassurance⁵⁶³ is constituted by tactics of self-identity (and otherness) – tactics that attempt to stabilize an identity (e.g., selfless, good, saved) as universally normal by the “deniable violences”⁵⁶⁴ of the repression / oppression of difference as an other (e.g., the selfish will, the city of the flesh). (In Kant, Rawls and Habermas, the ideal of the abstract, universal, liberal subject is established by tactics of humiliation applied to repress / oppress the particular, acculturated subject.) These tactics, which aim at repressing and distracting from the anxiety occasioned by the uncanny, are

⁵⁶² Ibid., 101.

⁵⁶³ William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 9.

⁵⁶⁴ William Connolly, *The Augustinian Imperative* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 137.

socialized by (in our Euro-American case) an Augustinian morality,⁵⁶⁵ and, because they are typically subconscious and automatic, hard to change consciously.⁵⁶⁶ In *Identity/Difference* and *Augustinian* (1993) it is, therefore, already clear that moral dispositions/identities – both the Augustinian disposition and Connolly’s alternative “non-ressentimental” “ethical decency”⁵⁶⁷ – are formed or transformed by techniques (and counter-techniques) that change psychophysiology⁵⁶⁸ – especially Connolly’s invitation

⁵⁶⁵ One has “established tactics of self-identity... means by which one has become constituted as what one is” (William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 9).

⁵⁶⁶ This is not to say that conscious discursive engagement can not be an effective means of altering one’s orientation to morality and contingency, but that the means must engage affect (and, just to be clear, affect is *always* engaged in discursive analysis as well) in such a way that one’s conditioned responses to the anxiety of the uncanny do not further harden the structures of response – in this case, punitive ones. Connolly is aware – later in *Neuropolitics* – of this linguistic connection: “some brain nodules... have the capacity to register only intense, crude inscriptions, whereas others to which the first are connected are capable of linguistic refinement. But in the process of thinking, all of them form a complex series of loops and counterloops with each other, the rest of the body, and the larger culture” (William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 74).

⁵⁶⁷ William Connolly, *The Augustinian Imperative* (Newbury Park, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1993), 137.

⁵⁶⁸ In *Identity/Difference* (I/D), the “experience of contingency in identity” can be engendered by “genealogy and democratic agonism” (William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 11); the way these methods work as tactics/techniques that change dispositions is still unclear. But there are nevertheless hints in I/D and *Augustinian* of a new attention to techniques and their effects on moral disposition. “Genealogy,” the method of both *Augustinian* and I/D, is for Connolly a “mode” of reflection that “cultivates” dispositions (Ibid., 10). In *Augustinian*, Connolly’s inclusive and empathetic terminology appears to be consciously chosen – a series of symbols that “work subsymbolically” to recultivate affective dispositions, that appear to try to access the unconscious uncanny: though we have made each other suffer, we are invited as “friends” to understand our collective suffering, as well as our ability to forgive/accept the tragic contingency of the circumstances that have conditioned Augustine’s and our punitive dispositions. (Connolly reveals the contingencies leading to Augustine’s own conditioned tendencies in ethics and self-identification, as well as how Augustine’s tendencies amount to techniques that habituate us Euro-Americans to command moralities like Augustine’s.) Genealogical discourse is of course only one possible counter-technique, and by no means the most efficacious, but it is clear now that the change in orientation to morality that Connolly wants to effect must take account of and work psychophysiologicaly, even if the language of *Identity/Difference* (while conscious of the relationship between affect and interpretation) still makes no explicit connection between the theoretical analysis of genealogy and the visceral (i.e., psychophysiology). (This lack of awareness is apparent, for example, in the following citation: “In the contemporary world... practices of child-rearing, intimate relations, tactics of self-improvement, gender relations, administrative regulation, therapy, work-incentive systems, medicine, advertising, election strategy, and political dissent are all legitimized or delegitimized through the theorizations that help to constitute them...” (Ibid.,11).

in *Augustinian* (1993) to cultivate an ethical sensibility more open (less anxious and reactionary) to the uncanny by applying “subtle tactics to the self”⁵⁶⁹; even if Connolly’s explicit consideration of specific tactics/ techniques and their effect on “the visceral register” will have to wait until *Neuropolitics* (2002).⁵⁷⁰

In *Neuropolitics*, Connolly novelly and explicitly focuses on the visceral “register” – i.e., in a psychophysiological sense, how we are morally conditioned/ cultivated, and how we might cultivate a different ethical disposition. Though Connolly spends much of the book on the genealogization of accepted (Kantian and other^{571,572}) moral economies,⁵⁷³ this genealogical

⁵⁶⁹ William Connolly, *The Augustinian Imperative* (Newbury Park, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1993), 138.

⁵⁷⁰ In *Ethos of Pluralization* (1995), Connolly develops further the account of the formation of dispositions – especially fundamentalisms. Fundamentalisms “that demand... a unified faith, race, reason, gender duality, normal sexuality, nation and/or territory... ethnic cleansing, enforced heterosexuality, racialization of crime and punishment redogmatizations of divinity, nature, and reason... intensification of state border patrols” (xii). For example, white, blue-collar males made resentful by the workplace subjugation/ feminization, are then courted by the elite, right-wing ideal of masculine assertion, and so end up enacting a masculine fundamentalism, in which they “belligerently assert primordial rights against women, gays, intellectuals, and African-Americans” (William Connolly, *Ethos of Pluralization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 114). But Connolly’s analysis remains largely sociological (rather than psychophysiological), and his solutions, political.

⁵⁷¹ Indeed, the *Augustinian* cultivation project (1. genealogize established – i.e., accepted as “given, necessary, or intrinsic” – conceptions (“gender, identity, nature, the will, truth, the Law”) 2. “cultivate fugitive excesses or surpluses in the experience of life to fold greater generosity into the ethical sensibility governing you” 3. “apply subtle tactics to the self” to make it less anxious and reactionary in the face of the uncanny, less likely to use the anxiety generated by the uncanny to re-repress it in the interest of maintaining “established moral economies” 4. create political strategies that “fold agonistic generosity more deeply into the cultural ethos of a democratic society” (138)), minus the explicitly political agenda is more or less the stated agenda of *Neuropolitics* – 1) contest accepted moral economies – the focus this time on Kant and neoKantians 2) engender nontheistic gratitude 3) apply techniques that cultivate us to an affective disposition of agonistic respect (106). We might call this “disposition of agonistic respect” one of universal respect for persons (defined as beings with affective dispositions), as opposed to the Kantian disposition which respects persons not as affective and particular but rather as rational, abstract/ noumenal beings – i.e., which in the guise of respecting the universal law of reason in all rational beings subserves the particular interests of the dominant culture and class. As we have seen, In Kantian democratic theory, universal noumenal reason is supposed to provide the basis of universal respect for the law (even though Kant, Rawls and Habermas reveal that the Kantian subject’s moral disposition respects the law via techniques of conditioning).

⁵⁷² In both *Augustinian Imperative* and *Neuropolitics*, it looks like 2 and 3 are not very distinct and entail “subtle tactics of the self.” In fact, even the activity involved in 1 cannot but work on “the visceral register” just as “subtle techniques of the self” do, even if they are not theorized this way, as we have already seen in our discussion of the work linguistic signs do in Rawls’ and

critique is supplemented by a discussion of how neuroscientific findings help explain our moral conditioning and could inform our counter-techniques, in the service of greater self-governance (democracy). Connolly's neurophysiological theorization, like many popularizations of neuroscience, lacks systematicity, potentially undermining some of its conclusions and therefore its potential application to our own technical experimentation. As importantly, Connolly mostly limits his analysis of technique to a decontextualized discussion of watching film, discussing only indirectly/obliquely most of everyday life experience, outside the cinema or screening room – i.e., where we repeat or confront habitual behavior, and where we face the institutional and freedom-limiting authorities of our lives.⁵⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Connolly's discussion of neuroscience has some validity, and does suggest an important direction for a further elaborated and systematized psychophysiological theory that could be put in the service of freedom.

especially Habermas' theories of childhood and linguistic development. Connolly himself recognizes this point, citing Foucault, "It is not enough to say the subject is constituted in a symbolic system.... It is [also] constituted in real practices.... There is a technology of the constitution of the self which cuts across symbolic systems while using them." ["On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York, Pantheon, 1984), 369]. The thoughtful application by oneself of techniques to one's entrenched patterns of affective thought can both track the institutional technologies through which the visceral register has been organized and activate presumptive responsiveness to new social movements of pluralization" (William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 108).

⁵⁷³ This focus is an obvious legacy in the work of his students. For example, Paul Saurette, *The Kantian Imperative: Humiliation, Common Sense, Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); John Tambornino, *The Corporeal Turn: Passion, Necessity, Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

⁵⁷⁴ Our friends and intimate relations, my parents and siblings as they are now, strangers I pass by or interact with in public, school colleagues and authorities, employers I work for, corporations and companies I buy things from, administrative government offices I pay taxes to and get basic services from, police.

Connolly's neuroscientific evidence for cultivation

The basic point of Connolly's discussion of neuroscience is that dispositions are conditioned, neurophysiological structure, which interprets our present experience and makes our decisions, or significantly circumscribes their possible range. Dispositions are memory – i.e., they are neural representations of experience, which provide the context of perception and decision.

Dispositions are, according to neuroscientist Antonio Damasio,⁵⁷⁵ “records which are dormant and implicit... of the... emotional reaction to the object... [W]hen we recall an object... dispositions... make their implicit information explicit... we retrieve not just sensory data, but also accompanying motor and emotional data.”⁵⁷⁶ In the “miniscule” time required for our reaction to an object/event, much unconscious calculation – accessing of neuronal networks of affect-imbued representations of our experience – occurs “behind the seemingly open stage of your [conscious] mind.”⁵⁷⁷ When we are “in the midst of action,” this dispositional memory, cultivated/conditioned over our lifetime, provides context – the way we see our situation, our options, and their consequences. This context constrains or perhaps even makes our decisions, even though we appear to make them freely and in the moment.

⁵⁷⁵ Behavioral neurologist and neuroscientist, currently David Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience at the University of Southern California, director of USC's Brain & Creativity Institute (BCI) analyzing and treating movement, behavior, and cognition disorders, recipient of the several prestigious awards in medicine and neuroscience, and author of several best-selling books on emotion and the brain. Damasio and Joseph LeDoux (below) are Connolly's main sources for his discussion of neuroscience and its implications for understanding habit and experimenting with technical modifications of it.

⁵⁷⁶ A. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness* (London: Heinemann, 1999), 160–1.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

Dispositional sites

Damasio calls the neurons (neuronal networks) that are fundamental to our dispositions “somatic markers.” Located in the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, which, Connolly notes, operates “below the threshold of [conscious] reflection,”⁵⁷⁸ somatic markers do the work of deliberation, sifting through a “wealth of detail” and highlighting components “that are likely to be relevant”⁵⁷⁹—usually pertaining to the danger or favorability of the object/event. Connolly reiterates Damasio’s account of a patient with damage to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex who was able to react fearlessly, noninstinctively, to the feeling of his car sliding on ice, so that the car remained in his control. He calmly drove over an icy patch of road because he had no access to the somatic markers that precipitated other drivers’ panicked responses and accidents in the same conditions. But when asked to choose between two dates to return to the clinic, this patient was unable to discriminate between relevant and irrelevant information:

For the better part of a half-hour, the patient enumerated reasons for and against each of the two dates: previous engagements, proximity to other engagements, possible meteorological conditions, virtually anything that one could reasonably think about concerning a simple date. Just as calmly as he had driven over the ice... he was now walking us through a tiresome cost-benefit analysis, an endless outlining and fruitless comparison of options and possible consequences. It took enormous discipline to listen to all of this without pounding on the table and telling him to stop, but we

⁵⁷⁸ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 35.

⁵⁷⁹ A. Damasio, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon, 1994), 175.

finally did tell him, quietly, that he should come on the second of the alternative dates.... He simply said, "That's fine."⁵⁸⁰

Cut off from the unconscious deliberation (contextualization) work his somatic markers would execute, Damasio's patient, Connolly comments, was "condemned to the infinite imperative of calculative reasoning because he had lost the affect-imbued markers appropriate to contextual decision making."⁵⁸¹

In addition to the somatic markers, Connolly focuses on the amygdala, a key anatomical structure in fast decision-making. It is part of a "system that generates rapid, coarse judgments in dangerous situations operating below the capacity of conscious assessment and feeling."⁵⁸² Connolly cites neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux's⁵⁸³ influential study of the amygdala – its involvement in "those unconscious crunching operations during the half-second delay [between sensory reception and consolidation of conscious perceptions, feelings, judgments], working 'sub-symbolically, in codes that are not decipherable consciously.'⁵⁸⁴"⁵⁸⁵ The amygdala "both influences conduct on its own and bumps *intensities* into conscious thinking and judgment [in the cortex]

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 194.

⁵⁸¹ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 35. Whether this demonstrates "the limits of pure reason," as Damasio (*Descartes' Error* 194) and Connolly conclude, is not clear. Nevertheless, this subject resembles Rawls' decision-maker, with veil of ignorance, devoid of relevant markers, which it is the project of the veil to obscure; and Habermas' cosmopolitan subject, who identifies only with norms... but in the end turns out to need and already be attached to a supplementary concrete object of identification.

⁵⁸² Ibid., 90.

⁵⁸³ NYU Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology, director of the Center for the Neuroscience of Fear and Anxiety for analyzing human pathological anxiety and fear through animal research, author of the critically acclaimed books on the brain and fear, *The Emotional Brain* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996) and *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002).

⁵⁸⁴ Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 280.

⁵⁸⁵ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 90–91.

that the complex brain regions then process according to their own capacities of reception, speed, and organization.”⁵⁸⁶

Connolly’s Conclusions

Though the nature of their relationship remains unclear in Connolly’s discussion, the amygdala and somatic markers, both appear to register the effect of past conditioning upon present conscious processes unnoticed and in parallel rather than serially (the way the conscious mind perceives).⁵⁸⁷ Both convert culture into individual response/behavior. Somatic markers have “intersubjective and linguistic elements mixed into them;”⁵⁸⁸ they are “culturally mobilized, corporeal disposition[s] through which affect-imbued, preliminary orientations to perception and judgment scale down the material factored into cost-benefit analyses, principled judgments, and reflective experiments.”⁵⁸⁹ Via the somatic markers, the “higher, linguistic register” responds not just to intelligible signs/events, but also the “visceral dimension of trauma, an intense set of feelings that gather in the gut, the muscles, and the pallor of the skin.”⁵⁹⁰ The amygdala “contains culturally influenced tendencies to action.”⁵⁹¹ It participates in a subsystem that both “organizes coarse infraperceptions and impulses to action on its own” and shapes higher brain regions’ “prioritizations with respect to perception, argument, interpretation,

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., 90.

⁵⁸⁷ “Consciousness seems to do things serially... one at a time, whereas the unconscious mind, being composed of many different systems, seems to work more or less in parallel” (Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 280).

⁵⁸⁸ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 36.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., 35.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 206, Fn 27. Italics mine.

and action.”⁵⁹² “Thinking and judgment are already well under way before they enter the picture as conscious processes.”⁵⁹³

In addition, Connolly discusses virtual memories – records of the past in body-brain networks that have “effects upon the present without taking the shape of recollection.”⁵⁹⁴ They effect our perception without our awareness, whether we are “sunk in the middle of action”⁵⁹⁵ or in non-emergency situations: “even ordinary perception moves pretty fast, faster than the conscious mind can think.” Perceptions are organized “through complex mixtures of sensory encounter, virtual memory, and bodily affect.”⁵⁹⁶ Virtual memories “mobilized” during perception “subtract from the incoming sensory material a surplus irrelevant to a small set of action possibilities....”⁵⁹⁷

Thus, through virtual memory, somatic markers and the amygdala, Connolly concludes that acculturation exerts its influence through the “incomprehensible quantities of unconscious calculation”⁵⁹⁸ that take place during “the half-second delay between the reception of sensory material and the consolidation of perceptions, feelings, and judgments”⁵⁹⁹ in our conscious interpretation of this material. “*Thought* [and behavior more generally] *is always*

⁵⁹² Ibid. Italics mine.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 28.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 97.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁹⁶ “As your affect-charged biocultural memory deems particular elements unnecessary or unworthy, they are subtracted from the myriad sensory materials rushing in” (Ibid., 28).

⁵⁹⁷ During the act of perception, memory “recovers” the “accumulated efforts of the past” in the form of “intelligently coordinated movements... the definite order and systematic character with which the actual movements take place...” (Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer (New York: Zone, 1991), 82, cited in William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 27). Memory “no longer represents our past to us, it acts it; and if it still deserves the name of memory, it is not because it conserves bygone images, but because it prolongs their useful effect into the present moment” (Ibid., 28).

⁵⁹⁸ Tor Norretranders, *The User Illusion: Cutting Consciousness Down to Size*, tr. Jonathan Sydenham (New York: Viking, 1998): 164.

⁵⁹⁹ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 83.

*under way by the time you place it under the incomplete governance of intentionality and public expression.”*⁶⁰⁰

Tactics

If perception, thought, decision is already influenced by the acculturated / conditioned amygdala, somatic markers, and virtual memory by the time consciousness becomes aware of an object / event, then directly appealing to this consciousness to change its perception and behavior will encounter resistance, as Connolly repeatedly states: “The logic of everyday perception seems innate to actors in the midst of action;”⁶⁰¹ The “weight of somatic markers... generates a need for tactics and techniques by which to work on them when their compressions of experience become too restrictive or destructive”⁶⁰² – as in the Augustinian command morality; “the amygdala cannot be changed by argument alone, but it, or the relays in which it is implicated, may be susceptible to some degree of tactics of change that *mimic the way it was culturally programmed.*”⁶⁰³

Connolly, nevertheless, proceeds to spend the larger portion of *Neuropolitics* using the neuroscientific evidence of cultural conditioning to *argue* against established command moralities of transcendentalists and thick universalists, who tend automatically to dismiss “perspectives anchored in sensible and infrasensible sources.”⁶⁰⁴ The fact that sense experience in the form of conditioning / acculturation tends to govern thought / behavior means that Kant and neoKantians treatment of arts of the self (“ubiquitous exercises, tools,

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 71.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁰² Ibid., 35–36.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 206, Fn 27. Italics mine.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 106.

and techniques helping to shape thinking and sensibility in profound ways”⁶⁰⁵) to “therapies” (aimed at removing “neuroses or blockages in the powers of normal rationality, recognition, deliberation, and decision”) is a misleading reduction:

If the unconscious dimension of thought is at once *immanent* in subsisting below the direct reach of consciousness, *effective* in influencing conduct on its own and also affecting conscious judgment, *material* in being embodied in neurological processes, and *cultural* in being given part of its shape by previous inscriptions of experience and new experimental interventions, then several theories of morality [including] the Kantian model of command through the Habermasian model of deliberative ethics and the Rawlsian model of justice... may deserve active contestation [because] some of the above theories systematically underplay the role of technique and artistry in thinking and ethics while others overestimate the degree to which the cultivation of an ethical sensibility is linked to an intrinsic purpose susceptible to general attunement or recognition.⁶⁰⁶

Fortunately,⁶⁰⁷ this (genealogization of command moralities, aimed at opening transcendentalists and thick universalists up to the immanent naturalist’s “ethics of cultivation”⁶⁰⁸) is just one of Connolly’s three related strategies to

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 85.

⁶⁰⁶ “The apodictic experience of morality as law recorded by Kant does not flow from the noumenal to the phenomenal realm as he contended. It may flow, rather, from the infrasensible dictates of the amygdala into higher consciousness” (Ibid., 104). Connolly makes clear that what he intends is not to disprove “the Kantian transcendental” but to open the door to “a contending interpretation of the transcendental field... It may be that Kant’s identification of an inscrutable transcendental field is profound, while his insistence that it must be eternal, supersensible, and authoritative in the last instance is open to modification” (Ibid., 85).

⁶⁰⁷ The “visceral [i.e., cultivated / conditioned] resentment to difference... blunts the capacity to nourish agonistic respect between interdependent constituencies, and diminishes critical responsiveness to new movements of cultural diversification” (Ibid., 106).

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

“spiritualize positive possibilities on the immanent field.”⁶⁰⁹ We need also to 2) create techniques that lessen “existential resentment against the absence of... final guarantees... in the world;”⁶¹⁰ in particular, techniques that work upon the amygdala;⁶¹¹ and 3) recultivate the “infrasensible” conditioned self to increase our “preliminary gratitude for the abundance of being already there,^[612] in the interests of folding more modesty and receptive generosity into entrenched presumptions, established interests, and operational codes.”⁶¹³ (Practically speaking, these latter two strategies are indistinguishable; decreasing existential resentment is by definition to increase one’s existential gratitude.)

Still, despite the resistances that Connolly says result from our conditioned dispositions, his discussion of tactics centers primarily on the category of “thought.” The above three (or two) strategies should all be pursued because *thoughts* can be partly changed by both conscious argument and tactics that have their effect unconsciously, and change in each of the conscious⁶¹⁴ and unconscious “registers” can “filter into the experience and

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid. “[O]ne can strengthen or modify a sensibility, to some uncertain degree, by working tactically upon the infrasensible register in which it is set” (Ibid., 105).

⁶¹¹ “For the amygdala is implicated in a larger brain system that triggers fear, anxiety, resentment” (Ibid., 104).

⁶¹² Connolly has Varela’s buddhist strategy in mind here, and so the feeling of contentment that arises from meditative breathing is a relevant example. See Francisco Varela et al., *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

⁶¹³ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 106. Since the world is neither “a dispenser of rewards for virtue” nor simply “a pliable medium susceptible to human mastery,” (*The Augustinian Imperative: A Reflection on the Politics of Morality* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1993), 9). Connolly says we can think and feel our experience of the world as an “abundance” in terms of the gift we receive in “richness of being” (*Why I am not a Secularist* (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 54), adopt an attitude of “nontheistic gratitude,” which embraces the “nonteleological excess of being over identity,” rather than trying to establish one’s own truth and purity by alienating/eliminating those uncanny elements that constitute/d a threat to my sense of security.

⁶¹⁴ “Thinking” itself is a technique – it carries “compositional power, participating in modifying old dispositions and forging new habits even as it *expresses* established habits and dispositions” (William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 99).

imagination available to the others:" "You work experimentally on the relays between thought-imbued *intensities* below the level of feeling and linguistic complexity, thought-imbued *feelings* below the level of linguistic sophistication, *images* that trigger responses at both levels, and linguistically sophisticated patterns of *narrative, argument, and judgment*."⁶¹⁵

This same preoccupation with thought is reflected in Connolly's technique of choice: film.

Technique - Film

Connolly's "short list of everyday techniques... by which thinking is altered in its direction, speed, intensity, or sensibility"⁶¹⁶ includes listening to music, circulatory surgery, running, Prozac and Valium, whipping, bathing, studying, giving in to feelings, concentrating on a practical activity, full-spectrum lighting, talking in public, watching TV analytically, reading, drinking wine, meditating, dancing, and avoidance. Technique, "in film, institutional life, and everyday life, is ubiquitous."⁶¹⁷ But Connolly spends much of his time in *Neuropolitics* on film.

Film is an effective technique because its "interplay of sound, rhythm, movement, and image... communicate[s] affective energies to us, some of which pass below intellectual attention while still influencing emotions, judgments, and actions...."⁶¹⁸ Film, in other words, can work upon us *unconsciously* to open us up to contingency, the uncanny nature of reality, the uncanny nature of ourselves – reality that is (conversely) done violence to by a

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 100.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., 102.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., 13.

moral/ethical disposition that aims at commanding it into an untenable identity. How exactly film works unconsciously upon the amygdala to change dispositions is not clear here. Connolly's discussion centers more on the role of virtual memory (whose implicit relation to the amygdala and conditioned dispositions was noted earlier). But film, it seems, is primarily special for Connolly more for its *conscious* than its *unconscious* possibilities: film allows the opportunity for *conscious* reflection on constitutive virtual memories because one does not need while watching film to make action decisions at the time of perception the way one does in everyday life; "to focus on the sounds, sights and smells of a scene or to wallow in your imagination... can be *dangerous* in operational perception."⁶¹⁹ The longer the delay between perception and action, the more the constitutive virtual memories are explicitly available to reevaluation⁶²⁰ - i.e., creative/"inventive" thinking.^{621,622,623} In this respect, film occupies a privileged place, along with "TV, meditation, and brain/body experiments" (though none of these receives the extended consideration film does), in allowing awareness of the nature of perception.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 28. Italics mine. But note how the focus/emphasis here (and below) is primarily on "how perception proceeds"... and only secondarily and thinly on recultivation.

⁶²⁰ Connolly, discussing Bergson, Ibid..

⁶²¹ Virtual memories are the foundation of creative thinking, but only "in settings less constrained by the requirements of action" (Ibid., 92).

⁶²² "During thinking, as the imperious demands of action-oriented perception are relaxed, elements in a nonchronological region of time drift, slide, and bounce into communication with each other. The *creative* dimension of thinking flows from this encounter between a nonchronological region of time, the fugitive present, and an uncertain future. Its *compositional* effect... is engendered by new pathways mapped into the body and brain as new thinking becomes conditioned" (Ibid., 97).

⁶²³ Though Connolly is less careful, I will, in general, avoid using the word "habituated" or "habituation" to refer to what in psychology and physiology are referred to as "conditioned" or "conditioning." "Habituation" in psychology refers to the progressively diminished probability of behavioral response to a stimulus with its repeated presentation; and it is a non-associative form of learning. "Conditioning," on the other hand, refers to associative learning in which the repeated presentation of an unconditioned stimulus with a neutral stimulus eventually confers the ability on the neutral stimulus (now conditioned stimulus) to elicit the same behavioral response as the unconditioned stimulus without presentation of the latter. "Habituation," in this regard, refers to precisely the opposite of what Connolly appears to intend.

But, not surprisingly, this is not true of all film. Connolly is in particular interested in films that “display the ubiquitous role of bodily affect in perception and judgment”⁶²⁴ – that in effect make us think in a more Bergsonian way. Though Connolly writes that Bergsonian interpretation is useful because it “opens the door to a wide range of tactics by which to *work* on affective memories that help to structure perception and judgment,”⁶²⁵ his discussion is almost exclusively about how to combine Bergson’s insights with awareness of technique in films to change our understanding of perception in general.

The flashback, for example, when combined with Bergsonian theory, can “make visible to viewers how each encounter insinuates into perception affectively imbued memories below the threshold of explicit feeling and visibility.”⁶²⁶ The close-up calls attention to “side [or infraconscious] perceptions” that situated actors fail to perceive but are nevertheless later consequential;⁶²⁷ in *Vertigo*, the unrealistic-looking falling body of Madeleine and the prematurity of her scream, both of which Connolly first took to be evidence of substandard technical work by Hitchcock, is revealed on Connolly’s third viewing to have been installed intentionally by Hitchcock as an “infraconscious perception that later infuses an eerie undertone of doubt into recollections of Madeleine’s fall to death.”⁶²⁸ The resulting “layered memory” (part conscious, part unconscious) of the scene can result in a seemingly inexplicable new line of thought or action (e.g., John Ferguson’s obsessive search for Madeleine even after he seems consciously to have

⁶²⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 41.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 14.

accepted her death as fact). In *Citizen Kane*, there are three levels of memory: “(a) explicit memories called up by an existing situation, (b) potential recollections that... operate implicitly in action contexts” where there is no time for explicit recall, and (c) fragmentary / inarticulable effects (traces) of the past in/ on the present.⁶²⁹ Though these “affective markers” never enter consciousness, they might be “susceptible to some degree of being worked upon by tactical means.”^{630,631} You can, for example, let it “infect your dream life” and work upon the infrasensible register that way.⁶³² *The Apostle* and its sequel demonstrate varying syntheses of doctrine and practice appropriate to the varying subjectivities of characters, so that all – the ministers and the ministered – develop a “trust in life,”⁶³³ undermining (where it existed) their dogmatism and resentment – the very means by which the doctrine of each was originally secured. In addition, between the two sequels, there is an “irrational” cut, a disruption in the action, much like Jim Jarmusch’s intervening dark screen moments in *Stranger than Paradise*. These moments “underline the element of contingency and creativity in the connections forged across scenes.”^{634,635}

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 38.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 40.

⁶³¹ The ambiguity around the identity and meaning of “Rosebud” “enacts Bergson’s view that the past is constituted not simply out of the present that it was but during the time it is called into being;” each of the witnesses’ and Kane’s memories are “shaped by the affect-imbued context” they arise within (Ibid., 37).

⁶³² Ibid., 40.

⁶³³ Ibid., 137.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 135.

⁶³⁵ *Five Easy Pieces*’ closing scene “could rapidly mobilize a series of affectively imbued virtual memories and, above them, a set of explicit recollections,”⁶³⁵ thus “tracking” the way the film conveys the role of Bobby/Robert’s past “in his present through bits and pieces [flashbacks] as the story proceeds” (Ibid., 70). Or, in *Being John Malkovich*, Malkovich’s uncanny sense that his desire is out of his own control may allow the viewer “the dim perception you sometimes have of something alien inhabiting your desire. It renders such disturbing or delicious experiences more available for reflection” (Ibid., 29–30).

There is no doubt value in Connolly's combination of film analyses and neuroscientific findings; they may even create virtual memory images that, as Connolly hopes, will change our way of perceiving and thinking in the direction of democracy and agonistic respect. But if all thought is affective/dispositional, as he repeatedly says throughout *Neuropolitics*, and if the "exercises, tools, and techniques" that "shape thinking and sensibility in profound ways"⁶³⁶ are likewise ubiquitous, if "technique, in film, institutional life, and everyday life, is ubiquitous,"⁶³⁷ if Foucault, whom Connolly cites on this point, is right that "the subject is constituted in real practices, [that] there is a constitution of the self which cuts across symbolic systems while using them"⁶³⁸ – and if Foucault means not just arts of the self but also institutional techniques that cultivate/condition the modern subject – if all of this is true, then we may want to know just how far an awareness of cinematic technique and theory will cultivate a freer ethical disposition.⁶³⁹ An ethical disposition opposed to the *project of docility* that Foucault says has been the object of our modern institutions of power since "the enlightenment" – or, in Connolly's terms, a project of cultivating the Augustinian command subjectivity.

Watching film while thinking about Bergsonian theory may help cultivate out of our ressentimental (Augustinian) dispositions an ethical disposition towards democracy and agonistic respect. But if this ressentimental disposition is strong (structured into neural networks that have been strengthened throughout formative and later years) and ubiquitous (i.e.,

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 85.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 102.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 108, citing Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 369.

⁶³⁹ Connolly suggests combining film technique and one's own experience, contemporary neuroscience and cultural theory of perception can "trigger creativity in your own thinking or cultivate some noble potentiality in your sensibility" (Ibid., 16–17).

constituted by daily practices through which we respond fearfully and punitively to the stress we feel in reaction to “others” and at the prospect of a more democratic engagement), then we (“the people,” who claim to want more governing power over our lives) probably need more broadly applicable techniques, that can be used in many activities throughout the day, instead of just in those moments in the theater (or in front of the video screen) and when we can take time to “get away” from the rapid pace of life. This is probably as true in both types of instances that Connolly says would prompt us to want to change our dispositions: when we are a) “confronted with the cruel effects our perceptual habits have on those marginalized or demonized by them,” or b) “when some ingrained habits of perception foster debilitating anxiety and depression”⁶⁴⁰ – especially the latter; persons *debilitated* by anxiety and depression are less likely to turn to Bergson and films like *Stranger than Paradise* for relief than to something with a more ubiquitous effect, like anti-depressant or anxiety-reducing drugs (which appear to work rather by producing psychic indifference than by causing empathy, which would be counter to Connolly’s goal of respectful agonism⁶⁴¹). In addition, if Connolly is right that our dispositions are less susceptible to direct appeals to our logic, because our logic is under the control of our fearful,⁶⁴² ressentimental dispositions,⁶⁴³ then, if we

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 29.

⁶⁴¹ M. Scoppetta et al., “Selective Serotonine Reuptake Inhibitors prevents emotional lability in healthy subjects.” *European Review for Medical and Pharmacological Sciences* 9 (2005), 343–48; Shauna P. Reinblatt, and Mark A. Riddle, “Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor-Induced Apathy: A Pediatric Case Series,” *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology* 16, no. 1/2 (2006), 227–33.

⁶⁴² As I try to make clear above (see footnote 543), Nietzsche, in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, discusses ressentiment as initially *premised* on powerlessness and fear, afterwards becoming an avoidance and suppression of uncertainty by the assertion of slave morality.

⁶⁴³ The distinction that must be made here is not between consciously and unconsciously consequential techniques, but between techniques that elicit defensive reactions and those that do not. If talking about moral disposition genealogically or otherwise evokes defensive reactions, these reactions will in general preclude any change in disposition except a reinforcement of the eliciting stimulus’s association with pain/punishment, a strengthening of

want to effect changes that address it we will have to rely less heavily on techniques like Connolly's Bergsonian film-watching.

But, first – and more importantly – to evaluate/prescribe techniques in terms of their relative strength and direction of dispositional effect, we will need a more systematic understanding of our neuropsychologies than that provided by Connolly's in part ambiguous discussion of the amygdala, somatic markers, and virtual memories. We can make better use of neuroscientific findings on the mechanisms of conditioning to provide a more explicit understanding of the techniques that cultivate our ressentimental subjectivity⁶⁴⁴ (the one we tend to see in modern democratic societies), as well as how to change it.

Finally, in the work of changing our dispositional relationship to our cultural traditions/authorities, we may discover that our way of relating to authorities also changes, both within and outside of our selves, perhaps even in more aggressive directions than are implied by "democracy and agonistic respect." The creation of democracy will probably require a disposition *not only* ethically predisposed to democratic governance *but* also willing to confront arbitrary authority in its several forms, not simply its dispositional form in dialogical relations and or only along politically legitimated lines (e.g., voting, private debate, and work in the privacy of one's neighborhood – running, drinking – and one's home – movies, TV, running, sleeping; the latter are all techniques that Connolly notes). A less fearful disposition. One that can speak and act fearlessly.

its ability to evoke, in this case, a ressentimental moral reaction, or, in other words, a strengthening of the ressentimental moral disposition.

⁶⁴⁴ Though Connolly suggests transformative "tactics" – "tactics that mimic the way [the amygdala] was culturally programmed," (William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 206, Fn 27), an analysis of the techniques of cultural programming is largely absent from his work.

Neurophysiology Revisited

Identifying techniques that will be effective in freeing our dispositions from their ressentimentality requires some understanding of what it takes to cultivate or condition a disposition. Given that our disposition is our neural micro-architecture, the neural site of our conditioning, techniques are consequential or not, in particular directions, at this micro-architectural level. Our entire neural architecture, which therefore includes our dispositions, is determined by the interaction of the organism's homeostatic striving with its environment – both 1) the unchangeable macro-architecture, which is determined by the interaction of genetic coding (the neural record of our species' homeostatic striving) with the embryonic, fetal, and childhood biological environment (which, in most cases, is stable enough to ensure what we call "normal" development) that establishes basic motor and cognitive abilities, and 2) the relatively plastic/changeable micro-architecture, which is both limited and produced by the interaction of our macro-architecture with the environment. Any techniques we apply to the organism will therefore meet up against the limits and possibilities of a macro- and micro-architecture (conditioned memory / representations) determined by the organism's past experience and conditioning (including its technical training), some (macro-architecture and part of our micro-architecture) which are general to us as humans, regardless of our culture and some (part of our micro-architecture) specific to our conditioning in a particular culture.⁶⁴⁵ We can, based on an understanding of our neural architecture, identify a few criteria that techniques

⁶⁴⁵ What can be changed within our dispositions must be determined experimentally. In fact, neuroscience/psychology (and indeed all of human history) is a record of experiments in what can be changed, and to what effect.

must possess in order to recondition a disposition. But we may also, with a rough conception of our particular micro-architecture, be able to identify criteria more particular to freeing a ressentimental Euro-American disposition from its ressentimentality.

Neurophysiology reexamined: Dispositions in the brain

Actions become habits/tendencies by becoming structured as memory (conscious and unconscious) – the substrate of our behavior (including thought and action) – in the “plastic” (malleable) micro-architecture of our brains.

“Plasticity” is a homeostatic mechanism, an essential part of the human organism qua “homeostasis machine.”⁶⁴⁶ The human body’s genetic inheritance is a set of mechanisms that *automatically* regulate life and aim at not just survival but well-being.⁶⁴⁷ Damasio, borrowing from Spinoza, refers to the self as a *conatus* – “striving, endeavor, tendency” of a thing to persevere in its own being. “In biological terms,” the *conatus* is “the aggregate of dispositions laid down in brain circuitry that, once engaged by internal or environmental conditions, seeks both survival and well-being.”⁶⁴⁸

In order of increasing complexity, this set of inherited mechanisms/dispositions is: metabolism (endocrine/hormonal secretions, digestive muscular contractions, etc., which control heart rate, blood pressure, circulation, blood and intercellular acidity/alkalinity, protein, lipid, and carbohydrate storage and distribution); basic reflexes (e.g., startle reaction to noise, touch, heat, cold, dark); immune system (warding off of viruses, bacteria, parasites, toxic chemicals – internally or externally generated); pleasure

⁶⁴⁶ Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2003), 31.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

(reward) and pain (punishment) behaviors (including approach and withdrawal); drives and motivations (e.g., hunger, thirst, curiosity and exploration, play and sex);⁶⁴⁹ emotions (joy, sorrow, fear, pride, shame, sympathy, and so on); and, finally, feelings (perceptual maps of bodily state – of all the other preceding levels of homeostatic regulation (primarily), and (secondarily and with time) of thoughts consonant with that state and a certain mode of thinking).

As complex organisms, all of our mechanisms of self-regulation, “whether spontaneous or reactive,” and even down to the cellular level, result from commands – though these are *primarily* unconscious – from the brain.⁶⁵⁰ They exist as “dispositional representations” in the brain, as the “micro-architecture” of the brain. A dispositional representation “is a dormant firing potentiality which comes to life when neurons fire, with a particular pattern, at certain rates, for a certain amount of time, and toward a particular target which happens to be another ensemble of neurons....” The end result is a particular behavioral response to which the organism is predisposed by its firing patterns (i.e., by its reactions, its preparation of the organism). “[F]iring patterns result from the strengthening or weakening of synapses, and that, in turn, results from functional changes occurring at the microscopic level within the fiber branches of neurons (axons and dendrites).”⁶⁵¹

These functional changes that occur at the microscopic level can occur only because of what is called “plasticity” – the ability of synapses to change structure and connectivity to reflect the co-occurrence of stimuli in the organism’s internal or external environment. Plasticity *proper* occurs with the

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 31–33.

⁶⁵⁰ A. Damasio, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon, 1994), 89.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., 104.

birth of synapses. But the brain is plastic in a more general sense from the beginning (before synaptogenesis); even in the developing nervous system of the embryo, genes interact with the environment in neural development. In other words, experience/environment is crucial, gets recorded and contributes to the structure of the organism; its effects ramify throughout the organism's life. The development of the brain's macro-architecture as much as its micro-architecture depends on plasticity.

The brain's basic architecture, its "initial connections" are produced primarily by genetic and other internal environmental factors.⁶⁵² But even the earliest stages of the organism's development rely on the chemical environment of the mother – the amino acids the embryo's genes use to produce the proteins⁶⁵³ necessary for its development are available only from its mother; and the embryo is affected by toxins, chemical additives, hormones, antibodies in the chemical environment provided by the mother. Shortly after neuron production has begun, neurons are segregated (under the control of homeotic genes) into different brain regions, where they will have sizes and shapes and possess transmitters and modulators specific to their respective brain regions. This neuronal differentiation is, while directed genetically, nevertheless subject to the influence of the specific chemical environment of its brain region.⁶⁵⁴ Neurons migrating from the neural tube to specific brain regions also functionally differentiate according to the region they migrate to – i.e., their

⁶⁵² Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002), 72. The embryonic brain develops from the ectoderm, one of the embryo's three germinal layers (ecto-, meso-, and endo-derm). The ectoderm thickens to become the neural plate, which becomes the neural tube, in which neurons are produced by precursor cells, under the influence of hormones from outside the neural tube.

⁶⁵³ Genes' purpose is protein assembly.

⁶⁵⁴ Young neurons transplanted before differentiation into a different region take on characteristics specific to the recipient region rather than the donor. See Shlaggar, B. L. and D. D. O'Leary, "Potential of Visual Cortex to Develop an Array of Functional Units Unique to Somatosensory Cortex," *Science* 252 (1991), 1556–60.

synaptic connections. (Migrating cells are functionally ambivalent.) The growth of axons, as growth cones, towards other neurons with which they will synapse depends on the chemical state of the growing axon – which determines whether it attaches to or repels specific proteins in their environment.⁶⁵⁵ Once growth is complete, growth cones cede to axonal terminals which form synapses with postsynaptic neurons. Activity at synapses leads to an increase in synaptic complexity – the stabilization of active synaptic connections, the regression (elimination) of inactive synaptic connections, and activity-dependent formation of new synapses (synaptogenesis).⁶⁵⁶ This principle applies throughout the life of synapses, not just during development.

In sum, our brains will all, given a normal chemical-physical environment during development, develop approximately the same structures and circuits – the same macro-structure and in part micro-structure (which we share as a result of similar experiential histories regardless of our particular cultures and subcultures). Experience as synaptic activity (via synaptic plasticity) also establishes a micro-structural connectivity specific to the experience of each culture, each subculture, and each individual.⁶⁵⁷

Synaptic connectivity, which constitutes macro-architectural developmental growth and the micro-architectural strengthening of synaptic connections, is established by “long term potentiation” (LTP). LTP occurs at a synapse when the excitation (action potential) of a presynaptic neuron – that on its own does not produce an action potential in the postsynaptic neuron (i.e., a

⁶⁵⁵ J. R. Terman and A.L. Kolodkin, “Attracted or Repelled? Look Within,” *Neuron* 23 (1999), 193–95.

⁶⁵⁶ S. R. Quartz and T. J. Sejnowski, “The Neural Basis of Cognitive Development: A Constructivist Manifesto,” *Behavioural Brain Research* 20 (1997).

⁶⁵⁷ See Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002): 72.

weakly connected presynaptic neuron; neuron C in Figure 2) – coincides with the firing of a presynaptic neuron that on its own *does* produce an action potential in the postsynaptic neuron (i.e., a strongly connected presynaptic neuron; neuron A, in Figure 1). This coincident presynaptic excitation produces changes at the postsynaptic cell membrane which afterwards make the postsynaptic neuron more likely, or “potentiated,” to excite in response to excitation in the previously weakly connected presynaptic neuron alone. This change, called “early LTP” (Figures 3 and 4), occurs in the course of minutes and tends to last less than three hours.⁶⁵⁸ Late LTP (Figure 4), which always

⁶⁵⁸ U. Frey and R. G. Morris, “Synaptic Tagging and Long-Term Potentiation,” *Nature* 385 (1997), 533–36. When a presynaptic neuron excites/“fires,” its axonal terminals release glutamate into the synaptic gap. Released glutamate, the most widespread and abundant neurotransmitter in the nervous system of mammals, is then bound/taken up by two types of postsynaptic receptors – AMPA and NMDA receptors. The AMPA receptor (alpha-amino-3-hydroxy-5-methylisoxazole-4- propionic acid; AMPA receptors are the primary facilitators of fast excitatory synaptic transmission throughout the nervous system) is the primary means by which the postsynaptic cell fires. *Only* if the AMPA receptor binds glutamate and causes a postsynaptic action potential (and the depolarization of the cell and unblocking of the NMDA receptor) *does* the NMDA receptor (N-methyl d-aspartate) bind glutamate and allow the passage of calcium into the cell. This passage of calcium into the postsynaptic cell causes the phosphorylation of and consequent increased receptivity of AMPA receptor proteins at the synapse in question (see H. K. Lee, “Phosphorylation of the AMPA receptor GluR1 subunit is required for synaptic plasticity and retention of spatial memory,” *Cell* 112 (5) (March 7, 2003), 631–43). In addition, glutamate released from the firing presynaptic neuron precipitates (via protein kinases activated by synaptic glutamate release) the insertion of (previously) nonsynaptic AMPA receptors into the postsynaptic cell membrane. After these changes the same amount of glutamate from the presynaptic cell is more likely to result in a postsynaptic action potential (This phosphorylation reaction is characteristic of early long-term potentiation. Where the presynaptic cell was only weakly connected to the postsynaptic cell – that is, where the presynaptic cell’s glutamate release upon excitation was insufficient to cause an action potential – the postsynaptic cell will *not* fire, NMDA receptors will *not* allow Ca passage into the cell, and the AMPA receptors that cause firing/action potential will *not* be phosphorylated, so that the next time that the presynaptic cell fires, the postsynaptic cell will be *no more likely* to excite. Where the pre-existing connection between pre- and post-synaptic cells was already strong, the glutamate released by the excitation of the presynaptic cell will be sufficient by itself to cause the excitation of the postsynaptic cell. However, if the weakly connected presynaptic cell fires at the same time as a strongly connected presynaptic cell, the glutamate released from the weakly connected presynaptic cell will bind the NMDA receptors at the weakly connected cell’s synapse as well - because of the postsynaptic action potential caused by the strongly connected cell’s presynaptic impulse. After the accompanying AMPA receptor change, the same action potential of and glutamate release from this weakly connected presynaptic cell is more likely (because of increased AMPA receptor availability) to precipitate an action potential in the postsynaptic cell. This increased synaptic excitability/potentiation is called long-term potentiation, or LTP.

follows early LTP, involves more changes in both pre- and post-synaptic neurons, so that the potentiation of the presynaptic neuron lasts from hours to years.⁶⁵⁹

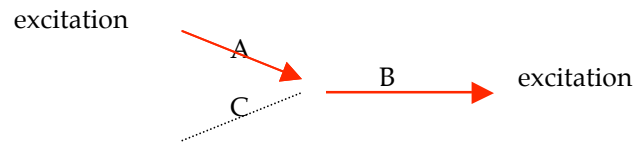


Figure 1. LTP: Action potential in neuron A alone. A-B pre-potentiated across synaptic space between neurons A, C, and B.

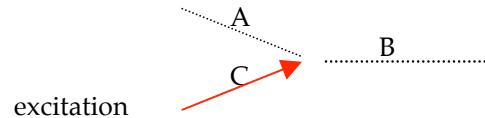


Figure 2. No LTP: Action potential in neuron C alone. No potentiation. No response.

⁶⁵⁹ Late (or enduring) long-term potentiation – i.e., lasting from hours to years – utilizes additional mechanisms, on which there exist several theories. The most widely accepted and demonstrated is “synaptic tagging,” in which a post-synaptic action potential induced at a particular synapse results in a short duration protein-synthesis-independent “synaptic tag” that sequesters LTP-inducing post-synaptic proteins produced in response to post-synaptic phosphorylation (see U. Frey and R. G. Morris, “Synaptic Tagging and Long-Term Potentiation,” *Nature* 385 (1997), 533–36). Late LTP occurs when calcium influx at the NMDA receptors (activates specific protein kinases that enter into the cell nucleus where they initiate CREB-1 gene transcription which) produces new proteins that travel throughout the cell. When these new proteins reach the recently activated synapses, they are sequestered/taken up by a molecular “tag” (an active kinase at the activated synapse/s, which lasts no more than three hours – i.e., the duration of early LTP) generated by the action potential at the postsynaptic side of the previously active synapses. Sequestering of these proteins results in: phosphorylation and dendritic spine growth, the increased availability of AMPA receptors, and growth of new synapses (via release of neurotrophins from just active postsynaptic dendrites, taken up by presynaptic terminals) (see Ibid.; K.C. Martin et al. “Synapse-specific, long-term facilitation of Aplysia sensory to motor synapses: a function for local protein synthesis in memory storage,” (K.C. Martin et al., “Synapse-specific, long-term facilitation of aplysia sensory to motor synapses: a function for local protein synthesis in memory storage,” *Cell* 91, no. 7 (Dec 26, 1997), 927-3). Neurotrophins released by the potentiated (i.e., fired) postsynaptic cell diffuse through the synapse to the presynaptic, firing neuron, are taken up by the presynaptic axon and precipitate axonal branching and new synaptic connections. Conversely, neurotrophin release prevents presynaptic cell death, and is thus a selective mechanism in preventing the presynaptic cell death that would otherwise occur; neurons that are not used do not survive. Synaptic activity thus determines the pattern of connectivity in the brain.)

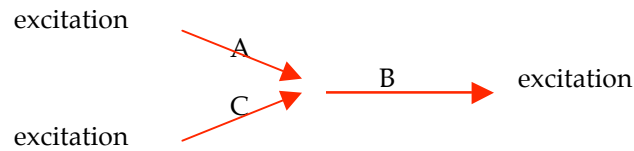


Figure 3. Early LTP: Coincident excitation of neurons A and C. A-B potentiation produces excitation in neuron B, and facilitates changes resulting in C-B potentiation (early LTP).

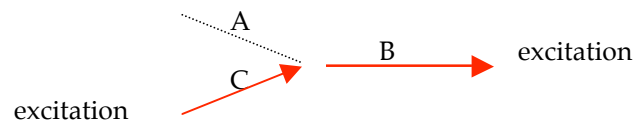


Figure 4. Early and late LTP: Action potential in neuron C alone. Synapse C-B potentiated.

The LTP we have thus far discussed in terms of single neurons takes place in groups and networks. In order for any one postsynaptic neuron to achieve its action potential/fire, many presynaptic neurons must fire simultaneously onto it. In addition, the firing of many presynaptic neurons onto a postsynaptic nerve occurs in great numbers of neurons at the same time, thus forming a network of synaptic transmission. The constitution of the dispositional network predisposing the organism to a particular behavioral response via late LTP *requires many repeated presentations of paired stimuli*. Via synaptic plasticity, these repeated transient firing patterns create networks that are organized into general regional separations of function, and pathways between these regions; brain development is a) the present genetic realization/representation of the (past) phyletic struggle of the organism to achieve an optimal state of being and b) the present experiential (ontogenic) realization of that struggle in the individual organism's internal and external environment. Synaptic plasticity

establishes the brain's macro- and micro-architecture,⁶⁶⁰ which simply *are* the memory⁶⁶¹ (conscious and unconscious) of the organism, the functional record of its learning, its experience.⁶⁶² This memory as macro- and micro-architecture is the substrate – disposition – of our behavioral responses. The extent and

⁶⁶⁰ Phylogenetically old representations (memory) are built evolutionarily into the structure of primary sensory and motor cortex – but need rehearsal/stimulation in critical periods for proper structure and functioning; these are the periods in which plasticity (LTP) occurs most readily.

⁶⁶¹ Memory in the brain is general in the sense that wherever synapses have simultaneously fired, there occurs a strengthening of synaptic connections and eventually a whole network/pattern of firing, which will be activated whenever a sufficient part of the original stimulus is provided.

⁶⁶² LTP has been widely and long understood as the mechanism behind Hebbian plasticity (after Donald Hebb, the psychologist who proposed that “When an axon of cell A is near enough to excite cell B or repeatedly and consistently takes part in firing it, some growth process or metabolic changes take place in one of both cells such that A's efficiency, as one of the cells firing B, is increased” (D. O. Hebb, *The Organization of Behavior* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1949), 62), through which neuron development, memory formation, and learning occur. In his review article “Long-Term Potentiation and Memory,” Lynch concludes that though there is no direct evidence explicitly connecting LTP with learning and memory, there is “a great deal of circumstantial evidence” (M. A. Lynch, “Long-Term Potentiation and Memory,” *Physiological Reviews* 84 (2004), 117), of LTP in most brain areas/structures, including, importantly, the hippocampus, amygdala, visual and somatosensory cortices, prefrontal cortex, cerebellum, the subiculum. The ubiquity of some form of LTP has led some respected neuroscientists to venture that there is no reason to doubt that LTP will be found to occur in *all* mammalian brain synapses (for example, see R. Malenka and M. Bear, “LTP and LTD: An Embarrassment of Riches,” *Neuron* 44 (2004), 5-21. The reduction of memory and learning to LTP, however, is on all counts too simplistic: on the one hand, in animal experiments, stimuli are applied to very specific fibers and recordings made at very specific cell populations, whereas memory consolidation during actual training activates many modalities “likely to translate into potentially confounding activation of several pathways and brain areas” (M. A. Lynch, “Long-Term Potentiation and Memory,” *Physiological Reviews* 84 (2004), 119); on the other, because there are many forms of memory and many facets of each, “reduction of such a complex modality to the form of plasticity that is LTP is simplistic” (Ibid. Lynch adds the following “cautionary points”: 1) data based on LTP sustained in one synaptic pathway should not automatically be assumed to apply to other synaptic pathways, 2) different synaptic connections might use different signalling molecules, 3) LTP found in one set of conditions (e.g., in vivo or in vitro, in anaesthetized or conscious animal) cannot automatically be assumed to occur in other conditions, 4) in order to compare or reconcile various findings, one must take account of the specific behavioral measure and particular (early or late) LTP form (Ibid.). Conversely, there are also many different forms of LTP, depending on the type of synapse and experimental conditions; the explanation of memory as LTP would have to be qualified accordingly. Nevertheless, memory consolidation requires some form of plasticity, and LTP is certainly at least *involved in* memory and learning, and displays the same properties as memory consolidation would require: specificity, associativity, cooperativity. It is relatively uncontroversial to assume, then, that forms of plasticity, including LTP indispensably, underlie brain structural and functional development – in other words, the representational networks – the architecture – that constitute learning and memory, in their conscious and unconscious forms.

nature of dispositional change by the application of technique is determined by the limits and possibilities of this architecture.

Within this neural macro-structure/architecture, the amygdala and prefrontal cortex are crucial determinants or components of our dispositions, as Connolly notes. But a more precise understanding of their relationship and their place in the larger neural architecture will allow us to make more precise recommendations and evaluation of techniques aimed at freeing our dispositions from resentment.

Architecture and Networks

Our neural architecture can be functionally separated into three parts: i) sensory and autonomic input, ii) processing, and iii) motor and autonomic output. There are 5 main sensory inputs to the central nervous system: the visual system, olfactory system, gustatory system, auditory system, and the somatosensory system.⁶⁶³ In each case, sensory stimuli cause action potentials in first order neurons whose cell bodies reside in the dorsal root ganglia of spinal nerves, or in the cranial nerves' sensory ganglia – outside the central nervous system. The first order neurons connect synaptically to second order neurons, whose axons cross to the opposite side of the spinal cord and project toward and synapse with third order sensory cells of the brain.⁶⁶⁴ Excitatory

⁶⁶³ The somatosensory system includes: 1) discriminative touch – pressure, vibration, texture... via Meissner's corpuscles, Pacinian corpuscles, Merkel's disks, Ruffini endings in the skin; 2) pain and temperature – via free nerve endings in skin, muscle, bone, and connective tissue that register temperature changes and pain peptides (prostaglandins, histamine, and substance P); 3) proprioception – via muscle and joint receptors – i.e., muscle spindles, Golgi tendon organs and tendon/joint afferents.

⁶⁶⁴ Most of these third order sensory cells are located in the sense-specific nuclei in the thalamus, with the exception of the *olfactory* system, in which neural signals travel via the olfactory bulb to the medial amygdala (social functions), and to the piriform (odor identification) and entorhinal cortices (which connect to the hippocampus for memory formation/recall) of the primary olfactory cortex in the medial temporal lobe.

(i.e., electro-chemical) activity from these third order neurons of each *sensory system*⁶⁶⁵ goes three routes: 1) to the reticular activating system (ARAS) in the midbrain, 2) via the thalamus directly and quickly to the amygdala and 3) via the thalamus *indirectly* to the amygdala via sense-specific areas of the cerebral cortex.^{666,667} Sensory input is processed at a low, crude/rough level in the thalamus, and at a higher level in the sensory areas of the cortex, and its associated regions – most importantly, the hippocampus and medial prefrontal cortex (PFC).

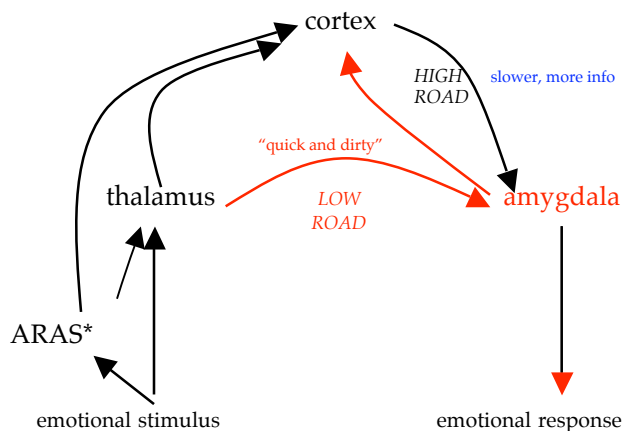


Figure 5. Neural processing of fear. Adapted from Joseph LeDoux *Synaptic Self* (New York: Penguin, 2002) Figure 5.7, p. 123.⁶⁶⁸

*LeDoux does not include reticular activation in his diagram.

Stimulation along the thalamo-amygdalar and thalamo-cortico-amygdalar routes (from stimulus to response) stimulates the amygdala to respond to “emotional” stimuli – stimuli that, phylogenetically or ontogenically, are

⁶⁶⁵ Minus the olfactory.

⁶⁶⁶ The visual system to occipital cortex, auditory to superior temporal cortex, somatosensory and gustatory to post-central gyrus.

⁶⁶⁷ See L. M. Romanski and J. E. LeDoux, “Equipotentiality of thalamo-amygdala and thalamo-cortico-amygdala projections as auditory conditioned stimulus pathways,” *The Journal of Neuroscience* 12 (1992), 4501-4509.

⁶⁶⁸ With permission from the author.

interpreted as threatening or rewarding to the organism⁶⁶⁹ – with “emotional” responses – i.e., internal and overt bodily responses that prepare the organism to act (approach, fight/flight, or freezing, depending on the value of the stimulus).⁶⁷⁰ According to LeDoux, the *conscious perception*, or *feeling* of the emotion (awareness of bodily preparation and expression) and *thought* about the emotion take much longer and involve higher cortical processes than are involved in the initial response.

Thalamo-amygdalar and thalamo-amygdalo-cortical processing activates or suppresses hypothalamic activity to the two major motivation circuits, generally called “punishment”/“fear” (periventricular) and “reward” (medial forebrain bundle, MFB) circuits.⁶⁷¹ Fearful/punishing stimuli induce thalamo-amygdalar excitation of the hypothalamus, which, via release of corticotropic releasing hormone/factor (CRH/F), initiates *sympathetic* responses (from brainstem autonomic centers⁶⁷² and the descending reticular activating system (DRAS)⁶⁷³) including reduced pain sensitivity⁶⁷⁴ (stress-

⁶⁶⁹ Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002), 206.

⁶⁷⁰ Damasio defines emotions similarly: a “patterned collection of chemical and neural responses” that change the internal state of the organism to prepare it for the varied actions/behaviors, which belong to the repertoire of the “reward” and “punishment” motivation circuits (A. Damasio, “Emotions and feelings: a neurobiological perspective,” *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium*, eds. A. S. R. Manstead et al. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2004), 50–51.

⁶⁷¹ See J. J. Paton et al. “The Primate Amygdala Represents the Positive and Negative Value of Visual Stimuli During Learning,” *Nature* 439 (2006), 865–870. Both circuits *are*, in their basic structure, unconscious *memory* systems which react to evolutionarily/phylogenically threatening or rewarding stimuli with, respectively, defense (fight/flight) or approach (reward) behaviors. But the structure of unconscious amygdalar memory is also modified by experience. Stimuli that co-occur with phylogenically (i.e., evolutionarily) threatening or rewarding stimuli come, via LTP, to be interpreted (ontogenically, via individual conditioning) as threatening or rewarding *on their own*, and from then on can play the same conditioning role as unconditioned stimuli do (see Figures 1-4).

⁶⁷² For example, vagal nuclei and the pituitary.

⁶⁷³ The *descending* reticular activating system (DRAS) provides background tone and postural set (i.e., muscles controlling balance), against which more specific voluntary motor actions are carried out. The DRAS also contributes to control of respiration and cardiac rhythms, gastrointestinal peristalsis, glandular secretion, urination, and coughing, swallowing, mastication and vomiting reflexes. The descending system receives input from structures whose

induced analgesia), release of adrenal hormones,⁶⁷⁵ taut stomach, racing heart, high blood pressure, clammy hands and feet, dry mouth, and increased muscular tension.^{676,677} This preparation for action predisposes the body to fight/flight (and immobilization) behaviors. (This preparation appears to be what I experienced that day as a TA in the classroom confrontation with that professor five years ago – a preparation that I can now remember having occurred in childhood and afterwards in my confrontations with authority.)

Connolly's conclusions regarding the amygdala are based on LeDoux's argument that a) "quick and dirty"⁶⁷⁸ thalamo-amygdalar processing results in behavioral output *before* "higher" cortical processing can modify the behavior in question,⁶⁷⁹ and that b) thalamo-amygdalar processing, via amygdalo-cortical connections, even predetermines the direction and content of the later cortical processing of the stimulus/event,⁶⁸⁰ which precedes and motivates actions in

excitatory/innervating action has already been modified by other brain areas – the subcortical motor output areas, the hypothalamus, and the vestibular nuclei (in the medulla). Input to the reticular activation system from the hypothalamus is largely autonomic; the hypothalamus is supplied by the solitary tract nucleus, which conveys visceral sensory stimulation from the vagus, including blood pressure and gut distension; optic nerve fibers to the suprachiasmatic nucleus (in the hypothalamus), which regulates circadian rhythms and associates them with light/dark cycles; circumventricular organs (nuclei), which react directly to blood composition changes – e.g., the OVLT (organum vasculosum laminae terminalis) responds to osmolarity changes, the area postrema responds to toxins and can bring on peristalsis; thermo- and osmo-receptors that respond to ionic balance and temperature.

⁶⁷⁴ Called "nociception."

⁶⁷⁵ Via the pituitary release of ACTH.

⁶⁷⁶ Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 132.

⁶⁷⁷ But parasympathetic inputs to the hypothalamus moderate these sympathetic responses; the parasympathetic system has an augmentary effect only on digestive and sexual arousal functions; it otherwise diminishes the effect of sympathetic excitation. The hypothalamus also receives input from higher brain structures: from the limbic and olfactory systems – the amygdala, the hippocampus, and the olfactory cortex.

⁶⁷⁸ Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002), 123.

⁶⁷⁹ "More processing time by the brain means a slower mental and behavioral response from the organism. In situations where rapid responses are required, speed can be more important than accuracy" (Ibid.)

⁶⁸⁰ As we noted above, Connolly writes that the amygdala "both influences conduct on its own and bumps *intensities* into conscious thinking and judgment [in the cortex] that the complex brain regions then process according to their own capacities of reception, speed, and organization" (William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 90).

response to the stimulus. This is true, says LeDoux, in particular of fear-inducing stimuli. Only the initial punishment/ fear response is entirely thalamo-amygdalar – i.e., non-cortical. While the reward (MFB) circuit is, like the punishment circuit, in that it is thalamo-amygdalar and works via the hypothalamus, research shows that initial reward processing requires higher, cognitive structures – the hippocampus⁶⁸¹ and medial prefrontal cortex.⁶⁸² Rewarding stimuli⁶⁸³ apparently excite thalamo-amygdalar processing *and* prefrontal (neocortical) and hippocampal processing that prepare the organism, via MFB dopaminergic reward effects,⁶⁸⁴ for approach/engagement behaviors. According to LeDoux, because the fear/ punishment circuit is *initially* strictly thalamo-amygdalar, it acts faster than, and even initially preempts the cognitive processing involved in the reward (MFB) circuit; fight/ flight/ freeze reactions happen before and preempt preparations of the organism for approach/engagement. Even after the initial thalamo-amygdalar reaction, fear, via amygdalar influence upon thalamo-cortico-amygdalar processing, controls behavior and “monopolizes consciousness.”⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸¹ The entorhinal cortex and ventral subiculum.

⁶⁸² The dopaminergic network extending from the ventral tegmental area (VTA) to the nucleus accumbens (NAcc and ventral striatum). See T. M. Korotkova et al., “Excitation of Ventral Tegmental Area Dopaminergic and Nondopaminergic Neurons by Orexins/Hypocretins,” *The Journal of Neuroscience* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 2003), 7.

⁶⁸³ LeDoux’s research and discussion focuses almost exclusively on fear’s influence on the amygdala; food-seeking and sex-seeking are his reward stimuli and behavior. But, importantly, his discussion of reward behavior includes emotional bonding (Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002): 233–34), where specifically sexual interaction does not occur, and pleasurable stimuli generally, which rely upon the dopaminergic MFB circuit (245ff.). Furthermore, LeDoux’s discussions of fearful emotional stimuli broadly include stimuli conditioned to evoke fear responses the experience of “fear and anxiety in... safe situations” (217).

⁶⁸⁴ These are reinforced by MFB output-related learning (plasticity-mediated memory) in the amygdala, MFB, prefrontal cortex, anterior cingulate cortex, and hippocampus. See L. R. Squire et al, eds. *Fundamental Neuroscience* (San Diego: Elsevier Science, 2003).

⁶⁸⁵ Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002): 226.

In the 3) thalamo-cortical-amygdalar route, sensory excitation from the thalamus synapses with a primary sensory area, whose pyramidal neurons⁶⁸⁶ send axonal connections to adjacent/nearby areas and these to other areas of occipital, temporal, and parietal cortex for further processing;⁶⁸⁷ all areas in these sensory cortical pathways are called *unimodal association cortex*⁶⁸⁸ - networks of cells that are interconnected to represent associated qualities of a complex stimulus or group of stimuli in the corresponding sensory modality⁶⁸⁹ (e.g., visual stimuli are represented in the visual unimodal association cortex). These networks are created by the strengthening of synaptic connections (LTP) resulting from temporal contiguity, spatial contiguity, repetition, and emotional/motivational connotations⁶⁹⁰ of the constituent qualities of a stimulus/event. Unimodal association cortex sends projections to a) the frontal lobe cortex (prefrontal cortex, PFC), *thereby accessing (and simultaneously modifying) sensory-motor associations*, b) the paralimbic cortex, which connects to the amygdala and hippocampus,⁶⁹¹ *thus accessing (and simultaneously modifying) emotional associations and memory*, respectively. Synaptic connectivity in the unimodal association cortex thus accomplishes the integration and distribution of information (representations) both from sensory input networks, “bottom up,” and from consolidated/ing sensory-motor memories, “top down.”

⁶⁸⁶ Named morphologically for their three-sided structure.

⁶⁸⁷ Again, with the exception of the olfactory system. Only signals from the olfactory sensory system do not pass through the thalamus to the amygdala – the faster route. But this does not mean that olfactory signals undergo more sophisticated processing before projecting to the amygdala. The cortex to which the olfactory tract projects has only four cellular layers, whereas all the other sensory system inputs project into areas with six cortical layers, in other words, to neocortex. (All the other lobes of the brain - the frontal, parietal, occipital and temporal lobes – are primarily neocortex.) The olfactory system cortex projects directly to the hypothalamus.

⁶⁸⁸ J. M. Fuster, *The Prefrontal Cortex: Anatomy, Physiology, and Neuropsychology of the Frontal Lobe*, 3rd ed. (New York: Lippincott-Raven, 1997), 67.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 72.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 47–48.

⁶⁹¹ In the temporal lobe; the hippocampal memory system stores and provides general situational information.

Unimodal association cortices also project to parietal and temporal lobe *multimodal convergence* cortex, that is, *transmodal areas*,⁶⁹² which, like unimodal association cortices, connect to the hippocampus. From primary sensory to unimodal association to transmodal association cortex, higher categories of knowledge (of greater abstraction and generality) are represented / realized.⁶⁹³ The multi / transmodal cortices include areas central to phonological processing, language production, and assignment of semantic meaning.⁶⁹⁴

The mental operations involved in linguistic processing and production, and in conscious thought generally, involve *working memory* – the holding of several objects in focus / attention simultaneously, thus enabling their conscious relation (e.g., performing computations, reading, and writing). Sensory memory in association cortices (e.g., echoic memory of auditory perceptions and iconic memory of visual-spatial perceptions, lasting from one millisecond to one second), becomes short-term memory when it is made the object of attentional focus (by the ARAS and amygdala), and is available to working memory for manipulation for less than a minute, unless attentional focus *renews* it in short-term memory. Consistent with Damasio’s “somatic marker”

⁶⁹² Ibid., 67–8.

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 71, 74.

⁶⁹⁴ The multi- / trans-modal cortices that are central to language construction are the angular and supramarginal gyri (which comprise the left inferior parietal lobe). (The angular gyrus, in combination with the posterior cingulate gyrus, helps process semantic meaning, whereas the supramarginal gyrus helps process word phonology and articulation.) These cortical areas connect (auditory, visual, and somatosensory) sensory input from unimodal association cortex to Wernicke’s area (in the left temporal lobe) - where phonological processing, language production, and assignment of semantic meaning occur - and Broca’s area (in the frontal lobe), whose general role is the representation of phonetic sequences – heard, generated, or recalled (Ibid., 187–88; 191). Though there is some localization of language processing in these specific sites, the angular and supramarginal gyri, and therefore also Wernicke’s and Broca’s areas, receive information from the amygdala and cingulate gyrus ((located in the medial brain, wrapping around the corpus callosum). Both of these areas receive axons from the thalamus, somatosensory cortex, and neocortex – and therefore provide the emotional-environmental context essential to linguistic (and all other modes of mental) processing (J. M. Fuster, *Cortex and Mind: Unifying Cognition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 189-90) – as will be discussed below.

theory, research indicates that PFC modules seem to be the locus of the conscious executive activity involved in working memory function.⁶⁹⁵ These modules' connections with association (unimodal and transmodal association cortices), sensory (cortices), motor (cerebellum), and limbic (thalamus, amygdala, hippocampus) areas provide stimulation, based on the individual's previous experience, that influences working memory.

The conversion of short-term and working memory – both sensory and motor⁶⁹⁶ – into long-term memory 'storage' in neocortex appears to occur via synaptic plasticity mechanisms in the hippocampus.⁶⁹⁷ Research has shown a time-dependent transition of the metabolic activity – i.e., a reorganization of the neural circuitry – involved in memory-based performance, a transition from

⁶⁹⁵ See J. M. Fuster, *The Prefrontal Cortex: Anatomy, Physiology, and Neuropsychology of the Frontal Lobe*, 3rd ed. (New York: Lippincott-Raven, 1997); J. D. Cohen et al., "Temporal Dynamics of Brain Activation During a Working Memory Task," *Nature* 386 (1997), 604-8; *Fundamental Neuroscience*, eds. L. R. Squire et al. (San Diego, CA: Academic, 2003), 1543-64; J. M. Fuster, "Unit Activity in Prefrontal Cortex During Delayed-Response Performance: Neuronal Correlates of Transient Memory," *Journal of Neurophysiology* 36 (1973), 61-78; P. S. Goldman-Rakic, "Toward a Circuit Model of Working Memory and the Guidance of Voluntary Motor Action," in *Models of Information Processing in the Basal Ganglia*, eds. J. C. Houk, J. L. Davis and D. G. Beiser (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 131-148.

⁶⁹⁶ The neocortex provides executive motor (procedural) memory via representational maps of all types of movement (simple to complex) in the premotor cortices, in connection with basal ganglia, limbic cortices, and the cerebellum (which is also crucial in the consolidation of long term motor memory (Garrett T. Kenyon, "A model of long-term memory storage in the cerebellar cortex: A possible role for plasticity at parallel fiber synapses onto stellate/basket interneurons" *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 94, no. 25 (December 9, 1997), 14200-14205). The primary motor pathway is the corticospinal pathway – primarily projections from precentral gyrus of cortex, but also the premotor and supplementary motor areas, and the postcentral gyrus (i.e., primary somatosensory cortex); these projections are pyramidal neurons, from cortical pyramidal cells to white matter (all still within the precentral gyrus) – into the corona radiata, which divides into the caudate and putamen; the radiating axons of the caudate and putamen constitute the "internal capsule" – a two-way highway, in which sensory information travels up from the thalamus to specific sensory cortices, and motor and somatosensory information travels through on its way to the spine, via the posterior limb of internal capsule.

⁶⁹⁷ Hippocampal output creates sharp-wave ripple complexes in the subiculum, parasubiculum, and deep layers of entorhinal cortex (within the subiculum). These ripple complexes constitute network patterns that appear to correspond to long-term memories. See György Buzsáki and James J. Chrobak, "Synaptic plasticity and self-organization in hippocampus," *Nature Neuroscience* 8, no. 11 (November 2005), 1418-20.

hippocampal metabolic activity to neocortical metabolic activity.⁶⁹⁸ Various neocortical areas⁶⁹⁹ - including the PFC – take over the functional contribution of the hippocampus to memory retrieval;⁷⁰⁰ long-term (consolidated) memories synaptically potentiated in association neocortex provide context in working memory for the interpretation/evaluation of each new stimulus-object supplied by sensation to short-term memory.

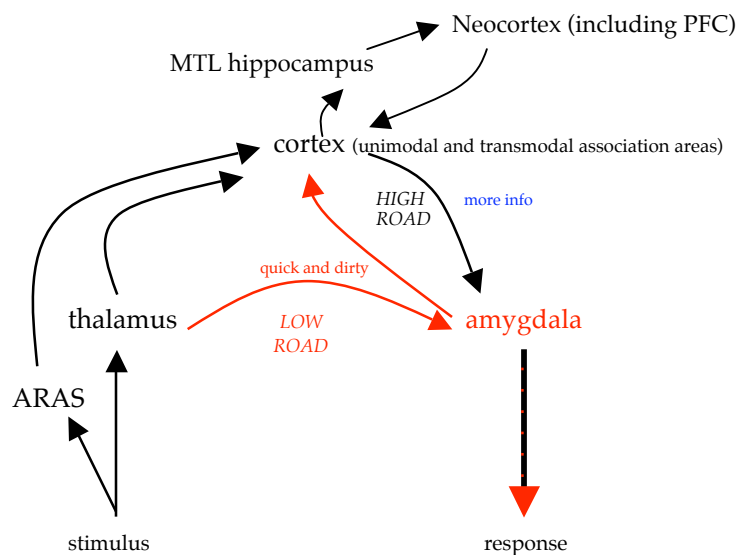


Figure 6. Neural processing of fear – in more detail. Adapted from Joseph LeDoux *Synaptic Self* (New York: Penguin, 2002) Figure 5.7, p. 123.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁸ Bruno Botempi et al., "Time-Dependent Reorganization of Brain Circuitry Underlying Long-Term Memory Storage," *Nature* 400 (August 12, 1999), 671-675.

⁶⁹⁹ Primarily frontal, anterior cingulate, and temporal cortices.

⁷⁰⁰ Memory consolidation occurs as permanent cortical memory representations via a transitory interaction between hippocampus and association neocortex (L. R. Squire and P. Alvarez, "Retrograde Amnesia and Memory Consolidation: A Neurobiological Perspective," *Current Opinion in Neurobiology* 5 (1995), 169-177; B. J. Knowlton and M. S. Fanselow, "The Hippocampus, Consolidation, and On-line Memory," *Current Opinion in Neurobiology* 8 (1998), 293-96; T. J. Teyler and P. DiScenna, "The Hippocampal Memory Indexing Theory," *Behavioral Neuroscience* 100 (1986), 147-54; A. R. Damasio, "Time-Locked Multiregional Retroactivation: A Systems-Level Proposal for the Neural Substrates of Recall and Recognition," *Cognition* 33 (1989), 25-62. Also, see M. D'Esposito et al., "The Neural Basis of the Central Executive System of Working Memory," *Nature* 378 (November 16, 1995), 279-81.

⁷⁰¹ With permission from the author.

Thus, the longer route from sensory input to the amygdala by way of the cortices involves many modifications of excitatory stimulation – importantly, conscious access to and comparison with other experience.

But, as we have noted, LeDoux argues that, “in the domain of fear,” the amygdala, by immediately precluding operation of the medial prefrontal cortex or mPFC⁷⁰² (the location of Damasio’s “somatic markers”), and subsequently, by changing cortical sensory processing, influencing the mPFC,⁷⁰³ and, indirectly, attention, alters the direction and conditioning of later (still within the few initial seconds of fear stimulation) unconscious perception and behavior; this thalamo-amygdalar and thalamo-cortico-amygdalar processing in turn alters the material available to working memory,⁷⁰⁴ and thus *even conscious* perception and behavior. In other words, *when fearful stimuli are present*, thalamo-amygdalar processing dominates – both immediately, in the emotional reaction, and subsequently in the thalamo-cortico-amygdalar route – importantly, of the mPFC.⁷⁰⁵ This initial processing appears to establish, via LTP, unconsciously learned fear memory in the PFC. That we do not have strong amygdala-mediated fear reactions (taut stomach, racing heart, high blood pressure, clammy hands and feet, dry mouth, and increased muscular tension) does *not* mean we no longer have fear of the precipitating stimuli, or that these stimuli are no longer present. LeDoux writes, “characteristically, amygdala-dependent signs of emotional arousal, such as elevations of heart

⁷⁰²Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002), 217.

⁷⁰³ In the immediate emotional preparation of the organism, LeDoux theorizes that inhibition of prefrontal cortex allows the amygdala to respond to fearful stimuli (Ibid.); subsequently, in providing motivation to behavioral responses, the amygdala influences access to prefrontal cortical memory.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., 226.

⁷⁰⁵ LeDoux argues that PFC influence on the amygdala is initially “shut off” by thalamo-amygdalar route (Ibid., 217).

rate, occur during the initial phase of avoidance learning, but disappear as the avoidance response is learned.”⁷⁰⁶ To avoid fear reactions, we simply avoid fearful stimuli. LeDoux’s observations of amygdalar effects would appear to provide a basis for Connolly’s conclusion that during the “half-second delay” between stimulus and behavioral response, even in the ordinary perception of everyday life, we are under the *unconscious* influence of the amygdala and/or amygdalar conditioning of the PFC.⁷⁰⁷ But it would also follow that this “half-second” establishes future (avoidance) behavior. Even if during subsequent moments one thinks, compares, and concludes that one should not be afraid of the stimulus, subsequent presentations will continue eliciting the overpowering fear reaction, and this fear reaction will determine a fearful response.

But if fear is *this* primary, if preliminary unconscious processing favors fear conditioning, then, given what Connolly has said about the unavoidable suffering (experience of pain) of life, we would expect *all* dispositions to be fearful dispositions – fearful reactions would predetermine fearful behavioral responses, and this would be *irreversible*; phylogenically (unconditioned) and ontogenically (conditioned) associated fearful stimuli would *in every instance* establish (except when overpowered by other, stronger fear stimuli) irreversible fear conditioning. This irreversible fear conditioning would provide a large base for the association of new stimuli with punishment; one’s happiness would depend on avoidance of an ever-increasing range of stimuli

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., 251. “A dog needs its amygdala to learn that playing around in the road is dangerous, but once the learning has occurred, he can happily play in the yard next to the road. (In this case, avoidance of danger doesn’t cause fear, it prevents fear.”

⁷⁰⁷ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 28; 206, Fn 27. As we noted above, the amygdala, Connolly writes, “both influences conduct on its own and bumps *intensities* into conscious thinking and judgment [in the cortex] that the complex brain regions then process according to their own capacities of reception, speed, and organization” (Ibid., 90).

increasingly powerful in provoking fear reactions *and responses* (i.e., further avoidance). The conditioning of culturally prohibited, habitual reward behaviors to reward stimuli would only occur accidentally outside and before the surveillance of punitive authorities; their subsequent discipline would, through fear conditioning, establish the subject's increasingly unconscious, avoidance of the stimulus/object and its associated behaviors. LeDoux indicates that fear and anxiety disorders may occur in individuals with abnormal "genetic and epigenetic organization of prefrontal synapses" or "experiences that subtly alter prefrontal synaptic connections,"⁷⁰⁸ so that their regulation of the fear circuit, by prefrontal cortex, is impaired. They have fear and anxiety *even* when "objective information" indicates that there is *no danger*. But given that, in LeDoux's theory, amygdalar conditioning of the prefrontal cortex even in *the normal individual* macrostructurally ensures a fear conditioned microstructure, unconscious conditioning will, given the unavoidable suffering of everyday life, increasingly indicate that there is danger, and that it is to be avoided. Conscious, working memory will reiterate this fact, or avoid direct confrontation with "dangerous" stimuli. Obedience to the rules of existing power arrangements would be practically *guaranteed*. The techniques in which Connolly places his hope for a free-er ethical disposition would have no effect on this universally fearful disposition. In fact, it would be difficult to explain even the conscious imagination of a disposition that would risk techniques of the self, aimed at freedom. This universal, fearful disposition, to the extent that it pursues pleasure, would without exception pursue it within the parameters of the conventions of existing – and therefore, on this theory,

⁷⁰⁸ Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002), 217.

natural – hierarchical power relations. (This would *justify* not simply a *suspicion* of ourselves and others but an *assumption* that we should fear ourselves and others.)

This would imply an organism that in essence is constrained to mere self-preservation, and at most traditionally prescribed experiences of pleasure, rather than a “conatus” – i.e., striving for optimal well-being.⁷⁰⁹ Retelling the Genesis story, for example, would *universally* and automatically achieve further reinforcement of the unconscious fearfulness of our dispositions. The uncanny would always remain inexplicably uncanny. Foucault's parrhesiatic practices would never be able to change their normative, governing standards (established by disciplinary techniques and then strengthened by ascetic practices), and so would merely amount to conventionally defined relations whose truth-telling practices would always work, ultimately, to support these norms. Such an organism would appear to be *determined* in a crude sense.

To the extent that such an organism's drives or desires contradict these norms/conventions, it is *capable* only of the kind of “compensation” or “imaginary revenge” upon the world⁷¹⁰ that characterize a ressentimental slave morality. In other words, if the human organism's psychophysiology is fear-dominated in the way LeDoux describes, then humans would be universally fearful and incapable of the agonism that Connolly hopes to encourage. If he were to take seriously the implications of the neuroscience he relies on, then Connolly cannot realistically hope for anything beyond fearfulness and the

⁷⁰⁹ Connolly's preference for Bergsonian film watching, removed from the demands/stresses of everyday life – in which interactions with individuals with institutional authority are *not* likely to occur – may, in avoiding fear stimulation, betray a partial hopelessness based on this part of LeDoux's perspective according to which fear responsiveness and conditioning predominates in the human organism.

⁷¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1989), 36-9.

mere reproduction of ressentimental morality – i.e., the valorization of suffering, weakness, and self-humiliation and the derogation of pleasure, strength, and agonism.

To the degree that we observe ourselves as capable of the kind of agonistic respect Connolly hopes for, LeDoux's theory must misinterpret our experience and the neuroscientific evidence. LeDoux's theory, it turns out, is not universally accepted, and, according to some recent research, mistaken; while its foundational parts seem to lead to the conclusion that fear (or avoidance) and ressentiment are universal and irreversible, thereby precluding the possibility of any consequential/disruptive critique, there is a competing theory and evidence that suggests the importance of one's *particular* conditioning (or cultural training) in making more (or less) *probable* (as opposed to *determining*) the disciplinarity of the subject (its avoidance and punishment behavior) as well as the degree of development of its critical capabilities (its engagement and risk behaviors) – a theory and evidence, in other words, that allow not simply the presence but the greater or lesser probability of differing degrees of agonistic respect and critique based on one's conditioning. This evidence indicates that fear is not predominant the way LeDoux often⁷¹¹ thinks it to be. Luiz Pessoa and others, using the same kind of backward-masking tasks⁷¹² upon which LeDoux bases his view that fear stimulation predominates,

⁷¹¹ LeDoux, though holding that fear is in fact primary and initially preemptive of cortical activation – both PFC and hippocampal, so that initial unconscious processing of fearful stimuli is entirely thalamo-amygdalar, says that there is secondary hippocampal and PFC modulation of amygdalar fear responses. But, on his view, emotional conditioning, under the influence of the amygdala, structures the PFC and hippocampus to avoid the fearful stimulus/event. This seems to mean that if the stimulus/event re-presents itself, it will merely reinforce the already conditioned PFC and hippocampal avoidance.

⁷¹² Subjects are shown a fearful face for a short duration (a range from 40 to 10ms - i.e., during the period that LeDoux says working memory/attentional consciousness is inoperative but autonomic reactions, via the lateral amygdala, occur) and then a neutral face for 50ms or more. The neutral face is supposed to "back-mask" the fearful face, since it is shown immediately after and long enough for attentional consciousness to become aware of it.

have demonstrated that many subjects (roughly two-thirds of their sample) are capable of conscious awareness of a fearful stimulus (i.e., its fear-invoking status) within⁷¹³ the time frame – i.e., Connolly's "half-second delay"⁷¹⁴ – that allegedly "unconscious" (amygdalar) autonomic responses and conditioning to a fearful stimulus occur.⁷¹⁵ Instead of the universal *inability* to recognize fearful faces before or at the onset of their initial autonomic effects, which we would expect from LeDoux's theory, the speed of conscious detection of fearful stimuli varies across subjects. This variation may be due to the subjects' attentional focus; other research has demonstrated that attentional (conscious) focus is *required* for fearful stimuli to have any noticeable emotional (reaction) effect⁷¹⁶ – when people are intensely focused on one object, it is less probable that other objects will be noticed – even in instances when fear stimuli are present: when intense focus precludes noticing them, autonomic fear reactions

⁷¹³ In this study, 33ms, in some cases after 17ms.

⁷¹⁴ In fact, this "half-second delay" was originally Benjamin Libet's finding; Libet found that conscious awareness was supposed to occur from 500ms of exposure to a stimulus, whereas *much shorter duration* painful stimuli and pain-conditioned stimuli initiated autonomic responses – i.e., before conscious awareness of them. In addition, in other research Libet reported that subjects became aware of intentions only after a behavioral responses. See Benjamin Libet, "The Timing of Mental Events: Libet's Experimental Findings and Their Implications," *Consciousness and Cognition* 11, no. 2 (June 2002), 291–99.

⁷¹⁵ Pessoa et al. found that, on reviewing LeDoux's and other research, it was possible that "noisy or weak" signals accounted for the inability (in that research) for subjects to detect fearful stimuli within the time that immediate autonomic reactions to the stimuli were supposed to occur. By carefully eliminated noisy or weak signals from the stimulus group, Pessoa provided for a more reliable fear detection result (Pessoa et al. "Visual Awareness and the Detection of Fearful Faces," *Emotion* 5, no. 2 (2005), 243–47). Pessoa found that "64% of the subjects tested were able to detect briefly presented (33 ms) and masked fearful faces" (Ibid., 246). *All* subjects were able to detect fearful faces at 70ms.

⁷¹⁶ Martin Eimer and Amanda Holmes, "The Role of Spatial Attention in the Processing of Facial Expression: An ERP Study of Rapid Brain Responses to Six Basic Emotions," *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience* 3, no. 2 (2003), 97–110. See also L. Pessoa, S. Kastner and L. G. Ungerleider, "Attentional Control of the Processing of Neural and Emotional Stimuli," *Cognitive Brain Research* 15, no. 1 (2002), 31–45; L. Pessoa et al., "Neural Processing of Emotional Faces Requires Attention," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA* 99 (2002), 11458–63. This also seems to be the finding in Pessoa et al.

will not result.⁷¹⁷ When fearful stimuli do disrupt attention to other objects, it is only through capturing this attention in conscious awareness.

This body of research appears to indicate that, even if the speed of conscious awareness differs between individuals, initial fear processing – the occurrence of emotional reactions – *relies on* conscious awareness; that is, these reactions involve “higher” cortical activity in the hippocampus and PFC. Even in infants, conscious medial temporal lobe memory (involving parahippocampal and hippocampal structures) occurs from early on, within the first postnatal months, at first supporting recognition memory (even within the first few days of life), and then recall memory within the child's first year.⁷¹⁸ The absence of autobiographical memory up to the age of 2 or 3, though it has often been explained on the basis of a “qualitative shift from one memory system to another” (typically unconscious to conscious, as in LeDoux's amygdalar explanation), appears instead to result from increasing experience-related development of “encoding, retention, and retrieval.”⁷¹⁹ Not surprisingly, these experience-related improvements in memory function co-occur with improvements in conditioning. That children are effected but cannot recall events in conscious memory does not mean that they were not conscious of

⁷¹⁷ In addition, as we have noted above, Pessoa et. al's research was guided by the observation that “in the face of weak, noisy signals, subjects may often indicate not detecting target stimuli and thus appear to be unable to reliably detect them” (Pessoa et al., “Visual Awareness and the Detection of Fearful Faces,” *Emotion* 5, no. 2 (2005), 243).

⁷¹⁸ Michelle de Haana et al., “Human Memory Development and Its Dysfunction After Early Hippocampal Injury,” *Trends in Neurosciences* 29, no. 7 (July 2006), 374–81.

⁷¹⁹ H. Hayne, “Infant Memory Development: Implications for Childhood Amnesia,” *Developmental Review* 24 (2004), 62. Hayne's review paper finds that infants' encoding abilities – the speed, detection of retrieval clues, matching of retrieval clues and target memories; retention interval; and contextualizing ability all improve drastically over the course of the first two years, apparently as a result of experience rather than structural change. Likewise, language, like other retrieval clues, is an extension of the infant's ability to encode, retain and retrieve cues and memories; the “same encoding, retention, and retrieval mechanisms that characterize memory processing across the lifespan” (Ibid., 64) explain childhood improvement in memory and also childhood amnesia. See also Michelle de Haana et al., “Human Memory Development and Its Dysfunction After Early Hippocampal Injury,” *Trends in Neurosciences* 29, no. 7 (July 2006), 374–81.

them at the time. In fact, this research seems to indicate that to be affected, they *must* have been conscious of them.

Finally, research demonstrates that the VTA dopaminergic (DAergic) activity that establishes working memory attention – i.e, the attentional focus prerequisite to reaction/response and conditioning – occurs in response to all *arousing* stimuli, whether they are rewarding, punishing, or uncertain.⁷²⁰ Stimuli/events, e.g., food rewards, become *incapable* of producing DA responses once they become predictable. Instead, DA activation occurs in conditions “of salient environmental change, conditions that require an organism to (i) become responsive to environmental stimuli, (ii) prepare for the possible output of high levels of behavioral activity, (iii) maintain a working memory representation of the just-encountered event.”⁷²¹ According to some authors, DA activation’s importance in preparing for action in both appetitive/rewarding and aversive/punishing conditions should be understood as establishing a “tonic motor readiness” – a “state of anxiety” which is neither wholly positive nor wholly negative while nevertheless being anticipatory.⁷²² (In this process the ARAS, which receives incoming sensory stimulation just before the thalamus, is probably crucial.⁷²³) “[M]ost DA in the

⁷²⁰ J. C. Horvitz, “Mesolimbocortical and Nigrostriatal Dopamine Responses to Salient Non-Reward Events,” *Neuroscience* 6, no. 4 (2000), 651–56; Wolfram Schultz, “Behavior Dopamine Signals,” *Trends in Neuroscience* 30, no. 5 (May 2007), 203–10; Don M. Tucker, “Dopamine Tightens, Not Loosens,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 22, no. 3 (1999), 537–38; Daniel S. Zahm, “The Evolving Theory of Basal Forebrain Functional ‘Macrosystems,’” *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 30 (2006), 148-172; Trevor W. Robbins, “Arousal Systems and Attentional Processes,” *Biological Psychology* 45 (1997), 57–71.

⁷²¹ J. C. Horvitz, “Mesolimbocortical and Nigrostriatal Dopamine Responses to Salient Non-Reward Events,” *Neuroscience* 6, no. 4 (2000), 654.

⁷²² Don M. Tucker, “Dopamine Tightens, Not Loosens,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 22, no. 3 (1999), 537–58. The authors note that DAergic activation resulting in “engagement” behaviors is, contrary to then current accepted neuroscientific opinion, not an exclusively “reward system” behavior, that it involves “punishment system” excitation as well. (This is precisely the moment that Connolly indicates that he hopes to be reopened by the dissociation of fearful stimuli from their punishment associations.)

⁷²³ Ascending reticular activating system (ARAS) (in the mid- and hind-brain) neurons, compared to the sensory-thalamo-cortical route, effect a longer-lasting but less specific cortical

VTA projection system [is] involved in information processing that is not of necessity guided directly by incentives."⁷²⁴ (Or perhaps not by clear ones, perhaps instead by a conatus not simply motivated by reward engagement or pain avoidance, but optimal well-being?)

Together, this new research appears to demonstrate that in all subjects, arousing stimuli are initially – in the immediate time following exposure to a fear stimulus (i.e., Connolly's "half-second delay") – a) experienced *ambivalently* – i.e., neither *exclusively* punishing nor *exclusively* rewarding (in terms of the preparation of the organism for fear or reward behaviors), and b) experienced *consciously*. That is, fear stimuli activate areas involved in both punishment and reward circuits, and thus their ambivalent status, via LTP, becomes (if it is not already by virtue of being phyletic macrostructure or ontogenic/conditioned microstructure) part of the neural synaptic microstructure. This must be established, as with any form of conditioning, through *attention* and *repetition*. In the repeated presentations required for the stimulus's initial fear conditioning – eventuating in avoidance behavior – the stimulus's ambivalent

response by sending nonspecific, polysynaptic projections diffusely throughout the cortex; their excitation innervates background arousal and cortical activity, which are prerequisite to sensory processing, consciousness, and cognition processes of specific cortical areas. Strong, novel, stimuli facilitate action potentials at the norepinephrinergetic (NE) nuclei (locus coeruleus and lateral tegmentum), which in turn excite cortical cells at synapses that have recently been activated by specific sensory stimuli, thus maintaining arousal around and focusing attention on arousing stimuli. (The ARAS-stimulated cortex responds by stimulating the ARAS, which renews ARAS-stimulated background arousal in the cortex.) The ARAS also includes dopaminergic nuclei (substantia nigra and ventral tegmental area) which project via the medial forebrain bundle into the forebrain in the brain's reward circuit, communicating with the amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and thalamus, and modulating memory, motivation, and motor control. The reticular formation includes the raphe nuclei and ventral tegmental field whose serotonergic and cholinergic cells (respectively) that directly and indirectly connect to the thalamocortical system, and thereby regulate states of awareness. (Cycles of attention and inattention throughout the day depend not only on sensory input to the reticular activating system, but also input from the thalamus directly to the cortex and indirectly through the ARAS to the cortex.)

⁷²⁴ R. D. Oades, "Dopamine: Go/No-Go Motivation Vs. Switching. Commentary on Depue & Collins' 'Neurobiology of the Structure of Personality: Dopamine, Facilitation of Incentive Motivation and Extraversion,'" *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 22 (1999), 532–33.

status is also, though more weakly, established as neural microstructure. Our phyletic macrostructure appears, then, to guarantee that we *automatically* attend, react, and respond to phyletically fearful stimuli, but this macrostructure also appears to guarantee: that the organism attends to stimuli that are new / uncertain (unpredictable); that this arousal for response is *ambivalent* (in part pleasurable and in part unpleasurable); and that the resulting potentiated attentional/preparatory microstructure *remains*⁷²⁵ – i.e., as a potentially retrievable memory (regardless of subsequent conditioning).⁷²⁶ Finally, in those cases where fear conditioning often occurs only *after* conditioning of prohibited reward behavioral responses to stimuli has already occurred, this reward conditioning of course also remains.⁷²⁷

When we see fearful stimuli, to reduce the aversive reaction we tend to avoid them; our reaction does not mean that we do not see them, but that their stimulation of our conditioned microstructure, via conscious attendance, facilitates preparation for avoidance. That we no longer experience strong defense reactions and responses to these stimuli comes from this avoidance behavior – not from the fact that the stimuli are no longer capable of eliciting these reactions and responses, but because they *can* and *do*⁷²⁸ – i.e., if we are forced into close proximity to them. We attend *further* to unpredictable details because of their status as neither specifically rewarding nor punishing; this can happen with stimuli we are already familiar with because of a change in

⁷²⁵ From sometime between the age of 2 and 3. Childhood experience is discussed below.

⁷²⁶ If the stimulus did not have an ambivalent microstructuring effect in the organism – making attention possible, if it were only to elicit a microstructure that was potentiated to always result in the punishment pathway stimulation and therefore punishment behavior, this neutral attention would be impossible.

⁷²⁷ Indeed, if it did not, there would be no need for the coercive institutions of society past childhood.

⁷²⁸ For example, in the following chapter, Steve Paxton notes that when our personal space is invaded, we tend to constrict our own movement to within closer range of our own body, thus avoiding the feared contact.

attentional focus of the individual - when we are already attending to particular stimuli, we may not notice other stimuli unless because of their intensity (our phyletic/ontogenic experience with it) they become more arousing and elicit attentional focus.

Conditioning and "extinction" (or re-conditioning to unlearn a habitual reaction and response) appear, then, to work by the same principle of repetition.⁷²⁹ Repeated experience of, which means attention to, a particular uncertain stimulus is required to establish its aversive or rewarding (or ambivalent) status for the organism. The individual can be made to attend to it by means of its co-occurrence with phyletically (i.e., unconditioned) or already ontogenically (i.e., conditioned) aversive stimuli.⁷³⁰ This can occur, for example,

⁷²⁹ Research indicates the importance of *repetition* in achieving extinction. In particular, short intervals between trainings ("trial massing") in initial extinction sessions ("trials") have been found to speed up extinction learning (G. J. Quirk, "Learning Not to Fear, Faster," *Learning & Memory* 11 (2004), 125–26). In fact, extinction trials both in part elicit fear and reward "incubation" – i.e., elicit a fear or reward reaction – and, at the same time, extinguish fear or reward reactions. If extinction trial intervals are longer ("trial spacing") they tend to incubate fear or reward by eliciting the fear or reward response more than extinguish it.

⁷³⁰ The extinction of conditioned punishment behaviors (i.e., the unpairing of particular CS from US) occurs by the *repeated* presentation of the punishment behavior-inducing CS *without* the co-occurrence of US – i.e., without accompanying punishing stimuli (J. P. Schroeder and M. G. Packard, "Facilitation of Memory for Extinction of Drug-Induced Conditioned Reward: Role of Amygdala and Acetylcholine," *Learning & Memory* 11 (2004), 641–47; P. H. Janak et al., "Dynamics of Neural Coding in the Nucleus Accumbens During Extinction and Reinstatement of Reward Behavior," *Behavioural Brain Research* 154 (2004), 125–35). Punishment/fear and reward extinction takes place in part by medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) projections to the amygdala – i.e., via the slower, cortical route to the amygdala. But extinction also occurs via NMDA-mediated LTP of inhibitory neurons within the amygdala itself (F. Sotres-Bayon et al., "Emotional Perseveration: An Update on Prefrontal-Amygdala Interactions in Fear Extinction," *Learning & Memory* 11 (2004), 525–35; R. Fuchs et al., "The Role of the Basolateral Amygdala in Stimulus-Reward Memory and Extinction Memory Consolidation and in Subsequent Cued Reinstatement of Cocaine Seeking," *European Journal of Neuroscience* 23 (2006), 2809–13; M. E. Bouton, "Context and Behavioral Processes in Extinction, Learning and Memory" *Learning & Memory* 11 (2004), 485–94, not just in the prefrontal projections that synapse with the amygdala. As a result, the effects of extinction are felt not just in the thalamo-cortico-amygdalar pathway to the activation or inhibition of sympathetic responses, but also in the thalamo-amygdalar route, thus moderating the fear and reward responses. (There is as yet no indication that amygdalar extinction itself takes place without prefrontal cortical projections. But whether extinction in the amygdala itself cannot occur without mPFC involvement, amygdalar extinction is consequential in the thalamo-amygdalar fear circuit, thus moderating the

through disciplinary techniques (applied by institutional authorities, colleagues, even ourselves in the form of ascetic practices). Once the repeated pairing is sufficient to establish conditioning, the reintroduction of the formerly neutral stimulus will elicit the memory of the stimulus as aversive and, subsequently, that response in the organism. The initial experience of the stimulus as ambivalent or rewarding will still exist as a microstructural memory of the stimulus, but through avoidance (the conditioned fearful behavior) of the aversive stimulus, the individual will not gain much subsequent repeated experience of (sustained attention to) the stimulus as ambivalent.

To "extinguish" a conditioned stimulus's ability to evoke fear reactions and responses (behavior) requires the subsequent repeated experience of (attention to) it as ambivalent – that is, without any strong fear reaction. This would mean somehow changing the conditioned avoidance behavior, since avoidance precludes the necessary attention to the stimulus to establish its ambivalence⁷³¹. Given the microstructure established by repeated experience of a stimulus as fearful, the "extinction" of the fearful status of a stimulus (its microstructural power to evoke a fearful reaction and response) is not in fact an actual extinction, but a kind of synaptic competition.⁷³² Even if subsequent repeated attention establishes a new microstructural/synaptic architecture, the previously established synaptic architecture (microstructure) connecting the

sympathetic fear response – see F. Sotres-Bayon et al., "Emotional Perseveration: An Update on Prefrontal-Amygdala Interactions in Fear Extinction," *Learning & Memory* 11 (2004), 525–35.)

⁷³¹ With rats, this is accomplished by forcibly reintroducing the stimulus repeatedly without the initial conditioning fear stimulus. The rat cannot avoid the stimulus, and therefore proceeds to strengthen the original neutrality of the stimulus.

⁷³² This resilience of fear or reward conditioning is of obvious homeostatic importance. There is strong evidence that the CS-US associations bonded during fear or reward conditioning are not erased by extinction, even though extinction, when successful, overcomes fear elicitation (Ibid., 527).

stimulus to the fear reaction remains. But the new microstructure exists along with the old; newly conditioned LTP mean that the stimulus is never *fully* restored to its original ambivalent status. Instead, the organism experiences fear *and* reward reactions (including emotions, feelings, thoughts^{733,734}),⁷³⁵ a new ambivalence is established, a heightened state of "tonic readiness," whose outcome is not certain. The stimulus is capable of producing both pain and pleasure. But because these reactions and responses use the same synaptic networks, sufficient repeated experience of pleasure in relation to the object can establish a habit of engagement with it. In the meantime, to use Luxon's and

⁷³³ Since any CS can play the role of US, providing amygdalar and prefrontal-amygdalar neural architecture to support the conditioning of new fear response- or reward response-invoking stimuli by association, the emotion, feeling (including associated thoughts), and explicit memories (i.e., part of the amygdala's response to fear-invoking stimuli (CS or US) is adrenal release, which in turn augments hippocampal long-term memory formation), prompted by the (unextinguished) fear response- and reward response-evoking CS can themselves become fear response- and reward response-evoking CS. (This is true for all anxiety disorders – e.g., panic, phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder – including anxiety in its nonclinical forms (Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 228).

⁷³⁴ The conscious experience of emotional changes in the body is "feeling" – a "mental representation [i.e., map] of the physiologic changes that occur during an emotion" (A. Damasio, "Emotions and feelings: a neurobiological perspective," in *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium*, eds. A. S. R. Manstead et al. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2004), 52) – that is, as we have seen, in unimodal and transmodal association cortices, in connection with the hippocampus, and the limbic structures, including the amygdala. This mapping includes, via working, short-term, and long-term memory, the evocation of thoughts that are experientially associated with the emotional and feeling state of the organism in that moment, as well as a corresponding direction of attention to particular, affectively valued features of the precipitating stimulus/event.

⁷³⁵ For example, a strict patriarchal, fundamentalist Christian upbringing may pair pious behavior (e.g., Bible-reading, church attendance, servility, strict repression of urges to masturbate, dance, listen to secular music, have sexual contact with the same or opposite sex) with rewards or punishment reduction (e.g., affection, allowance (financial power), dessert, less spanking) from primary caregivers and other childhood and adolescence authorities. *Stimuli*, a prohibitive word or look (or any other sign) from the parent, and, by extension, all kinds of other stimuli, i.e., any thing/event/situation that serves as a temptation to disobey/opportunity to obey, are paired with the unconditioned stimuli and conditioned stimuli, affection, food, freedom to move, to elicit unconditioned response behaviors – approaching/engagement or avoidance – towards (in response to) the conditioned stimuli. At the same time, of course, conditioning will occur wherever there is space removed from patriarchal surveillance, either in private, in fantasy, or when patriarchal caregivers are absent or not looking, or on occasions when the primary caregivers behave nonpatriarchally, rewarding behaviors that indirectly but covertly strengthen CS-UR (unconditioned response) pairings that contradict patriarchal moral behaviors – e.g., sexual and other fantasies/dreams, masturbation, dance, and, in general, exploratory, non-prechoreographed behaviors.

Foucault's terminology, the stimulus is viewed as suspicious (potentially painful), but also potentially trustworthy (i.e., rewarding). It will always retain some, even if minute, degree of its original ambivalence and subsequent fearful status.

Subjects are, therefore, not entirely fearful, and when they are resentimental, not entirely so. The resentimental subject is fearful;⁷³⁶ it learns to avoid stimuli that it originally experiences as ambivalent or pleasurable because the application of extensive disciplinary techniques makes them fearful. Its experience has established the fearful status of those behaviors that are punished, and the fearful status of the feelings (including, possibly, the feelings of a state of tonic motor readiness), thoughts, explicit memories, and other stimuli associated with them – including other people, or parts of other people. As far as possible, it avoids all of these. Its resentimentality *also* consists in its learning a slave morality – to associate suffering, weakness, humility with “good,” to experience feelings and thoughts of pleasure, strength, action, and pride as “bad.” The resentimental subject’s compensatory “revenge” requires punishment of the “bad” in oneself and others, an avoidance of potentially pleasurable stimulus experiences (which can include confrontation, as our discussion of Foucault has shown) that leave this subject in a perpetually dissatisfied and dependent⁷³⁷ state.

⁷³⁶ See footnotes 543 and 640 below.

⁷³⁷ Nietzsche says in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, “While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is ‘outside,’ what is ‘different,’ what is ‘not itself;’ and *this* No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye – this *need* to direct one’s view outward instead of back to oneself – is of the essence of *ressentiment*: in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all – its action is fundamentally a reaction” (*On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1989), 36-7).

But this ressentimental subjectivity is not inevitable. We are capable of valuations that are not ressentimental. Fear (contrary to what LeDoux, explicitly, and Connolly, at least implicitly, think) is not predominant and preemptive, unconsciously affecting the unwitting organism through the conditioned amygdala; such a predominance would, as we have discussed, make all subjects preemptively and irreversibly fearful, and incapable of anything but a ressentimental morality. Instead, the (conscious) experience of culture both within and beyond childhood is clearly influential in predisposing us to differing degrees of fear and of ressentiment. Though clearly the repeated, pleasurable and painful experiences of stimulation in childhood give power to an increasingly large range of stimuli to evoke strong reactions and make probable certain responses in the individual, their power appears not to derive from their "unconscious" – and therefore consciously inaccessible – establishment in the neural microarchitecture that constitute our dispositions. It derives from conscious and repeated reinforcement in initial presentation and subsequent (conscious) experience.⁷³⁸

Disciplinary *and* Experimental

To decrease the probability that it will *habitually* avoid and punish (so as to remove / avoid) itself and others, such a subject, as we have said, would need *repeated* experience of *attention* to the stimuli it has been conditioned to fear – i.e., stimuli that this subject is precisely conditioned to avoid. But the problem, as we have established above, is *not* one of a completely fear-dominated subject, or a (more specifically) completely ressentimental subject (with an

⁷³⁸ In this sense, the psychoanalytic attention to childhood trauma / drama may serve to distract attention from (i.e., avoid) rather than direct it to a confrontation with the authorities and practices that maintain these stimuli's power to provoke specific behavioral responses.

intractable "motivational deficit"). Our organism, in response to the stimulus's original ambivalence (partial pleasure and partial pain), retains a microstructure making the organism "tonically motor ready;" it *can* maintain this attention (a kind of "steadiness" that is neither wholly trusting/approaching nor wholly suspicious) towards the stimulus – i.e., a kind of "agonistic respect." The "way out" – for a conatus – of the dissatisfaction and unhappiness of fearful avoidance and ressentimentality, then, is to experiment with and refine techniques "of the self" that develop this attentiveness, precisely when we are "sunk in the middle of action,"⁷³⁹ in the act of "ordinary perception" of the demands of everyday life, rather than just when we are away from them, as Connolly seems to advise.⁷⁴⁰ Our organism's neural macrostructure appears, by guaranteeing the basic capacity for tonic readiness, to guarantee that these techniques to some extent already exist – the human organism is not simply disciplinary or ressentimental but also an experimental, risk-taking subject. What the organism does *not* guarantee is the degree and sites of these techniques' development.

To conclude that fear is not predominant in the organism is not to say that fear cannot still affect it. Clearly, fear conditioning can make avoidance behavior more probable, and make recall of the stimulus's original ambivalence difficult. But this conditioning, research indicates, requires conscious attention. (We may still find ourselves doing things we cannot remember choosing, but this does not mean that we did not.) Whereas for Connolly, our "tactics of self-identity" and "otherness," involving ressentimental responses, are normally subconscious and automatic, a growing body of evidence seems to indicate

⁷³⁹ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 26.

⁷⁴⁰ Indeed, if Connolly were right about the predominance of fear, retiring to the dark, quiet of the theater would not eliminate its predominance.

instead that our responses to ontogenic/conditioned fear stimuli are still choices involving conscious awareness, even when these responses happen quickly and don't involve long deliberation.⁷⁴¹ That they *can* be recalled, attended to, even in the "midst of action," is the source of our (and Connolly's) hope in techniques of the self that might develop our habit of attention. This (latter) research also seems to indicate that this habit of attention is in all subjectivities *already* developed enough to be able to *maintain* and even develop itself further, to varying degrees in both the "slow" and "fast" interactions that constitute our everyday lives. The amygdala, "somatic markers," and virtual memories that are crucial to Connolly's conclusions appear not to act independently of conscious awareness but as a result of it.

This is not to say that watching certain films from a Bergsonian perspective will not affect the subject; these exercises of steady observation/attention in the dark and quiet, free of most fear stimulation, can, as Connolly says, "help" (i.e., allowed repeated attention to what one might normally avoid), given that perception, reaction, response, and conditioning require attentional focus. Such slowing down of one's movement/responses can result in the development (through practice) of one's ambivalence – critical awareness – to include attention to more minute detail by allowing the repeated experience of one's sensations (feelings and thoughts) – i.e., so that they become recallable memories. Slowing down is not necessarily a fear-stimulated act of avoidance (a distraction from one's sensations, feelings, and thoughts). It can also be an act of *engagement* with one's sensations, feelings and thoughts; Connolly's film-watching technique *could* do this. And the resulting

⁷⁴¹ That working memory cannot easily access this information does not mean conscious attention was not involved.

awareness, *might* be maintained during faster and less restricted movement and interaction. But the maintenance of this attention is also made more probable by repeatedly practicing – by trying it. Film watching is, nevertheless, still only *a partial* confrontation with the disciplinary subject; as a technique, in and of itself, it does not risk the fearful (but also ambivalently *arousing*) struggle with arbitrary authority where it exists in our practices in our relations with friends, strangers, coworkers, and also supervisors and other authorities who enforce our society's conventions and laws.

Given his desire and hope for agonistic respect, Connolly's technique (Bergsonian film watching) and his neuroscience seem unrealistically pessimistic; they at least implicitly assume a universally fear-dominated subjectivity (conditioned by an Augustinian command morality) – i.e., an apparently *determined* subjectivity – that contradicts both neuroscientific evidence and Connolly's optimism about the transformative possibilities of techniques of the self. (This simultaneous pessimism and optimism reminds us of Luxon's and perhaps Foucault's simultaneous and contradictory conclusions that we are *irreversibly* disciplinary subjects *and* that we are capable of *changing* this disciplinary subjectivity.) There *is* hope. The modern liberal subject is not simply a disciplinary and ressentimental subject; s/he also has the capacity – i.e., freedom – (already developed to some degree) *in fearful experiences* to "remark, describe, and remember,"⁷⁴² to tell the truth of her/his experience. If this subject wants to change his/her dispositions, behavior, and relations, s/he must risk this confrontation.

⁷⁴² Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008), 385, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

7. Steve Paxton's "Interior Techniques"

[I]n what is given to us as universal,
necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied
by whatever is singular, contingent, and the
product of arbitrary constraints?⁷⁴³ (Michel
Foucault)

What had the culture physically suppressed
or selected out which we might reclaim?⁷⁴⁴
(Steve Paxton)

Contact Improvisation⁷⁴⁵

Steve Paxton, after childhood training in gymnastics, was trained in aikido, ballet, and modern dance, later performing for postmodern choreographers Merce Cunningham and José Limón. He helped found and performed in the Judson Dance Theater, shortly afterwards breaking off to co-found the experimental, improvisational Grand Union in 1970, where Paxton began developing the practices that were to become "contact improvisation" (CI). The idea in the practice of CI, whose seminal performance "Magnesium" took place at Oberlin College in January, 1972, was to discover, through spontaneous movement in contact with other dancers – trained and untrained,

⁷⁴³ Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 45.

⁷⁴⁴ Steve Paxton, "Drafting Interior Techniques," *Contact Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1993), 64.

⁷⁴⁵ For an example of contact improvisation performance, please see Liz Erber, "Early Morning Contact Video," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ql0ISYdCypQ>.

spontaneous duets⁷⁴⁶ - human movement (and human behavior in general) which was "pleasant, highly stimulating, and elemental"⁷⁴⁷ to us as human organisms interacting with each other. There was no set choreography, no specific instruction. Improvisers in the space continuously chose when and how long and with whom they would dance and what movement to do. The Grand Union (1970-1976), where Paxton had begun experimenting with improvisation in duets (not yet named contact improvisation) two years before "Magnesium," was, likewise, "totally improvisational:"

The totally improvisational company that the Grand Union unintentionally became bypasses the grand game of choreographer and company. There, ego-play is the issue, and those gentle means of assuming authority or submitting to it had, in the past, been played thoroughly by the members... Instead, following or allowing oneself to lead is each member's continual responsibility. The security of pre-set material is only occasionally indulged in, since it seems to get in the way of amplified self-exploration that arises in improvisatory performance. The weighty theatrical tradition of subjecting one's self to another person's aesthetic of time-space-effort manipulation is ignored in favor of the attempt to be emancipated without confining or restricting others."⁷⁴⁸

Read from a Foucauldian perspective, Paxton in this *single* passage indicates how CI, motivated by its participants' dissatisfaction with and desire to free themselves from the disciplinary subject in their own practices and those of others, is, by means of the ability to observe and experiment, a continuous

⁷⁴⁶ Duets are typical; trios or larger groups are not impossible, but the more bodies, the more difficult it is to attend to all the bodies involved.

⁷⁴⁷ Steve Paxton, "Drafting Interior Techniques," *Contact Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1993), 64.

⁷⁴⁸ Steve Paxton, "The Grand Union," *The Drama Review* 16, no. 3 (1972), 130-1.

practice of self-awareness in relation to others – what Luxon calls a "disposition to steadiness."⁷⁴⁹ Or, more accurately, Paxton said it is an "attempt" to do this. It *could be* a practice of freedom. As I have argued, in the previous chapter, the organism's capability for such "amplified self-exploration" is guaranteed by its neural macrostructure. But to succeed in achieving freedom and satisfaction for the self a practice/ technique must risk confronting and thereby change the disciplinary subjectivity in one's own and others' dispositions.

This chapter examines CI as a technique of the self that attempts to take advantage of our macrostructurally guaranteed ability (those abilities to "remark, describe, and remember" that Foucault observed) to attend to stimuli/ objects that we are disciplined (fear-conditioned) to habitually avoid – an avoidance that constitutes our obedience and submission to established relations of power. Achieving a risk-taking (truth-telling) subjectivity requires attending to those habits – those "inexplicable inhibitions"⁷⁵⁰ – as they operate in our behavior (i.e., our relations) to prevent this subjectivity's operation/ development. Though CI accomplished much in this direction, Paxton's apparent binarization of the body and its reflexes, on the one hand, and consciousness and culture, on the other, helped limit its success. By altering its technique to include a more accurate, *recallable* image of the body and consciousness, reflexes and culture, CI might provide a habit of critique, an expressive subjectivity, ready to confront and tell the truth, in "the midst of action."

⁷⁴⁹ Nancy Luxon, "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 36 (2008), 386, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.

⁷⁵⁰ *TJ*, 515.

In his remarks on the subjectivity of the individual in American society, Paxton was uninhibited:

We are conditioned to voluntary slavery. In a democracy, dictators must demand that others be slaves; fortunately for the dictators, the American life produces slaves who are unaware of the mechanism of that production. The ties that bind are the ties that blind.⁷⁵¹

This conditioning in unawareness was a production of “gestures, modes of posture... behavior... mental attitudes... which constitute [the] proper social activities and communications... as well as the accompanying mental attitudes we acquire or aspire to for proper presentation of our ‘selves.’”⁷⁵² What we learn in school for the most part is “to sit still and focus our attention for hours each day. The missing potential here is obvious – movement of the body and varieties of peripheral sensing.”⁷⁵³ The “constraints and taboos of touching” that we learn as we grow up undermine our potential for satisfying physical contact.

Paxton observed this general cultural production of (though he did not use the term) disciplinary bodies even in dance, and his own experience of it. Far from being a freer space of cultural production, “[i]n dance—one laboratory for exploring the human body and all it carries with it in this life—repression of possibilities is the general rule, mirroring social forms.”⁷⁵⁴ In the dance classroom and rehearsal space, most dancers are physically isolated: “in class each person is equally spaced from all the others in floor work, or sequentially

⁷⁵¹ Steve Paxton, “The Grand Union,” *The Drama Review* 16, no. 3 (1972), 131.

⁷⁵² “What had the culture physically suppressed or selected out—[via] certain gestures, modes of posture and behavior (i.e., body language) which constitute proper social activities and communications, as well as the accompanying mental attitudes we acquire or aspire to for proper presentation of our ‘selves’—which we might reclaim?” (Steve Paxton, “Drafting Interior Techniques,” *Contact Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1993), 64).

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁴ Steve Paxton, “The Grand Union,” *The Drama Review* 16, no. 3 (1972), 133.

isolated when moving across the floor)... That each person must stay within his isolated space allotment... is typical of our culture."⁷⁵⁵ We are afraid of proximity, and therefore respond to "crowding" by avoiding contact - "condensing the field [of movement] into a tight little bubble around the person," or by "withdrawing inside the skin wall;"⁷⁵⁶ "There is dignity for the mind even if the messages of the body must be ignored. The understanding of personal space is social/habitual and since the habit is defensive, having that space invaded can be shocking."⁷⁵⁷

In general, dance companies, whether they were classical, modern, postmodern, practiced the same disciplinary techniques and reinforced the same hierarchical power relations that Paxton observed in society generally:

Many social forms were used during the 1960s to accomplish dance. In ballet, the traditional courtly hierarchy continued. In modern dance (Graham, Límón,⁷⁵⁸ Lang, et al.), the same social form was used except magicians rather than monarchs held sway. Post-modern dancers (Cunningham, Marsicano, Waring) maintained alchemical dictatorships, turning ordinary materials into gold, but continuing to draw from classical and modern-classical sources of dance company organization. It was the star system. It is difficult to make the general public understand other systems, inundated as we are with the exploitation of personality and appearance in every aspect of theatre.... [T]his basic poverty of understanding on the audiences' part is a drag....⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁸ Paxton, as we note above, spent several years dancing for both Límón and Cunningham.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., 131, cited in C. J. Novack, *Sharing the Dance* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 58-9.

Paxton, for his part, desired "unique and personalized forms"⁷⁶⁰ of dance practice. His dissatisfaction with these hierarchical power relations, in which directors' and practitioners' reproduced impersonal dance practices, as well as their audiences' apparent reproduction of demand for them, appear to have motivated his experiments with improvising in contact, in his time at the Grand Union and after.⁷⁶¹

If the hierarchical organization of power through the technical and organizational rules governing both dance and society were the problem, then perhaps by removing these constraints, one could find a freer type of movement and contact. Paxton's innovation, therefore, was to remove the "external" constraints that produced these inhibitions, to see what the result might be. Paxton set up movement experiments in which there was no teacher, director, correction, discipline, no set choreography, and no specific instruction. From Paxton's perspective, CI's potential impact would be to return decision-making authority to the dancer – a dancer who could be not just an institutionally recognized dancer in a culture industry, but anyone, everyone, in fact, who moved. CI could "reclaim" the potential that "the culture" had "physically suppressed or selected out."⁷⁶² It would do this by precisely developing our "habit of attention,"⁷⁶³ underdeveloped in "western movement" generally. In particular we lack "sensitization to the corporeal." In western movement, in our sports and dance, Paxton contended that the proper

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁶¹ Paxton (b. 1939) continues to teach and to experiment with his body even now, describing it as "his laboratory."

⁷⁶² Steve Paxton, "Drafting Interior Techniques," *Contact Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1993), 64.

⁷⁶³ It is not clear whether Paxton had read Foucault at the time of the writing of this article: 1993. Paxton is discussing the "thoughts that went through" his head in the six months between "Magnesium" in January and the presentation of the developing work, by then called "contact improvisation," in New York in June, 1972. Certainly in 1972, it would have been unlikely, though the article is written retrospectively.

performance of a particular, choreographed, and controlled form of movement was prioritized; the sensation of movement was merely secondary. In CI, on the other hand, "behavior evolves from sensing movement."⁷⁶⁴ The aikido roll, for example, could be taught in a western way, in terms of its form. But this attention to form would preclude the attention to sensation (on the back and neck) that were necessary for its execution, and would instead result in other habitual behaviors. The roll could, therefore, be broken down into parts that allowed one to feel these sensations.

This breaking down into parts, or slowing down of movement was crucial.⁷⁶⁵ If one wanted to achieve free, spontaneous movement instead of culturally imposed, habitual movement, one must develop one's habit of awareness in relation to the reflexive reactions of the body, which were more basic. Paxton "took the working model" for his investigations to be "a simple imaginary person with no physical, sensorial, or social inhibitions... a generic person with positive elements I had observed in many students, dancers, martial artists, and children,"⁷⁶⁶ and met with in partners, and himself, while doing CI. Whereas "planetary" experience/evolution had established and "tuned our potentials," "cultural things develop[ed] select parts of the potential."⁷⁶⁷ What were the unexplored possibilities of movement (i.e., behavior) general to humans as generic bodies, "tuned" by a shared evolution, unfettered by "physical, social, or sensorial" inhibitions? One could find this individual by becoming aware of the way the body "reflexively" interacts with

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁵ Taking weight from and giving weight to a partner was to be "slowly developed over months" (Steve Paxton, "Contact Improvisation," *The Drama Review* 19, no. 1 (1975), 42). Hatha yoga, with its emphasis on awareness of [the reflex activities involved in] breathing and posture, was suggested as a very gradual means of improving flexibility.

⁷⁶⁶ Steve Paxton, "Drafting Interior Techniques," *Contact Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1993), 64.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid.

its environment. And this needed to be developed slowly, because when something happens "which is too fast for thought" (e.g., when we are spinning or rolling very quickly), consciousness "goes away."⁷⁶⁸ Nevertheless, we can train consciousness to remain aware, "hang in" with the body when it is moving fast as well. Through specifically designed exercises, we can remain aware of the body's systems reflexively interacting with "weight, momentum, friction, the touch of their partner, the sensation of the floor under their body... [and] their peripheral vision of the space."⁷⁶⁹ For example, by closing one's eyes while standing, one could become aware of the tiny postural adjustments to shifts in weight. Consciousness, observing the reflexes, would be taught by them, amplifying its mediation by them.⁷⁷⁰ This new knowledge of what was merely reflex would become the "new ground for moving"⁷⁷¹ and allow "spontaneous" improvisation.

Therefore, with this developing awareness of reflexes, with consciousness merely watching rather than under the influence of our culture, trying to control, dancing would take place between the reflexes of people; "flowing streams of movement" which were "accidental[,] pleasant, highly stimulating, and elemental" suggested to Paxton that CI was "a basic mode of

⁷⁶⁸ In this confusing discussion, Paxton juxtaposes the "conscious" with the "reflexive," saying that consciousness *must* "leave" because of the speed of the event/stimulus, but then that consciousness can "stay" and just observe by training it. Consciousness' leaving is first a) innate and uncontrollable, and then, contradictorily, b) cultural and trainable. As for Paxton's distinction between "reflexive" and "cultural" behaviors, those reflexes that remain outside of the domain of conscious influence beyond the first year of life are very few— including the plantar reflex, cranial nerve reflexes, and tendon reflexes. Postural "reflexes," the ones that Paxton seems really to be referring to, on the other hand, are influenced by conscious awareness (and therefore culture) from early on. Indeed, this seems to be the basis of Paxton's observations regarding "modes of posture" that are culturally imposed.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid., 64.

⁷⁷⁰ "Does the nervous system and its mediation of posture relative to gravity have the possibility of teaching the consciousness, and does the consciousness have the property of amplifying or strengthening that mediation? I assumed this reciprocity did exist" (Ibid., 66).

⁷⁷¹ Ibid., 63.

communication between the reflexes of people as they moved."⁷⁷² Cultural habits, on the other hand, would manifest as "blocks" or "gaps" in conscious awareness, and would be worked through patiently and calmly, whether they were "emotional, orientational, or habitual."⁷⁷³ This calm, patient work was made possible because early CI practice in preparation for performances often involved long, intense live-in training, in which dancers would get to know each other very well, developing trust and awareness of themselves and their dance partners.

Paxton summed up the essential principles as follows:

[I]mages [based on real sensations] were used to focus the mind and then give the mind foci within the sensations of the body.

The words had to be unambiguous, unthreatening, informative, and generally understood.

The statements had to be true, obvious, and relevant.⁷⁷⁴

Its images would not involve "fictitious gasses,"⁷⁷⁵ but rather real sensations. The image would correspond to the real experience of the individual, in understandable, defined terms. The practice of "freedom of interaction in the social set,"⁷⁷⁶ based in habits of awareness, aimed at "producing freedom for individuals of a group, spurring them on to new awareness."⁷⁷⁷ Performances would be the practice itself and both would transmit, not the virtuosic and hierarchical "star-system," but the pleasant, and highly stimulating freedom of

⁷⁷² Ibid., 64.

⁷⁷³ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., 66.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., 62.

⁷⁷⁶ Steve Paxton, "The Grand Union," *The Drama Review* 16, no. 3 (1972), 131.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

interaction to their audiences, who might become participants. The first tour of the work in 1973 was called "You come. We'll show you what we do."⁷⁷⁸

The effect was powerful. Both on the dancers and the audience. Contact improvisers working with Paxton in the 1970s reported feelings both during the practice and performances (which were merely the practice but with an audience) of "tremendous tension and excitement about encountering anybody, an anticipation, not knowing what was going to happen – whether you were going to dance slowly, hardly move, do a lot of lifting and falling, or whether it was going to be sensuous or kind of playful and combative."⁷⁷⁹ "There was a sense of danger in it, always."⁷⁸⁰ The effects of this ambivalent tension persisted even *after* dancing; dancers reported that they felt "extremely energized."⁷⁸¹ And they were transmitted to audiences. (By the same associational conditioning that happens generally throughout our neural micro-structure, we are capable of, to an extent limited by our experience, feeling the movement and sensations of others' movement/behavior⁷⁸² by way of attending to the signs associated with that movement.) Dancers reported precisely this observation of audience's reactions and responses:

What happened, I think, was that sensations were transmitted to the audience. They would come out of the performances flushed and sweating, almost, and thrilled *as if they had been doing it themselves*.... To tell the truth, I

⁷⁷⁸ The second performance, after *Magnesium* in January, took place in the John Weber Gallery, June, 1972, with rehearsals in a Manhattan Chinatown loft, where the dancers also lived during the rehearsal period. Cynthia Novack observes that the performance was merely a continuation of rehearsal. Each performance lasted 5 hours, the audience coming and going as they pleased, no special music, lighting, costumes, or sets, except for the wrestling mat (C.J. Novack, *Sharing the Dance* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1990), 68).

⁷⁷⁹ Lisa Nelson, who began contact improvisation performance in 1975, cited in *Ibid.*, 70-1.

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷⁸² See Buxbaum, L.J. et al. "On beyond mirror neurons: Internal representations subserving imitation and recognition of skilled object-related actions in humans," *Cognitive Brain Research* 25, no. 1 (2005), 226–239.

don't think there was one performance we did that wasn't very enthusiastically received. It was like we had offered something to people as a way of looking at movement and a way of experiencing movement that was very new and healthy, very vital and life-supporting. And it was very refreshing to people, I think.⁷⁸³

In some performances, audience members *would* actually do it themselves.

They "would be jumping all over one another," remaining long after the end of the performance, often initiating interaction with the performers;

They would really want to start rolling around and jump on you... they would embrace you after a performance to congratulate you, but they'd hang on you, lean on you... I think that... seeing how long it was possible to touch somebody and not come away was very infectious... There was something that really unified everybody.⁷⁸⁴

There was a "tremendous feeling of accessibility between performers and audience."⁷⁸⁵ Many of these audience members would go on to practice CI themselves, having, some performers noted, *already* learned the practice from watching a single performance. According to Lisa Nelson:

The performances were like a demonstration. It was very rough and you *could drop in and out and it was okay....* Duets would last ten or fifteen minutes, sometimes even twenty. The solo work in between was more episodic, usually very weight-oriented, jumping and falling, and falling and rolling.... When everyone had a chance with as many people as possible, it

⁷⁸³ C. J. Novack, *Sharing the Dance* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 72. "The performances were so exciting, and it thrilled me to be in them... I always felt there was a gut-level response from the audience about what they were seeing. You understand that this is just my impression, but the response—the applause, the "oohs" and "aahs," the laughter—was just a real physical response" (Danny Lepkoff, cited in *Ibid.*, 72).

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

would be over. As a person in the audience, and as a learning performer, you really got to see how the different levels would occur, starting from the more tentative contact, perhaps, to a real physical contact, bumping up against each other, to some very poignant, very soft communicative duet....⁷⁸⁶

This ability for contact improvisation to communicate to the audience was something Paxton himself was aware of: "it is through the eyes that the audience begins a kinetic response, or a physical empathy with the dancer."⁷⁸⁷ And, as the performers describe, it also provided audiences with an introduction to the method. Audience members might not be prohibited from joining performances, and certainly were not prohibited from joining the practice. (This continues to be the case.) Paxton would go on to call CI "a kind of grass roots community work."⁷⁸⁸ A new publication, *Contact Quarterly*, was established in 1975, to disseminate the central ideas of the practice, as well as encourage a broader discussion by practitioners and teachers.

But, while Paxton envisioned it as a community project, CI (or this community project) appears to have a more radical potential, which Paxton only partially developed. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, the kinetic experience of CI, one of excitement and ambivalent tension, which is shared by both performer and audience (of potential performers), seems to be the very basis of "critique" – i.e., the ability of the individual to recall the original ambivalence of stimuli/objects, the ambivalence of our own

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid., 71.

⁷⁸⁷ Steve Paxton, "Improvisation is a word for something that can't keep a name," *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*, eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997), 125. Hereafter cited as *CQ/CI Sourcebook*, with the original year of each article's publication in parentheses.

⁷⁸⁸ *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1989), 167. Paxton also implies that Grand Union members were at least sometimes thinking of politics; they "were influenced as much by their shared past and the particular focus on *new developments in collective action* as by their own decisions about the future" (Steve Paxton, "The Grand Union," *The Drama Review* 16, no. 3 (1972), 131; italics mine).

feelings/sensations, behavior, thoughts, in relation to arousing stimuli/objects. This ambivalent tension allows attention/awareness as opposed to continued avoidance of fearful stimuli (on the basis of their association with punishment) – in this case, close interactions with others, where roles, movements, and contact are uncertain, and *where one is aware of one's own decision-making authority*, in direct relation to others with decision-making authority.

Foucault theorized that our docility, our obedience to existing authorities and conventions, depended on just this type of association and avoidance. If CI could elicit and become aware of (i.e., recall) this ambivalent tension, the originally ambivalent value of touch and improvisation, it could begin to dissociate direct confrontations/negotiations from punishment. By reminding us in its discourse (physical sensations, images, words, as signs) of this primary ambivalent tension, which is also the basis of the audience's empathy with the dancers, CI might encourage a more risky confrontation and renegotiation of power generally. That is, this practice would create a new neural microstructure, a recallable memory, associating engagement with uncertain results, possible rewards, possible punishments, or, more likely, something in between. This experience in memory could be recalled in precisely those situations of potential truth-telling to immediate personal and institutional subjectivities⁷⁸⁹ that bring up ("automatically") in the individual's thoughts and sensations past painful experiences of confrontation that ended in punishment.⁷⁹⁰

In developing this already existing capability to recall that one's feeling of tension is in fact in part a "tonic motor readiness" for action, with uncertain

⁷⁸⁹ In part disciplinary, in part not, as we have noted.

⁷⁹⁰ See chapter 5 for a discussion of Connolly's account of "the uncanny" in the retelling of the Genesis story.

outcomes, and that one's experience of pain and panic instead result from the imposition of now arbitrary authority,⁷⁹¹ in situations just like this one, CI would, it seems, create a freer, bolder, more active subjectivity - a subjectivity willing to risk truth-telling in more direct and daring ways than before, in its interactions generally, with any type of audience. In a group exercising this, would this not lead to more direct individual and collective interactions/confrontations, negotiating its desires (to critique and engage) with those partly disciplinary, partly expressive subjectivities in its immediate "personal" relationships? Such a subjectivity might eventually (through continued practice in this recall in situations of heightened ambivalent tension in the organism) hesitate less in confrontation with those authorities in our political institutions, which are supposed to represent our desires and realize our interests?

But the development of this capacity for *recalling* the ambivalent feeling of what Rawls calls "inexplicable inhibitions" in the moment of confrontation or negotiation with other partially disciplinary subjectivities would appear to depend on the practice of CI technique, in the terms that Paxton described: a direct experience of the sensations in simple, truthful thoughts (or images) that recalled the experience, used to guide further interaction. The artist, Paxton wrote, had "responsibilities... to keep... these techniques... clear of confusion."⁷⁹²

Not long after the practice and publication had begun, however, Paxton expressed unhappiness at the direction CI practices were taking:

⁷⁹¹ The practice would reveal the arbitrary nature of the imposition.

⁷⁹² *CQ/CI Sourcebook*, 5.

I want to go on record as being *pro-physical-sensation* in the teaching of this material. The symbolism, mysticism, psychology, spiritualism are horse-drivel. In actually teaching the *stand* or discussing *momentum* or *gravity*, I think each teacher should stick to *sensational facts*.⁷⁹³

By the end of the decade, members of the Grand Union had isolated themselves in their own CI practices, and the growing CI community of new teachers' practices, including their textual discourses, deviated and continue to deviate even further from Paxton's original emphases and writing.

Paxton had emphasized the importance of: a) direct descriptions of real sensations as a basis for interaction; b) how CI produced freedom *for the group*; c) unambiguous and informative words used in real interactions; and d) rejecting our "voluntary slavery" to a "star-system" by making performance an indistinguishable extension of practice, with decision-making authority restored to the dancer. The changed discourse, on the other hand, had turned and continues to turn its attention to CI as: a) internal body experiments or somatic education describing the sensation as an aesthetic experience, for example, of the small dance,⁷⁹⁴ rather than information to be used in the interaction; b) a therapy developing the *individual's* "personal power and strength of presence" useful for "performing" in all areas of daily life and therefore a legitimate part of the college curriculum;⁷⁹⁵ c) the heavy use of metaphor and poetry in directing and describing the practice,⁷⁹⁶ including CI as

⁷⁹³ Paxton, cited in C. J. Novack, *Sharing the Dance* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 81-2.

⁷⁹⁴ For example, Ann Woodhull, "The Small Dance, Physiology and Improvisation," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1977-78), 24-26.

⁷⁹⁵ See Daniel Lepkoff "The Educational Value of Contact Improvisation for the College Student," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1979-80), 55.

⁷⁹⁶ This tends to be the approach of Nancy Stark Smith, chief editor of *Contact Quarterly*. See for example "Editor's Report/High Moon—11th Hour Reflections," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1976-77), 8; "Dealing with the Heat," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1983-84), 91; and "Crossing the Great Divides" *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1992), 217.

a "spiritual" endeavor concerned with "getting at the soul of our dance" by means of metaphor;⁷⁹⁷ d) minor discussions⁷⁹⁸ about the internal "politics" of contact dance – its alleged ability to eliminate role-related gender inequalities while participants engaged in it;⁷⁹⁹ but there were also complaints about new hierarchies and elites within the practice.⁸⁰⁰ Moreover, CI's partial inclusion in college dance curricula depended on demonstrating its now developed repertory of specific technical movements, observing the typical hierarchical conventions: choreography, set repertory, typical distinctions between audience and performer.

Paxton, though he was critical, said generally that it was "important that the vision" of contact improvisation "was cloudy," since a "true group process" could not evolve if its "course" were already "completely predetermined."⁸⁰¹ He had seen this happen with the members of the Grand Union. Because its structure could "open up all the possibilities," it also "eventually led to isolation of its members."⁸⁰²

To be sure, this divergence can in part be explained by a new generation of teachers, removed from Paxton - the "father" and by far most articulate disseminator of contact, primarily in the text of *Contact Quarterly*, but also in other writing, teaching, and performances. It also seemed to move in the direction of a more American liberal democratic cultural practice; it had become a personal aesthetics, a celebration of individualism and individual

⁷⁹⁷ Martin Keogh, "A bottle of wine, a cane, a cloth," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1989), 182.

⁷⁹⁸ In the *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (with articles spanning 1977-1992), four out of approximate 200 articles are dedicated to the "politics" of CI.

⁷⁹⁹ Byron Brown, "The Politics of Contact," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1977-78), 18.

⁸⁰⁰ Cynthia Novack, "Egalitarianism and Hierarchy in Contact Improvisation," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1988), 140-1; see also "On Lisa Nelson Dancing" *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1987), 130-1; and Mark Pritchard, "Still Moving: My rise and fall in contact improv," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1990), 196-8.

⁸⁰¹ Steve Paxton, "The Grand Union," *The Drama Review* 16, no. 3 (1972), 131.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*, 131, cited in C. J. Novack, *Sharing the Dance* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 60.

experience – including the heroization of its star performers, a religious experience described in metaphorical terms, and its understanding of its own even potential political significance remained undeveloped.

But this divergence also seemed to be in part due to the physiological understanding conveyed in Paxton's own practice – his teaching and (largely written) discourse. Paxton cannot be faulted for his persistent attention to the body; articles and transcripts of classes attest to Paxton's consistency in his use of direct descriptions of real sensations and references to actual body parts.⁸⁰³ He also continued to insist on CI as a group work creating "deep bonds."⁸⁰⁴ Some statements tended towards the abstract and metaphorical – or example, "quality to quality, receiving what is given. a volley – ball of karma"⁸⁰⁵ – and possibly spiritualist – "Does the class seek purity? If so, special learner will receive pure energy and pure intensity;"⁸⁰⁶ but these occurred within texts that, again, are focused on the teaching of bodily sensation. Finally, Paxton's extended, intellectual discussions, were also concerned with the body, philosophy of science and language, how the endocrine system can speed up or slow down our experience of time.⁸⁰⁷

Paxton's physiological discussions nevertheless relied on and reinforced certain conceptual oppositions – specifically he repeatedly juxtaposed the "reflex" and "bodily," on the one hand, to mere "habit," "culture," and "consciousness," on the other. We have seen some of these oppositions already in our discussion of Paxton above: the body and its reflexes could be free, spontaneous, uninhibited, unfettered, if it were allowed to act without

⁸⁰³ Steve Paxton, "Transcription," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1986), 107-9.

⁸⁰⁴ "Hier-visibility," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1989), 167.

⁸⁰⁵ "Teacher Teaching" *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1977-78), 34.

⁸⁰⁶ "Teacher Teaching" *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1977-78), 34.

⁸⁰⁷ "Improvisation is a word for something that can't keep a name," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1987), 125-29.

consciousness' interference, its cultural blocks, gaps, impositions, and habits.⁸⁰⁸ CI was reflexes dancing with reflexes, consciousness merely watching: "While in contact, we attend to our reflexes, which have been stimulated by the other's movements. Our reflexes move us, and this causes our partner to move. This cycle of movement responses is continuous and forms the basis of the dialogue."⁸⁰⁹ As a result, experienced as opposed to beginner dancers *were* their reflexes and their bodies.⁸¹⁰ Consciousness might even be bypassed; improvisers might "sink past the conscious mind into more appropriate states."⁸¹¹ If Paxton's dialogue was also more complicated than this, this was still the opposition participants and many teachers appear to have remembered and disseminated. As Cynthia Novack puts it, "participants took the focus on physical aspects as a neutral value, a part of natural law rather than an aesthetic (cultural) overlay."⁸¹²

But at the same time, Paxton placed his hope for the future precisely *in consciousness*. One hoped that "one's subjective understanding will continue to grow, and more parts of one's body will come under conscious training."⁸¹³ Sometimes, it was a combination of "reflex *and intuition*"⁸¹⁴ that explained the pleasure experienced in contact improvisers' duets; dancers learned confidence in their "choices." Whereas in most statements it is the evolved, reflexive body that is the basis of freedom, in others "[i]t is the habit of adaptation which will keep us reproducing the system."⁸¹⁵ Consciousness was now not the problem

⁸⁰⁸ "The dignity of the mind" came at the "expense of the messages of the body" (Steve Paxton, "The Grand Union," *The Drama Review* 16, no. 3 (1972), 133).

⁸⁰⁹ Steve Paxton, "Fall After Newton" (transcript), *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1987), 129.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁸¹¹ *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1989), 69.

⁸¹² C. J. Novack, *Sharing the Dance* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 68.

⁸¹³ "Jumping Paradigms," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1992), 253.

⁸¹⁴ "Q & A," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1980), 68.

⁸¹⁵ "Improvisation is a word for something that can't keep a name," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1987), 129.

but the solution. Paxton noted that he was comfortable with these kind of contradictions; "CI ha[d] always abounded in logical contradictions."⁸¹⁶ Most of the rest of the contact community, however, chose to ignore the contradictions and instead think in more familiar - ironically, culturally habitual - terms, avoiding the question of consciousness and culture altogether. Now CI was an activity of the body and the soul, the body itself became spiritual, and one needed to be free from the mind. The body's pre-cultural status eliminated any need to engage in questions of culture, the cultural production of one's entire organism (consciousness as part of the body), and even possibly the need to change these institutions; if one could simply supersede a disciplinary consciousness through "bodily experience," then why bother with specific sensations relating to "culture" – especially if one's experience of "culture" and authority had been painful. One's relationship to the world and even oneself now became highly metaphoric.

Since, as we have seen, the work of repeated pairing establishes the brain's associational neural microstructure, its recallable memory, Paxton's more repeated association of the body with reflex, on the one hand, and culture with conscious inhibition, on the other, helped secure the divergence of the teaching and textual discourse away from an understanding of the production of one's inhibitions – inhibitions which many (teachers, students, and the outside dance community) expected to disappear into an egalitarian utopia once they entered the studio.⁸¹⁷ Equally significant was the dissociation of

⁸¹⁶ "Hier-visibility," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1989), 167.

⁸¹⁷ See Cynthia Novack, "Egalitarianism and Hierarchy in Contact Improvisation," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1988), 129; "Hier-visibility," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1989), 166.

relaxation from tension;⁸¹⁸ since it was cultural, it was to be avoided. Moments of tension could be answered by going back to one's bodily sensations and relaxing. Exciting moments were, for Paxton, not "tense" but "adrenalized"⁸¹⁹ or "glandular."

I will suggest that CI discourse could be altered to realize its more radical potential. It would have to make clear that consciousness is aware but behaviorally avoids stimuli that one is conditioned to fear, rather than disappears because "the body" or its reflexes are faster and wiser; that conscious experience – *of culture* - is necessary for the development and change of reflexes;⁸²⁰ that consciousness itself behaves like a reflex, automatically attending to fearful, rewarding and novel (i.e., arousing) stimuli to produce an ambivalent tension (i.e., tonic motor readiness), and a potentially recallable memory; that this ambivalent tension provides the possibility of attending consciously to stimuli, thoughts, feelings, and external objects (including people and parts of people) one is accustomed to avoid, but might interact with to see whether that fear is substantiated; that this conditioning of avoidance behaviors may result from disciplinary conditioning, and that the confrontation with (i.e., engaging in) the stimuli that precipitate avoidance will bring up associated memories indicating those disciplinary techniques and possibly institutional practices that establish them.

⁸¹⁸ "New material comes into range with the ability to relax into contact and attune movement awareness to the demands of the situation. The body can move more swiftly when it acts out of intuition rather than prejudice. Relationships become possible at high speeds that would be arduous if slowed. It becomes evident that dancers have been only touching the surface" (Steve Paxton, "The Grand Union," *The Drama Review* 16, no. 3 (1972), 134).

⁸¹⁹ Steve Paxton, "Fall After Newton" (transcript), *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1987), 129.

⁸²⁰ As noted above, those reflexes that remain outside of the domain of conscious influence beyond the first year of life are very few—including the plantar reflex, cranial nerve reflexes, and tendon reflexes. Postural "reflexes," the ones that Paxton seems really to be referring to, on the other hand, are influenced by conscious awareness (and therefore culture) from early on. Indeed, this seems to be the basis of Paxton's observations regarding "modes of posture" that are culturally imposed.

In CI, (as we noted above) dancers choose their partners or no partners, when their duets begin and end, type of movement or no movement, and so on. With all of these prohibitions removed, certain general patterns can, nevertheless, still be noted.⁸²¹ Most beginners worry about and feel humiliation when improvising, even when dancing alone. The more unfamiliar the movement is, the greater the fear, even when that movement poses no obvious threat to participants and spectators, and, when engaged in, even bring them satisfaction. S/he feels anxious, thinks judgmental thoughts, recalls previous experiences of humiliation, gets scared of other people's judgment, and in response often initiates habitual (usually recognizable) movement forms (for example, ballet or modern dance movement, if they are in his/her training, or performance of a recognized character/role).

The spontaneous physical interaction of *contact* usually compounds this basic improvisational fear. As with improvisational solo movement, the more unfamiliar the form, the greater the feeling of anxiety and fear. S/he generally avoids extended visual, manual, pubic, and abdominal contact, between not just the same but also opposite genders, again, even when it poses no immediate physical threat and can, when engaged in, provide feelings of pleasure. When this contact does occur, s/he tends to interpret it conventionally – as a sign of the other's attraction or repulsion, approval or judgment; the dancer often reports feeling "confused" or intensely ambivalent. S/he appears to default into habitual, conventional movement forms (heterosexual duets, men lifting women, performing romance or conflict), even

⁸²¹ The following observations (where it is not indicated otherwise) on improvisational dance are based on my own experience, and then discussed and corroborated in informal interviews, and with dancers from all over Europe and North America in response to my presentation of this material as a formal paper at CI36, the recent 36th anniversary celebration the beginning of "Contact Improvisation" in 1972.

when s/he intends to be spontaneous.⁸²² In the public performance of contact improvisation these patterns can be even more marked.

But these patterns, though corroborated by the vast majority of contact improvisers, are nevertheless not generally discussed, in either *Contact Quarterly* or the CI community in general. Beginning improvisers all have their own particular experiences, some of course more intense/extreme than others, but their habits of movement and observations of the apparent reproduction of impersonal dance practices and judgment in their own CI practice overlap generally enough that they - combined with Paxton's critiques of American education and culture - would suggest a pervasive and successful (though not total) disciplinary project in the terms that Foucault's early work describes. *And* they also contain a partially developed "critique" - a suspicion about the inexplicability of those inhibitions of acts of pleasure - acts of pleasure which, when they do occur in CI, occur without punishment. This critique (I have observed above) is neurally guaranteed in the fact of conscious attention, but its degree and direction of development is not guaranteed, and has not been fully realized in CI.

To the extent that we really are voluntary slaves, then associating a recallable "image of the real," a "kinetic image" - perhaps "ambivalent tension" or "tonic motor readiness" - with the sensation of this tension might allow it to come to mind and help us attend to rather than avoid/obey the disciplinary

⁸²² One of my recollections after a CI "jam": "I watch and judge myself: my movement is ugly. I feel stupid, standing there unsure what to do next... everyone else seems to be fine, but I'm back somewhere deep inside myself again, watching myself freeze up. Moving feels better, but I notice the tension around my mouth and face, I plan out my movement to be beautiful but it doesn't work. When I'm with a partner, I'm watching them for directions... I feel like I'm doing the wrong thing... they're going to leave. Or that they're staying too long. I'm embarrassed that the movement and weight transfers are rough and disjointed. It doesn't matter if no one else is watching and judging, because in these moments I'm judging and punishing myself, and my partner. It's my fault. Or it's theirs. I can even feel this way when I'm dancing alone. It sucks. I just want it to be over, go home, and forget it ever happened."

subjectivity in ourselves and others. Though CI is a development of a habit/practice of attending in conditions of uncertainty, by associating this habit with a "pre-cultural" body, with touch but not thought, CI's discourse diminishes its potential political effect, by – in its current manifestation at least – motivating a partial retreat, obediently, to an allegedly "pre-cultural" body. The more confrontational potential of CI is to establish this recallable truth of ambivalent tension in the face of choice/ decision/ confrontation – i.e., to continue acting knowing that this tension is only a sign that one (organism, including one's consciousness) is attending, preparing for response - and to develop this in growing numbers of expressive and less disciplinary subjectivities, "truth-tellers."

In other words, CI practice provides a repeated and ongoing experience of ambivalent tension towards (as opposed to avoidance of) previously fearful stimuli in interactions with others – i.e., in the prohibited physical behaviors of *unchoreographed* physical contact with others; the improviser steadies the practice of his decision-making authority in direct relationship with others who also have decision-making authority. The improviser can (through these interactions with others) thereby become critically aware: of the organism's sensations, feelings, and thoughts, and behavior that characterize our fearful avoidance (i.e., our disciplinary subjectivity); and the arbitrariness of their production through prohibitive conditioning in one's own experience of the institutional, interpersonal, and individual practices and techniques (what people do to us, what we do to them, what we do to ourselves). By developing his ability to remain aware of (i.e., not avoid) formerly fearful stimuli, and his awareness (recallability) of this ability (i.e., *as a choice*), the improviser can continue to risk further engagement with others – potential allies and potential

enemies – with uncertain outcomes. That is, CI could effect a potential "radical democratization" of its participants.

If Connolly is right that the feeling of anxiety is the "most productive and dangerous effect"⁸²³ of the uncanny, its elicitation in CI has not made the most of it. CI practices elicit but then turn this tension away from "culture" and "consciousness" and exclusively toward the sensations of an allegedly "pre-cultural" body. This image-inary association undermines the radical potential of Paxton's achievements – extensively practicing/performing and describing an experimental technique of awareness of the self in relation to others, as the basis for their more expressive, less obedient, improvisatory interaction.

⁸²³ William Connolly, *The Augustinian Imperative* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 135.

8. Conclusion

So apparently even a government formed on values of freedom and equality will trample on freedom and equality. How embarrassing. ...If liberty and equality are chosen, then at the moment of choice, they exist. What happens the next moment is something for all of us... to ponder.⁸²⁴ (Steve Paxton)

Freedom and equality as choices imply an uncanny moment, in which we, the people, both want the ambivalent uncertainty of decision-making *and* also feel fear of (or "inhibitions" in relation to) decision-making, and therefore may relinquish the opportunity to others. That is, we may decide to let others decide, or we may decide to take decision-making authority ourselves in relation to others. These others can be our dance partners, friends, teachers, doctors, lawyers, government representatives, state authorities, and so on. In these deciding moments, what we conclude about our fears or inhibitions – i.e., whether they indicate the hopelessness of attempting to take authority *or* that we will have to "try it" to find out – is in fact what constitutes this decision, and also the changes to the arrangement of power that result. If the form or degree of democracy is decided in this deciding moment, then it is crucial to examine it – what leads up to it, and what happens in it.

I began this discussion recounting just such a deciding moment, an experience of power's operation in my body – a recallable image (i.e., memory) of the present decision to confront (or not confront) authority in relation to a

⁸²⁴ Steve Paxton, "Hier-visibility," *CQ/CI Sourcebook* (1989), 167.

past experience of discipline and punishment now internalized as a bodily reaction. If this was the moment in which I decided my relation to authority, my share in power, it seemed to be strongly affected by disciplinary techniques applied by authoritative others – and subsequently by myself – upon myself, in order to achieve and reinforce a (not entirely but still strongly) disciplinary subjectivity. This subjectivity, its origins, limits, and possibilities, were variously explored in the ensuing chapters.

My discussion of Foucault's analyses of disciplinary techniques and techniques of the self provided an introduction to the problem of freedom for the modern subject – a subject whose obedience and docility, produced by the application of disciplinary techniques throughout society, were apparently automatic and guaranteed. But Foucault's later attention to *parrhesia* assumed another subject, whose capacity to "remark, describe, and remember" could be developed into a practice of steadiness in telling the truth, even in risky confrontations with political authority. While the earlier disciplinary subjectivity automatically reproduced his own docility, this new subjectivity, even in its nascence, was to somehow "supersede" it. Just how disciplinary was the subject then? This question, for Foucault, could be answered only through techniques of the self and in relationship, aimed at producing "critique" – a courageous habit of attention towards the truth. Parrhesiastic practice was, in this sense, Foucault's implicit answer to his earlier enlightenment question: "in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints?"⁸²⁵ But could this be hoped for? What was the human capable of?

⁸²⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York : Pantheon Books 1984), 45.

And was the disciplinary subject then not completely disciplinary? Finally, was the parrhesiastic practice really "politically" consequential, if the parrhesiastes would not be "a legislator"? These questions remained unanswered, at least in these analyses. Perhaps the parrhesiastes would find out in practice, experimentally.

If Foucault hoped his parrhesiastes would be more critical, Plato's psychophysiological techniques, I argued, tended to produce obedience. Though not an "ascetics," the "freeman's" practices still aimed to harmonize his conduct with the law, just as his governing of his household would do for his wife, children, and slaves (but, since he was a citizen, also possibly the entire polis). It was this conditioning in obedience that would be the foundation of the republic. The continued tendency in political theory to ignore this larger Platonic project is a habit more indicative of our own than Plato's time – that is, the habit of ignoring the psychophysiological basis of power, on which the "play" of Plato's conceptualizations do their work. If Platonic conceptuality still set the terms for philosophy in our time, then perhaps this too relied on habits in *our own* disciplinary subjectivity, and its establishment through our own liberal institutions of power.

My analysis of Kant's enlightenment philosophy, then, found it to be a simultaneous celebration of the triumph of reason *and* a discursive project aimed at reinforcing the work done by techniques of humiliation – techniques which Kant himself noted were particularly effective in conditioning early obedience, and later voluntary submission to liberal institutions of government. Rawls and Habermas merely extend this Kantian conceptuality further into mainstream liberal democratic thought. Both Rawls' reflective equilibrium and his overlapping consensus rely upon and reinforce conditioned and coercive

exclusions – in liberal political history, in childhood, and even later, whenever "inexplicable inhibitions" arise and overlapping consensus fails to occur. Rawls' own theory, then, plays a central and self-conscious part in the political conception's "wide role as educator," taking certain questions off "the political agenda" for good. Habermas, first projecting a universal conception of communicative rationality and then, like Rawls, relying on a potentially exclusive acculturation of norms, also ends up with legitimation and motivation "deficits." While the fact that the fantasy of post-conventional ego identification (even once Habermas changes its source to a particular liberal democratic cultures) is not realized is devastating for Habermas' theory, this does not mean that his and Rawls' prominence in mainstream liberal democratic theory is any less secure. Their terminology continues to have a reinforcing effect upon an already conditioned mainstream liberal subjectivity, repeatedly reminding it of its commitments to "universal rational consensus."

In contrast to Kant and his heirs, Connolly's analyses explained the ressentimentality of our dispositions as an effect of our early and later conditioning, a resilient conditioning that needed to be worked upon through techniques that affect our "linguistic" and "visceral register[s]." On the basis of his understanding of neuroscientific evidence and Bergsonian theory, Connolly recommends specific film viewing techniques, applied to specific films, for changing our dispositions when we are accessible, outside of the demands and pressures of everyday life. Since disciplinary technique is "ubiquitous" – and especially in those potentially confrontational moments with the authorities of our lives, we needed more broadly applicable techniques, ones that involved direct relations with others. Neuroscientific evidence, moreover, indicated the always imminent possibility for conscious practices, even in the midst of strong

emotional reactions. Foucault's parrhesiastic capabilities – remarking, describing, and remembering – were found to have a neurophysiological basis.⁸²⁶ A capacity for critique was guaranteed in the ambivalent tension of the organism's conscious attention. But, as Foucault observed, this needed to be developed, *and* neuroscientific evidence suggested it needed to be developed not just in those closer personal relations, but also in confrontation with disciplinary authority.

Steve Paxton's "interior techniques" of contact improvisation (CI) possessed this potential. As a face-to-face, confrontational, development of one's "habit of attention," it might develop in its participants the increasingly radical, decision-making, "expressive subjectivity" and trust required for eventual, powerful, collective confrontation and negotiation of political power in our liberal institutions. *And* it might do so by means of a radical transformation of the human organism. But through his persistent juxtaposition of the body / reflex with consciousness / habit / culture, and referral of attention and experience back to "the body" rather than to "consciousness" (the apparent source of our "voluntary slavery"), Paxton undermined this radical potential. CI teachers and participants followed what seemed like Paxton's lead, celebrating the body and its now spiritual and highly individual, personal powers; culture and consciousness, being the problem, were never consistently associated with the sensations of the body, and so in participants' minds were unconnected, and could be ignored. I suggested how CI's radical potential, given its powerful effect on participants and audiences alike, might be realized through slight changes in Paxton's technique – changes that would

⁸²⁶ The capacity for "critique" was present in the "tonic motor readiness" of the organism in response to arousing stimuli. See Chapter 5 for this discussion.

associate the body's ambivalent tension with its history of corporealization, its present relation to others, and the possibility of becoming an expressive subjectivity "in the midst of" it.

In all of these chapters, the authors seemed to assume both an originally coerced and manipulated subjectivity *and* that it had been (Plato, Kant, Rawls, and Habermas) or could be (Connolly, Foucault, and Paxton) transcended to achieve their privileged subjectivity and form of communicative relations or rationality. It turned out, however, that – in the terms of each account – the original subjectivity was not transcended but in fact the essence of the ideal subjectivity and the motivating force and source – by its attachment to each author's respective "image of the real" – for "achieving" this ideal (and this is perhaps an inevitable result of describing subjectivity in polarized terms). Foucault wants to "sidestep" a disciplinary (automatic and ascetic) subjectivity achieve a more expressive,⁸²⁷ relational subjectivity, but using an image of the latter whose appeal to the former, to the extent that it does appeal, seems difficult to explain. Plato intends to transcend bodily desire/sophistry and achieve reason/philosophy, but legitimizes the latter with specific images of the obedient person both in his noble lie, the myth of the metals, and in his moderate "free man." Kant and Rawls want to establish the stability of liberal political principles and institutions through their images: Kant would overcome the prejudicial (passionate or affective) empirical person, realizing the rational, noumenal person, but through humiliation techniques aimed at creating affective attachments (i.e., habitual pain avoidance) to an image of abstract

⁸²⁷ A subject who is both hopeful and suspicious as with Connolly, and primarily linguistic, as with Habermas.

noumenal personality, obedient to God and the universal moral law; Rawls wants to overcome the coerced, acquiescent subject of the morality of authority to attain principled, moral, rational personality or citizenship, but ends up relying on acculturated and ultimately coerced and manipulated particular attachments to cultural images of first, rational person-hood, and, later, the (political) citizen. Habermas would overpower particular cultural attachments and instrumental rationality to obtain a patriotic, communicatively rational citizen; Habermas ultimately, however, depends on a pre-ideal attachment to specific (idealized) images (of deliberative democracy) from one's own culture, including its particular political-legal condition. Connolly would compete against a fearful and resentimental subject to accomplish a critically analytical and inclusive, pluralist subjectivity, but using an image of the latter – a non-resentimental subjectivity with a "preliminary gratitude for the abundance of being" or "nontheistic gratitude" whose emergence and development from original resentmentality is hard to account for. Finally, Paxton (or CI) would bypass conscious/ cultural habitual "slavery" to establish "a simple imaginary person with no physical, sensorial, or social inhibitions" – that is, the reflexive body, with unique and personalized forms of movement and contact; but it was hard to find a basis for this reflexive communication within the voluntary, habitual slavery resulting from American cultural education.

This apparently habitual opposition of an earlier (deterministic) image of subjectivity to a latter preferred image/ideal appears to make both earlier and later subjectivities (in their extreme, polarized types) impossible, and thereby undermine these images and the techniques prescribed to obtain them; we are left with no believable image of the real from which to make prescriptions or "critique" these theories. (Moreover, this opposition, insofar as it attempts to

secure an ideal identity by punishment of or flight from – avoidance of – its inverse seems even resentimental.) But the possibility of an ambivalent tension or "critique" appears to be borne out by experience and recent neuroscientific research, which suggests explicitly what the contradictions of all these theories – to varying degrees – may only imply – i.e., that: Subjects do not *automatically* reproduce disciplinary behavior, but not reproducing it tends to be very scary, and very exciting; what subjects *choose* appears *not* to be guaranteed by neural structure, pure practical reason, or even historical luck; subjects, part disciplinary and part expressive, experience in their everyday lives moments of ambivalence – critical anxieties.

Given these observations of experience, perhaps, if we want to go beyond this dichotomy of free critique vs. disciplinary subjectivity, we need to: a) confront and rethink the generally established pain/fear vs. pleasure/reward understanding of conditioning, desire, and motivation, and b) discuss forms of government, accounts of our history and our selves, and techniques (disciplinary and of the self) in terms of their likelihood of producing more or less *disciplinary* subjectivities or more or less *expressive* subjectivities.. that is, in terms of their encouragement or prohibition of that ambivalent tension of decision-making that characterizes experimental, improvisational practices (and not just discussion) – practices that, by attending to and confronting our inexplicable *and unhappy* inhibitions, allow us to become clearer about and act against and to change those rules and conditioning which are arbitrary and unnecessary.

WORKS CITED

- Adkins, A. W. H. *From the Many to the One: A study of personality and views of human nature in the context of ancient Greek society, values and beliefs*. (London: Constable, 1970).
- Botempi, Bruno et al. "Time-Dependent Reorganization of Brain Circuitry Underlying Long-Term Memory Storage." *Nature* 400 (August 12, 1999): 671-675.
- Boulous Walker, Michelle. *Philosophy and the Maternal Body: Reading Silence*. (New York: Routledge, 1998).
- Bouton, M. E. "Context and Behavioral Processes in Extinction." *Learning and Memory* 11 (2004): 485-94.
- Brown, Byron. "The Politics of Contact." *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1977-78: 18.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter*. (New York: Routledge, 1993).
- Buxbaum, L.J. et al. "On beyond mirror neurons: Internal representations subserving imitation and recognition of skilled object-related actions in humans." *Cognitive Brain Research* 25, no. 1 (2005): 226-239.
- Buzsáki, György and James J. Chrobak. "Synaptic plasticity and self-organization in hippocampus." *Nature Neuroscience* 8, no. 11 (November 2005): 1418-20.
- Cohen, J. D. et al. "Temporal Dynamics of Brain Activation During a Working Memory Task." *Nature* 386 (1997): 604-8.
- Connolly, William E. *Ethos of Pluralization*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).
- Connolly, William E. *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).
- Connolly, William E. *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).
- Connolly, William E. *The Augustinian Imperative: A Reflection on the Politics of Morality*. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1993).

Connolly, William E. *Why I am not a Secularist*. (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

Coole, Diana. *Women in Political Theory: From ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism*. (Boulder, Colorado: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988).

Cooper, John M., ed. *Plato: Complete Works*. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

Damasio, Antonio. *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. (New York: Avon, 1994).

Damasio, Antonio. "Emotions and feelings: a neurobiological perspective." In *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium*. eds. A. S. R. Manstead et al. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2004): 49-57.

Damasio, Antonio. *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*. (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2003).

Damasio, Antonio. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness*. (London: Heinmann, 1999).

Damasio, A. R. "Time-Locked Multiregional Retroactivation: A Systems-Level Proposal for the Neural Substrates of Recall and Recognition." *Cognition* 33 (1989): 25-62.

De Haana, Michelle et al. "Human Memory Development and Its Dysfunction After Early Hippocampal Injury." *Trends in Neurosciences* 29, no. 7 (July 2006): 374-81.

D'Esposito, M. et al. "The Neural Basis of the Central Executive System of Working Memory." *Nature* 378 (November 16, 1995): 279-81.

Derrida, Jacques. "Plato's Pharmacy." In *Dissemination*. tr. B. Johnson (Chicago: University Press, 1981).

Dews, Peter, ed. "The Limits of Neo-Historicism." In *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas*. (London: Verso, 1992): 237-44.

Dodds, E. R. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951).

Eimer, Martin and Amanda Holmes. "The Role of Spatial Attention in the Processing of Facial Expression: An ERP Study of Rapid Brain Responses to Six Basic Emotions." *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience* 3, no. 2 (2003): 97-110.

- Erber, Liz. "Early Morning Contact Video."
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ql0ISYdCypQ>.
- Fillion, Réal. "Freedom, Truth, and Possibility in Foucault's Ethics." *Foucault Studies*, no. 3 (November 2005): 50–64.
- Foucault, Michel. *Birth of the Clinic*. (New York: Pantheon, 1973).
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. (New York: Pantheon, 1977).
- Foucault, Michel. *Fearless Speech*. ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/>.
- Foucault, Michel. "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress." in *The Foucault Reader*. ed. Paul Rabinow (New York, Pantheon, 1984): 340-72.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972–1977*. ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).
- Foucault, Michel. *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984, Vol. 1, Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. ed. Paul Rabinow et al. (New York: New Press, 1997).
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality Vol. II, The Use of Pleasure*. tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985).
- Foucault, Michel. "What is Enlightenment?" In *The Foucault Reader*. ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984): 32-50.
- Freeman, Samuel ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Freud, Sigmund. (1919h). "The Uncanny." In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1974), 17: 217-256.
- Frey, U. and R. G. Morris. "Synaptic Tagging and Long-Term Potentiation." *Nature* 385 (1997): 533–36.
- Fuchs, R. et al. "The Role of the Basolateral Amygdala in Stimulus-Reward Memory and Extinction Memory Consolidation and in Subsequent Cued Reinstatement of Cocaine Seeking." *European Journal of Neuroscience* 23 (2006): 2809–13.
- Fuster, J. M. *Cortex and Mind: Unifying Cognition*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Fuster, J. M. *The Prefrontal Cortex: Anatomy, Physiology, and Neuropsychology of the Frontal Lobe*, 3rd ed. (New York: Lippincott-Raven, 1997).

Fuster, J. M. "Unit Activity in Prefrontal Cortex During Delayed-Response Performance: Neuronal Correlates of Transient Memory." *Journal of Neurophysiology* 36 (1973): 61–78.

Goldman-Rakic, P. S. "Toward a Circuit Model of Working Memory and the Guidance of Voluntary Motor Action." In *Models of Information Processing in the Basal Ganglia*. eds. J. C. Houk, J. L. Davis and D. G. Beiser (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995): 131-148.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

Habermas, Jürgen. "Apologetic Tendencies." In *The New Conservatism*. Ed. and trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 227.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Between Facts and Norms*. Trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

Habermas, Jürgen. "Can Complex Societies Form a Rational Identity?" In *Toward the Reconstruction of Historical Materialism*. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), abridged in "On Social Identity." *Telos* 19 (Spring 1974): 91-103.

Habermas, Jürgen. "Citizenship and National Identity." in *Between Facts and Norms*. Trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996): Appendix II, 491-516.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979).

Habermas, Jürgen. "Development of Normative Structures." in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. (Boston : Beacon Press, 1979).

Habermas, Jürgen. *Inclusion of the Other*. Ed. Ciaran P. Cronin and Pablo De Grieff (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000).

Habermas, Jürgen. "Individuation through Socialization: On George Herbert Mead's Theory of Subjectivity." In *Postmetaphysical Thinking*. Trans. William Mark Hohengarten (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992): 149-204.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Knowledge and Human Interests*. Trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971).

Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990).

Habermas, Jürgen. "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism." *The Journal of Philosophy* 92, no. 3 (1995): 109-131, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2940842>.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).

Hayne, H. "Infant Memory Development: Implications for Childhood Amnesia." *Developmental Review* 24 (2004): 33-73.

Hebb, D. O. *The Organization of Behavior*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1949).

Honig, Bonnie. *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Horvitz, J. C. "Mesolimbocortical and Nigrostriatal Dopamine Responses to Salient Non-Reward Events." *Neuroscience* 6, no. 4 (2000): 651-56.

Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

Janak, P. H. et al. "Dynamics of Neural Coding in the Nucleus Accumbens During Extinction and Reinstatement of Reward Behavior." *Behavioural Brain Research* 154 (2004): 125-35.

Kant, Immanuel. *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*. tr. Victor Lyle Dowdell, ed. Hans H. Rudnick (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978).

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgment*. tr. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1987).

Kant, Immanuel. *Education*. tr. Annette Churton (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. tr. Allen Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

Kant, Immanuel. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's, 1965).

Kant, Immanuel. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*. tr. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1983).

Kant, Immanuel. *The Metaphysics of Ethics*. tr. J.W. Semple, ed. Rev. Henry Calderwood (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886) (3rd edition), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1443/56222>.

Kenyon, Garrett T. "A model of long-term memory storage in the cerebellar cortex: A possible role for plasticity at parallel fiber synapses onto stellate/basket interneurons." *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 94 (25) (December 9, 1997): 14200–14205.

Keogh, Martin. "A bottle of wine, a cane, a cloth." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1989: 182.

Knowlton, B. J. and M. S. Fanselow. "The Hippocampus, Consolidation, and On-line Memory." *Current Opinion in Neurobiology* 8 (1998): 293–96.

Korotkova, T. M. et al. "Excitation of Ventral Tegmental Area Dopaminergic and Nondopaminergic Neurons by Orexins/Hypocretins." *The Journal of Neuroscience* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 7–11.

Krause, Sharon. "Desiring Justice: Motivation and Justification in Rawls and Habermas." *Contemporary Political Theory* 4, no. 4 (November 2005): 363–385.

LeDoux, Joseph. *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are*. (New York: Viking, 2002).

LeDoux, Joseph. *The Emotional Brain*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

Lee, H. K. "Phosphorylation of the AMPA receptor GluR1 subunit is required for synaptic plasticity and retention of spatial memory." *Cell* 112, no. 5 (March 7, 2003): 631–43.

Lepkoff, Daniel. "The Educational Value of Contact Improvisation for the College Student." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1979–80: 55.

Libet, Benjamin. "The Timing of Mental Events: Libet's Experimental Findings and Their Implications." *Consciousness and Cognition* 11, no. 2 (June 2002): 291–99.

- Lloyd, Genevieve. *The Man of Reason*. (Minneapolis: U. Of Minnesota Press, 1984).
- Luxon, Nancy. "Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault." *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008): 377-402, <http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/377>.
- Lynch, M. A. "Long-Term Potentiation and Memory." *Physiological Reviews* 84 (1) (January 2004): 87-136.
- Malenka, R. and M. Bear. "LTP and LTD: An Embarrassment of Riches." *Neuron* 44 (2004): 5-21.
- Markell, Patchen. "Making Affect Safe for Democracy?" *Political Theory* 28, no. 1 (2000): 38-63, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/192283>.
- Martin, K. C., A. Casadio, H. Zhu, E. Yaping, J. C. Rose, M. Chen, C. H. Bailey, and E. R. Kandel. "Synapse-specific, long-term facilitation of aplysia sensory to motor synapses: a function for local protein synthesis in memory storage." *Cell* 91, no. 7 (Dec 26, 1997): 927-38.
- McCarthy, Thomas. *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981).
- Mead, George Herbert. *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967).
- Moller Okin, Susan. *Women in Western Political Thought*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).
- Nehamas, Alexander. *The Art of Living*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
- Nelson, Lisa and Nancy Stark Smith, eds. *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997).
- Norretranders, Tor. *The User Illusion: Cutting Consciousness Down to Size*. trans. Jonathan Sydenham (New York: Viking, 1998).
- Novack, Cynthia J. *Sharing the Dance*. (Novack, C.J. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).
- Novack, Cynthia. "Egalitarianism and Hierarchy in Contact Improvisation." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1988: 140-1.

Oades, R. D. "Dopamine: Go/No-Go Motivation Vs. Switching." Commentary on Depue & Collins' "Neurobiology of the Structure of Personality: Dopamine, Facilitation of Incentive Motivation and Extraversion." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 22 (1999): 532-33.

Paton, J. J. et al. "The Primate Amygdala Represents the Positive and Negative Value of Visual Stimuli During Learning." *Nature* 439 (2006): 865-870.

Paxton, Steve. "Contact Improvisation." *The Drama Review: TDR* 19, no. 1 (1975): 42-48.

Paxton, Steve. "Drafting Interior Techniques." *Contact Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1993): 64-78.

Paxton, Steve. "Fall After Newton" (Transcript). In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1987: 129-130.

Paxton, Steve. "Hier-visibility." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1989: 166-7.

Paxton, Steve. "Improvisation is a word for something that can't keep a name." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1987: 124-131.

Paxton, Steve. "Jumping Paradigms." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1992: 252-3.

Paxton, Steve. "On Lisa Nelson Dancing." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1987: 130-1.

Paxton, Steve. "Q & A." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1980: 68-70.

Paxton, Steve. "Teacher Teaching." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1977-78: 34.

Paxton, Steve. "The Grand Union." *The Drama Review* 16, no. 3 (1972): 130-1.

Paxton, Steve. "Transcription." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1986: 107-9.

Pritchard, Mark "Still Moving: My rise and fall in contact improv." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1990: 196-8.

Pessoa, L. et al. "Visual Awareness and the Detection of Fearful Faces." *Emotion* 5, no. 2 (2005): 243-47.

Pessoa, L., S. Kastner and L. G. Ungerleider. "Attentional Control of the Processing of Neural and Emotional Stimuli." *Cognitive Brain Research* 15, no. 1 (2002): 31-45.

Pessoa, L. et al. "Neural Processing of Emotional Faces Requires Attention." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA*. 99 (2002): 11458-63.

Quartz, S. R. and T. J. Sejnowski. "The Neural Basis of Cognitive Development: A Constructivist Manifesto." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 1997, 20 (4): 537-596.

Quirk, G. J. "Learning Not to Fear, Faster." *Learning & Memory* 11 (2004): 125-26.

Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005).

Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1996).

Reinblatt, Shauna P. and Mark A. Riddle. "Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor-Induced Apathy: A Pediatric Case Series." *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology* 16, no. 1 / 2 (2006): 227-33.

Robbins, Trevor W. "Arousal Systems and Attentional Processes." *Biological Psychology* 45 (1997): 57-71.

Romanski, L. M. and J. E. LeDoux. "Equipotentiality of thalamo-amygdala and thalamo-cortico-amygdala projections as auditory conditioned stimulus pathways." *The Journal of Neuroscience* 12 (1992): 257-74.

Saurette, Paul. *The Kantian Imperative: Humiliation, Common Sense, Politics*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

Schroeder, J. P. and M. G. Packard, "Facilitation of Memory for Extinction of Drug-Induced Conditioned Reward: Role of Amygdala and Acetylcholine." *Learning & Memory* 11 (2004): 641-47.

Schultz, Wolfram "Behavior Dopamine Signals." *Trends in Neuroscience* 30, no. 5 (May 2007): 203-10.

Scolnicov, Samuel. "Plato on education as the development of reason." Proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy. (Boston: Paideia: Philosophy Educating Humanity, 1998), <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Anci/AnciScol.htm>.

Scoppetta, M. et al., "Selective Serotonine Reuptake Inhibitors prevents emotional lability in healthy subjects." *European Review for Medical and Pharmacological Sciences* 9 (2005): 343–48.

Shlaggar, B. L. and D. D. O'Leary. "Potential of Visual Cortex to Develop an Array of Functional Units Unique to Somatosensory Cortex." *Science* 252 (1991): 1556–60.

Sotres-Bayon, F. et al. "Emotional Perseveration: An Update on Prefrontal-Amygdala Interactions in Fear Extinction." *Learning & Memory* 11 (2004): 525–35.

Spelman, Elizabeth "Woman as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views," *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 109-131.

Squire, L. R. et al, eds. *Fundamental Neuroscience* (San Diego: Elsevier Science, 2003).

Squire, L. R. and P. Alvarez. "Retrograde Amnesia and Memory Consolidation: A Neurobiological Perspective." *Current Opinion in Neurobiology* 5, (1995): 169-177.

Stark Smith, Nancy "Crossing the Great Divides." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1992: 217.

Stark Smith, Nancy. "Dealing with the Heat." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1983-84: 91.

Stark Smith, Nancy. "Editor's Report/High Moon—11th Hour Reflections." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1976-77: 8.

Tambornino, John. *The Corporeal Turn : Passion, Necessity, Politics*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

Terman, J. R. and A.L. Kolodkin. "Attracted or Repelled? Look Within." *Neuron* 23 (1999): 193–95.

Teyler, T. J. and P. DiScenna, "The Hippocampal Memory Indexing Theory." *Behavioral Neuroscience* 100 (1986): 147–54.

Tobias, Saul. "Foucault on Freedom and Capabilities." *Theory, Culture & Society* 22, no. 4 (2005): 65–85.

Tucker, Don M. "Dopamine Tightens, Not Loosens" *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 22, no. 3 (1999): 537–38.

Varela, Francisco et al. *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

Woodhull, Ann. "The Small Dance, Physiology and Improvisation." In *Contact Quarterly's Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1997) 1977-78: 24-26.

Zahm, Daniel S. "The Evolving Theory of Basal Forebrain Functional-Anatomical 'Macrosystems'." *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 30 (2006) 148-172.