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The Academic, Ethics and Power

I dream of the intellectual destroyer of evidence and universalities, the one who, in the inertias and constraints of the present, locates and marks the weak points, the openings, the lines of power, who incessantly displaces himself, doesn't know exactly where he is heading nor what he'll think tomorrow because he is too attentive to the present.

(Foucault, 1996a: 225)¹

What relationship does, or can, the academic have to herself, today? To what extent can one's relationship to one self be stylised as a site of resistance in the contemporary university? In this paper, I seek to begin to respond to these questions. I do so, first, through a connective reading of Michel Foucault's work on (neoliberal) governmentality and his later work on the care of the self. Whilst such a connection was drawn explicitly on a number of occasions by Foucault in lectures and interviews, it is understated in the Foucauldian literature, and at times distinguished by researchers working *either* on governmentality studies *or* on his 'care of the self'. Whilst I do not reject the importance of singular focus in either of these fields, I nonetheless feel that work at their intersection can be fruitful.²

More specifically, in this connective reading, I argue that the academic, today – and my focus for this paper's purposes will be, admittedly, UK-centric - is incentivised to internalise the principles of, and self-govern according to, neoliberal governmentality. Through such self-government, the academic's everyday practice of 'knowledge production', 'skill transfer', etcetera, is today *in the service of* neoliberal governmentality. I cite two examples on this: academic writing and practices of networking. Pivoting on these two examples, I will then suggest and defend two practices of resistance available to the academic today under

1. I would like to thank Keith Ansell-Pearson for his support and enthusiasm from the early stages of this paper, and his feedback which vastly improved and focused it. Of course, I extend my gratitude to the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade, the organisers of the *Engaging Foucault* conference in December 2014, for giving me the opportunity to present this research. From my fellow panel members in their talks, audience members with their questions, and fellow delegates in our conversations, I received probing feedback and invaluable encouragement.

2. Indeed, important and interesting work is being pursued in each area independently. For example: Death's (2010) work on Foucault and global protest. Ansell-Pearson's (2014) work on Nietzsche, Foucault, and the care of the self hints towards this intersection, as does Thompson's (2003) suggestion that self-formation forms a distinct model of resistance in Foucault.

neoliberal governmentality: writing (again) and friendship. In §1, I pursue this connective reading, before considering writing in §2, and friendship in §3.

I argue that writing and friendship open up the possibility of *resistive* and *transformational* practices of subjectivation. Both practices contain a 'double movement' comprising (1) the subject's refusal of objectification in the neoliberal regime of truth; and (2) a transformative and experimental transfiguration of the self through those practices. I insist on both (1) and (2). I do so because much literature discussing Foucault's work on resistance will situate it as a mere non-productive corollary of 'power', and so, speaking generally, resistance becomes situated in a power-resistance (negative) dialectic. So put, all one could do in a power-resistance dialectic is 'say no' to governmentality. Nothing to me seems further from the Foucault drawn, and which I draw in this essay, between his work on governmentality and his work on the care of the self. Bernauer (1988: 71, my alterations, my emphasis) captures this well:

Foucault's notion of self-formation is always in the context of a struggle for freedom within a historical situation. [This self *becomes* autonomous] only through a struggle with and a stylizing or adaptation of those concrete possibilities which present themselves as invitations for a practice of liberty. Foucault's employment of aesthetic terms points to the power which [his] agonism has for an *ecstatic* art, for leaving itself behind in transgressing the prisons of a particular historical determination and for creating a new relation to the event and, thus, self.

This *ecstatic* component is the reason why I insist on both (1) and (2), enabling the historical situatedness of all resistance, but allowing for a (non-negative) ecstatic component which enables or produces transformation.³ Allow me now, then, to turn to this connective reading itself.

§1

§1.1 Governmentality as a Technology of Power...

In 1977-78 and 1978-79, Foucault's lecture courses became devoted to the exploration of 'techniques' of liberal government. While his then recently published *Discipline and Punish* (1991a) (in 1975) devoted itself to the operationalisation of disciplinary power in institutional contexts, in sites of enclosure (prisons, schools, the army), his work on liberal (and neoliberal) governmentality was centred on something different: on government *at a distance*. Governmentality is exercised on the possible field of action of the subject; it is the 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 1994a: 237, my translation). Foucault's analytics of governmentality, then, is devoted to uncovering the operationalisation of power *outside of* institutions of enclosure. So, the move was from the study of the intense regulation of behaviour in disciplinary institutions, to the study of a mode of power that governed *through freedom*.⁴ Governmentality governs not through injunctions or orders, but through

3. Foucault insists on this creative, productive transformative element of resistance in 'End of the Monarchy of Sex' (1996a: 224).

producing a field of action with certain incentive structures. As Jason Read notes: ‘The state [of governmentality] channels flows of interest and desire by making desirable activities inexpensive and undesirable activities costly, counting on the fact that subjects would calculate their interests’ (2010: 6). Governmentality produces a space of freedom for subjects through governing their incentive structures in order that they will be induced to make ‘optimal’ decisions. What constitutes an *optimal* decision is relative to the particular *regime of truth* that governmentality utilises: statistical and economic knowledge (2010: 12-13; 46; 66-67).⁵ Taking neoliberal governmentality as our example, Foucault notes:

“[Neoliberal governmentality] has to intervene on society as such, in its fabric and depth. Basically, it has to intervene on society so that competitive mechanisms can play a regulatory role at every moment and every point in society and by intervening in this way its objective will become possible, that is to say, a general regulation of society by the market.”

(Foucault 2010: 145)

Neoliberal governmentality governs the incentive structure of subjects in such a way that subjects are encouraged to govern themselves as competitive and entrepreneurial sites of human capital, as, that is, sites of continuous production and continuous self-investment.⁶ In governing the subject as a site of human capital, we can say that that neoliberal governmentality *objectivises* the subject as a site of human capital.⁷ We can say that the *ideal subject* of neoliberal governmentality is the subject who *self-governs* herself as a site of human capital.

§1.2 ...and a Technology of the Self

This subject, the ideal subject of neoliberal governmentality, who governs herself as a competitive and entrepreneurial site of human capital, is one, then, that *objectivises herself in neoliberal governmentality’s regime of truth*. This subject is governed through her self-government according to the neoliberal regime of truth. She is one who practices neoliberal governmentality *upon herself*. A motif that runs through much of Foucault’s work on relationships of power is that the naturalisation of power is a key factor in its perpetuation; or, in other words, that power tends to efface its operational mechanisms:

“[P]ower is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms. Would power be

4. In this way, it seems to me possible to read Foucault’s work on governmentality alongside Deleuze’s *Postscript on the Societies of Control* (1992).

5. I will not be able to explore these epistemic instruments more fully here. The clearest examples we can draw upon are GDP, inflation and employment rates. Governmentality, this is to say, governs in such a way that individual subjects will make decisions that are most likely to impact upon these figures in ‘positive’ ways. In this way, these figures can function as a measure of how ‘praiseworthy’ the economic conduct of a given population is, and an individual’s contribution (or lack thereof) to these figures is likewise figured as a barometer of praiseworthy or blameworthy conduct.

6. The theory of human capital was an innovative approach to the subject in post-WWII economic theory, particularly in the Chicago School of Economics. See: Schultz (1960) and Becker (1964).

7. To draw this out in terms of a comparative example, this mode of objectivisation in neoliberal governmentality is distinct from the mode of objectivisation we might see under liberal governmentality, related to the distinction between liberal and neoliberal models of the individual. See: Besley and Peters (2007: 18).

accepted if it were entirely cynical? For it, secrecy is not in the nature of an abuse; it is indispensable to its operation. Not only because power imposes secrecy on those whom it dominates, but because it is perhaps just as indispensable to the latter: would they accept it if they did not see it as a mere limit placed on their desire, leaving a measure of freedom – however slight – intact?”

(Foucault 1988: 86)

Transposing this thought onto our consideration of governmentality, we can say that governmentality operates most effectively when its internalisation is treated as a practice of freedom, or when a subject internalises its regime of truth as *her own*. In other words: *a technology of power operates most effectively when the subject practices it as a technology of the self.*

It is on this point that the connective reading I am forwarding becomes sharper. As Foucault noted in an unpublished lecture, an analytics of governmentality is an analytics of ‘the surface of contact on which the way of conducting individuals and the way they conduct themselves are intertwined’ (2005: 548).⁸ In his famous book length study of Foucault, Deleuze, too, captures this theme when he notes that ‘the theme which has always haunted Foucault is that of the double [which is] an interiorization of the outside’ (1995: 97-98). In short: *governmentality’s operation and success is inseparable from the types of relationships that subject’s have to themselves and their conduct.*

It is with this take on Foucault’s analytics of governmentality that we can clearly establish the prescience, and indeed, intense continuation, of his apparent ‘shift’ to the ‘care of the self’ in his later lecture courses. These two themes form a thread united by the subject’s constitution through certain practices, games of truth and relationship to themselves. As I noted at the top of this paper, this connective reading is one Foucault himself emphasised. For example, in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*:

[I]f we understand by governmentality a strategic field of power relations in their mobility, transformability, and reversibility, then I do not think that reflection on this notion of governmentality can avoid passing through, theoretically and practically, the element of *a subject defined by the relationship of self to self* [...] [I]n the type of analysis I have been trying to advance for some time you can see that power relations, governmentality, the government of the self and of others, and the relationship of self to self constitute a chain, a thread, and I think it is around these notions that we should be able to connect together the question of politics and the question of ethics.

(Foucault 2005: 252, my emphasis)

Or in an 1984 interview:

[G]overnmentality implies the relationship of self to self, which means exactly that, in the idea of governmentality, I am aiming at the totality of practices, by

8. Foucault also phrased it in these terms: “What are the games of truth by which man proposes to think his own nature when he perceives himself to be mad; when he considers himself to be ill; when he conceives himself as a living, speaking, laboring being; when he judges and punishes himself as a criminal?” (Foucault 1992: 7).

which one can constitute, define, organize, instrumentalize the strategies which individuals in their liberty can have in regard to each other [...] [T]he notion of governmentality allows one, I believe, to set off the freedom of the subject and the relationship to others, i.e., that which constitutes the very matter of ethics.

(Foucault 1988: 19-20)

Governmentality provides the subject with a space of freedom which encourages the subject to have a particular relationship to herself. The relationship one has to oneself under governmentality is, therefore, a *site of politics*.⁹ Furthermore, one's relationship to oneself is a *site of ethics* insofar as it involves the subject's ethos, that is, how the subject negotiates the space of freedom afforded to her by governmentality (what Foucault will call practices of freedom or practices of liberty). Conceived in this way, the relationship one has to oneself is, thereby, *ethico-political*. McGushin captures this with a sense of urgency:

An ethics of the self [is] an urgent political task because the concern for the self, the formation of the self, and the truth of the self are all already permeated by relations and techniques of power – that is, *the self as such is already political*.

(McGushin 2007: xvii, original emphasis)

Taking this conception – that is, this connective reading between Foucault's work on governmentality and his work on the care of the self – I will now pivot to the question of contemporary academic practice. How can we situate the 'academic' today? How is the contemporary academic governed today, and what types of relationships is she incentivised to have to herself and her academic practice?

§1.3 Academic Practice Today

Indeed, in Foucault's own work, the question of the *intellectual's* role, or in any case, the role and status of the *one who speaks the truth*, is central. In his famous introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault affirmatively situates this book squarely against the 'ethics of the intellectual' which had dominated post-war France (1984: xi), broadly, that of the Marxist intellectual who 'represents' the masses. Foucault (and, of course, Deleuze) rejected this notion of an intellectual as he who expresses the repressed truth of the repressed collective; and instead situated the intellectual as he who 'struggles against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of "knowledge," truth," "consciousness," and "discourse"' (Deleuze and Foucault, 1996: 75). The intellectual, as positioned here by Foucault, is engaged in a struggle *in his relationship with himself and in relation to the dominant game of truth*, in other words. Braidotti (2011: 268), on this, underlines that for both Foucault and Deleuze, intellectual engagement involved a 'change of scale to unveil power relations where they are most effective and invisible: in the specific location of one's own intellectual and social practices.'

9. In an unpublished manuscript, presumably from the preparation for *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures, Foucault (2009: 390) wrote: 'Politics is no more or less than which is born with resistance to governmentality, the first uprising, the first confrontation'.

In short, Foucault's domain of analysis is always practical (himself included) or composed of practices (his own included). As Strausz reminds us (2013):

[W]e can't exclude *ourselves*, subjects of governmental rationalities and technologies of power, from the study of governmentality. What requires attention are the actual practices through which we become part of how we experience life within the epistemic structure of Western modernity. Caught up in a dense web of relations of "power" and "knowledge," the "subject" that is being articulated is in fact a *who*: me, you, *us*.

It is in this spirit, which Braidotti and Strausz highlight, that I wish to centralise the question of academic practice today. When considering the operations and effects of power, academic subjects cannot exclude *themselves* and *their practices* from such analyses. What relationship do 'we' – as those engaged in academic practice – have to ourselves today? This, of course, permits of no catch-all response: those in the academy relate to themselves in heterogeneous styles. Nonetheless, as a general hypothesis, and with the proviso that I am, admittedly, being UK-centric within the confines of this paper, I claim that the academic is today incentivised to govern herself as a site of human capital. Academic practice in the university, today, involves the constant negotiation with the freedom afforded to subjects by neoliberal governmentality.

The academic subject who has internalised and self-governs according to neoliberal governmentality, as I already noted, *objectifies herself in neoliberal governmentality's truth procedures*. Her relationship to herself, her writing, her professional relationships and to truth hinges upon her objectification in governmentality's truth regime (economic and statistical knowledge) and how *it* assesses her conduct.¹⁰ Structurally, this subject's objectification is comparable to what Foucault (2014: 198, my emphasis) highlights in Christianity's objectification of the penitent and his conduct:

The penitent is the object, but the operator or operators of [these truth procedures] is not the penitent himself, [these are] the truth procedures by which *others*, either the whole community, or the bishops, or the leaders, *are able to know the penitent and make him the object of a truth inquiry*.

Neoliberal governmentality, in other words, objectifies the conduct of its subjects in *its* regime of truth in a manner not unlike Christianity's objectification of the moral conduct of its penitents. Under neoliberal governmentality, the neoliberal subject constitutes the *penitent* and political economy is the *truth procedure*. Through these procedures, the community can *know, judge, and assess* the subject within categories of praiseworthiness and blameworthiness.

For the remainder of this essay, and drawing on the connective reading I have highlighted, I will argue that the *care of the self* can be utilised by academics as a practice of resistance to neoliberal governmentality, specifically in relation to this notion of a subject's *objectification* within its truth procedures. These will be explored through two specific practices: writing (§2) and friendship (§3). However, and as a disclaimer, I am not suggesting that there are something like two subject-positions or two distinct subjects, an

10. See, for example, Lewis & Hardy's (2014) paper which researches the impacts of standardised assessment techniques in the effective micro-management of the daily conduct of teachers, drawing on Foucault.

'ideal subject of neoliberal governmentality' and a 'resisting subject'. Rather, the subject's relationship to oneself occurs within a dense socio-institutional network which involves a variety of negotiations, struggles and compromises. The search is not to uncover what a 'pure' or 'authentic' resisting subject might look like, indeed, such a search would have a moralistic edge. My purpose here is much smaller: to explore two types of micro-practices of resistance available to the contemporary academic subject who negotiates through a constrained realm of freedom, and as a gesture towards the types of possibilities for resistance and self-transformation *immanently available* within present institutional networks. On this I follow Oksala: 'freedom in Foucault's ethics is a question of developing forms of the subject that are capable of functioning as resistance to normalizing power' (2005: 190).

Furthermore, I only suggest two micro-practices here, and I do not suggest that the two I have isolated have any special privilege. As Foucault (1998: 96-97) notes: 'points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case.' I have focused on two for purposes of space and clarity, but indeed, a fuller and more comprehensive cartography of resistance would be an extension demanded of this research.

§2 Writing

The only thing that is really sad is not to fight [...] I do not like writing; it's a very difficult activity to master. Writing interests me only to the extent that it becomes part of the reality of a struggle, as a tool, a tactic, a means of clarifying. I would like my books to kinds of scalpels, Molotov cocktails, or mine shafts, and that they might ignite after use like fireworks [...] I am an instrument salesman, a creator of recipes, a guide to optical devices, a cartographer, a draftsman, a gunsmith (Foucault, 1994: 725, trans. in Stivale, 2008: 105).

If I had to write a book to communicate what I have already thought, I'd never have the courage to begin it. I write precisely because I don't know yet what to think about a subject that attracts my interest. In so doing, the book transforms me, changes what I think. As a consequence, each new work profoundly changes the terms of thinking which I had reached with the previous work [...] When I write, I do it above all to challenge myself and not to think the same thing as before. And no matter how boring and erudite my resulting books have been, this lesson has always allowed me to conceive them as direct experiences to tear me from myself, to prevent me from always being the same (Foucault, 1991b: 32)

In these two quotes, we see two distinct, but, as I contend, I connected axes in Foucault's approach to writing. One: as a practical and political tool in and of itself; writing as a political practice and form of resistance. Two: as a practice which transforms and dislodges the self; writing as a practice of the self. If this is the relationship Foucault had to his writing, what, can we say, is the relationship the academic has to her writing, today?

§2.1 Writing Under Neoliberal Governmentality

Of course, writing is, undoubtedly, one of the central practices of academic life (articles, book chapters, references, administrative work, feedback, etcetera). Today, for the academic, writing is captured within the apparatus of neoliberal governmentality.¹¹ I claim this for two reasons, taking the United Kingdom as my operative example. First: through government assessment programs such as the Research Excellence Framework, the academic's conduct is micro-managed in relation to his production of 'impactful' and 'serviceable' units of knowledge. The academic's job security and status is bound up with his continuous production of impactful and serviceable units of knowledge. Second, the assessment of this production is conducted through the quantification and ranking of departments nationally (recall that the production of statistical knowledge is a tactic of governmentality (§1.1)). A philosophy department's poor performance in these rankings, for example, will lead to material punishment in the form of reduced funding.¹² The academic's incentive structure is such that s/he is rewarded (financially and, one can imagine, socially through factors such as prestige) for the continuous production of impactful, well-cited, popular units of academic knowledge.

The academic who self-governs according to neoliberal governmentality objectifies her conduct through channelling her 'knowledge production' in these assessment programs. In submitting her labour as the object of its truth inquiry (in the REF, league tables, and so on), she confesses her conduct for punishment or gratification. She, this is to say, objectifies herself in that true discourse.

§2.2.1 Writing and Subjectivation; Askēsis and Paraskeuē

For Foucault, however, writing is a practice through which the subject can resist such objectification. It can do so when stylised as a practice that moves towards what he terms the '*subjectivation of true discourse*' (2005: 333). The *subjectivation of true discourse*, here, does not involve the subject's insertion into a regime of truth (as with the Christian penitent or the neoliberal academic). Rather, it involves the subject's *becoming* a subject of veridiction, becoming one who can enunciate or speak the truth, which 'arises from the subject's practices of freedom [and is] integral to fashioning oneself as an ethical subject' (Milchman and Rosenberg, 2008: 121).

Butler, on this, notes how for Foucault, fashioning oneself as an ethical subject involves a double-moment of *desubjugation* and *self-making* when the subject risks its mode of existence within a particular regime of truth and pushes against its limits. Fashioning oneself as an ethical subject involves looking 'both for the conditions by which the object field is constituted, but also for the limits of those conditions, the moments where they point up their contingency and their transformability' (2002: 222).¹³ Instead of inserting the aca-

11. I am speaking here primarily of writing which is produced as 'research output'.

12. For more on these points, see: Docherty, 2011; Research Excellence Framework, 2012; Smith, 2012

13. In other words, Butler's point here is that points of contingency and transformability are at the limits of the object fields, but still, so to speak, within them. Indeed, this is partially why I am focusing on in my discussions of friendship and writing, as practices *within* the object field of neoliberal governmentality - immanently present in existing institutional networks - but which nonetheless (as I argue) can function as points of transformability.

demic into the neoliberal regime of truth and as a conduit of neoliberal governmentality, writing can function as a transformational and ethical practice where the subject comes to ‘make the truth her own’. In order to more fully elucidate this, I will now turn specifically to the place of writing within Foucault’s exploration of the *epimeleia heauton* (the care of the self).

§2.2.2 Writing in the *Epimeleia Heauton*

For Foucault, writing – under the *epimeleia heauton* – forms part of the first moment of *askēsis* (which also consists in listening, reading and speaking). Before turning to writing itself, it is worth noting the function *askēsis* plays under the *epimeleia heauton*. The *askēsis* has three components: (i) practices through which the subject makes her self-care her object and end; (ii) establishing a *paraskeuē* (which are preparatory practices which prepare the subject for the events of life); (iii) practices through which the subject *binds herself to truth* – rather than submitting to the law (Foucault, 2005: 332)

This threefold process of *askēsis* is the process through which the subject constitutes herself as a subject of veridiction, as one who can speak and live the truth, and is prepared for life. So, this is not a Christian asceticism of self-renunciation; but an *askēsis* which is a ‘technique of life, an art of living [...] which is not the objectification of the self in a true discourse, but the subjectivation of a true discourse in a practice and exercise of oneself on oneself’ (ibid: 333).

Within *askēsis*, writing functions under *paraskeuē*; writing prepares the subject for life and its events. It is also tied to reading. Through reading and writing the subject alters her relationship to herself through *thought*. The practice of reading and writing is a transformational practice which prepares the subject for the events of life. It is therefore always a ‘practical’ procedure: the practice of *paraskeuē* is the element of *askēsis* which ‘[transforms] *logos* into *ethos*’ (ibid: 327). How does reading and writing function as a transformational practice? First, as reading is ‘an exercise by which, through thought, the subject puts himself in a certain situation [and is] shifted with regard to what he is through the effect of thought’ (ibid: 358). Writing, then, functions to temper reading, to develop a ‘corpus’ of our reading and to enable that which has been written to be ‘absorbed’ and established in the soul. It is not, however, a simple ‘incorporation’ of the discourse that has been read; rather it is the ‘creation of an equipment of true propositions for yourself, which really is your own’ (ibid: 358). So: writing is as much a document of what has been read as a *creative* and *affirmative* enterprise wherein the subject alters her relationship to herself, makes the truth her own and transforms *logos* into *ethos*:

It is a matter of unifying these heterogeneous fragments [of reading] through their subjectivation in the exercise of personal writing [...] The role of writing is to constitute, along with all that reading has constituted, a “body”. And this body should be understood not as a body of doctrine but, rather – following an often evoked metaphor of digestion – as the very body of the one who [...] has appropriated them and made their truth his own: writing transforms the thing seen or heard “into tissue and blood”. It becomes a principle of rational action in the writer himself (Foucault, 1997: 213).

Writing forms part of the movement from *logos* to *ethos*. *Askēsis* is the movement of the subject whereby ‘the subject of true knowledge [is] the subject of right action’ (2005: 485), and such that the subject works on herself in order that she may become an ‘ethical subject of truth’ (ibid: 484) and live her truth. How must this subject of ethical truth conduct herself? Or, around what principles and mechanisms can the subject speak truth?

§2.2.3 Writing and Parrhēsia

The subject of veridiction is the subject who has ‘made the truth her own’ and is in a position to convey true discourse to disciples, students, or friends. It is here where the issue of *parrhēsia* arises (‘speaking freely’ or ‘speaking frankly’) and the problem of the *ēthos* required on the part of the subject of veridiction when she conveys true discourse. *Parrhēsia* is a technical term denoting the ethos by which the subject of veridiction speaks the truth to other. For our purposes, this is the ethical problem of how the academic utters, conveys or passes on truth. The role of *parrhēsia* here is very clear – the master (the academic, the subject of veridiction, the philosopher) who engages in *parrhēsia* will speak to the student in such a way that the student ‘will be able to form an autonomous, independent, full and satisfying relationship to himself’ (ibid: 379). The master, this is to say, must speak truth to the student so that the student himself can *epimelēia heauton*:

The final aim of *parrhēsia* is not to keep the person to whom one speaks dependent on the person who speaks [...] It is insofar as the other [the master in our case] has given, has conveyed a true discourse to the person to whom he speaks, that this person, internalizing and subjectivizing this true discourse, can then leave the relationship with the other person. The truth, passing from one to the other in *parrhēsia*, seals, ensures, and guarantees the other’s autonomy (ibid: 379, my addition).

The master, then, does not engage in flattery, rhetoric, or encourage dependency (this would, effectively, encourage students to *objectify* themselves in that truth). The master’s *parrhēsia* enables students to *parrhēsia* themselves. It involves the ‘passing’ of truth to the student, ‘whose effect and function are to change the subject’s being. This truth must affect the subject. *It does not involve the subject becoming the object of a true discourse*’ (ibid: 243, my emphasis).¹⁴

§2.3 Writing as Resistance

14. A relevant question emerges here on the extent to which this master-student-*parrhesia* relationship resembles the liberal-humanist-Enlightenment model of education, critical pedagogy and *Bildung*. Whilst a further research project would be required in order to more fully explore this, I will point out three things. First, that Foucault’s relationship to the Enlightenment is complex. Whilst he rejects the foundational humanist subject (1994b: 317-318, 344), his work on Kant & Enlightenment (1984b) and Enlightenment & critique (2007) is partially supportive of its historical legacy. Second, McCall (2007) does consider more explicitly the situating of Foucault’s thoughts on writing as correlative to the notion of *Bildung*. Thirdly, a plethora of work has been produced which considers the applicability of these notions of *parrhesia* and ethical self-formation in education research. For example, Huckaby (2007) and Raaen (2011) consider teachers who *parrhesia*; Clarke (2008) and de Marzio (2012) discuss teaching as an ethico-political-aesthetic practice of the self; and Biesta (1998) explicitly discusses the notion of a critical pedagogy *without* humanism.

Writing, practiced under the *epimeleia heauton*, is a practice of resistance. It resists the subject's objectification in a true discourse. Under *epimeleia heauton*, writing involves the subject's subjectivation of true discourse. It is a practice of micro-resistance against those power relations that seek to establish the directionality of conduct and over-determine practices of self-formation, such as, precisely, the power relations of contemporary neoliberal governmentality. Neoliberal governmentality governs academic writing within its game of truth, and the neoliberal academic objectivises herself in this game of truth. Academic writing as a component of *epimeleia heauton* seeks to establish a different, self-transformative, relationship between the subject and truth. Schematically, it is a double movement of resistance which mirrors Butler's identification of fashioning oneself as an ethical subject as a double movement of *desubjugation* and *self-making*:

α. A strategic refusal of the subject's objectification in the neoliberal regime of truth and its normalising *conduct of conduct* which governs subjects as sites of human capital.

β. A transformative and experimental affirmation of the self that seeks to constitute itself otherwise.¹⁵ Whilst, for Foucault, the 'author' is external to the text (1977), the writer is *in* and *transformed through* writing:

The essay – which should be understood as the assay or test by which, in the game of truth, one undergoes changes, and not as the simplistic appropriation of others for the purpose of communication – is the living substance of philosophy, at least if we assume that philosophy is still what it was in times past, i.e., an "ascesis," *askēsis*, an exercise of oneself in activity of thought (Foucault, 1992: 9)

I will now pivot my attention to my second case, friendship.

§3 *Philía*: the Practice of Friendship

Some people go to priests; others to poetry; I to my friends (Woolf, 1931: 266).

Being-loved certainly speaks something of *philía* [...] It says nothing of friendship *itself* which implies *in itself, properly*, essentially, the act and the activity: someone must love in order to know what loving means (Derrida, 2005: 8)

§3.1 *Networking Under Neoliberal Governmentality*

The cultivation and practice of friendship is not something often discussed as a component of academic life. What *is* discussed, however, is *networking*. Networking is, today, incentivised and approached as a 'professional friendship' explicitly pursued for reasons of self-interest and of the accumulation of human capital. Blaxter et al.'s *Academic Career Handbook* notes how the 'search for competitive advantage [is the] primary motivator for developing strategic networks [...] They also provide the individual with group support and

15. For an interesting exploration of micro-practices of resistance in this context, see Ball and Olmedo (2013).

offer scope for collaboration in different aspects of their work' (1998: 57; Jarillo, 1993). Their exploration of network highlights a variety of strategies for developing networks (for example, the five Cs: conferences, collaboration, correspondence, collegiality and community). In order for the academic subject gain recognition and success, she must network. Arnold (1997: 83) makes the direct connection: the 'effective initiation and maintenance of social relationships for career-related purposes is [...] *networking*.' Or Brooks and Brooks (1997: vii-ix), whose third (of seven) 'Secret of Success' in academia is: 'Successful people know how to develop an effective network'.

All of this is to say, then, that the academic's production of knowledge under neoliberal governmentality is bound up not just with the production itself (i.e., academic writing), but also the academic's forming of effective networks whom they can both *produce knowledge with* and as a *readership*. A readership is necessary so that the academic will be well cited, secure prestige, and score highly in assessment programs like the REF which I noted previously. Networking is a constant and continuous investment in one's human capital.

§3.2 *Parrhēsia & Epimeleia Heauton Between Friends*

Just as networking is indispensable for the academic subject's successful investment in her human capital, the other is indispensable for the *epimeleia heauton* (Foucault, 2005: 127). The other is indispensable in this passage from objectification in true discourse to the subjectification of true discourse; the other is a condition for the subject's transformation. This other can take many 'forms', but one such form is the friend; the friend is someone who (to return to the notion from §2.2.2) speaks frankly to and guides the subject:

Individual guidance could not take place without an intense affective relationship of friendship between the two partners, the guide and the person being guided. And this guidance implied a certain quality, actually a certain "way of speaking," a certain "ethics of speech" [...] which is called, precisely, *parrhēsia*. *Parrhēsia* is opening the heart, the need for the two partners to conceal nothing of what they think from each other and to speak to each other frankly (ibid: 137).

The practice of *parrhēsia* comprises an ethics of speech which does not fool or flatter the other or encourage the other's dependency upon the speaker.¹⁶ To explicitly note the contrast: both the practice of Christian confession and contemporary academic assessment practices require the subject to confess her conduct for a truth regime's assessment. *Parrhēsia* is distinct from this; as we saw in §2.2.2, the master or teacher's practice of *parrhēsia* has as its objective students who practice their own autonomy and do *not* become dependent on the master's truth. This is also to say that the master's practice of *parrhēsia* encourages *parrhēsia* between students; and *parrhēsia* between students will, further, increase bonds of friendship between them due to the intense affective nature of relationships required for speaking frankly and openly (ibid: 389). *Parrhēsia* is, therefore, not simply a relationship of hierarchy (or it is not always or simply that). The practice of *parrhēsia* circulates not solely between teachers and students, but between friends.

16. See, for example, Plutarch's *How to Know a Flatterer from a Friend* (2012).

Parrhēsia and the exchange of ‘soul services’ (ibid: 497) are important components in the affective intensity of friendship. As Garlick (2002: 569-570) notes:

The *parrhesiast* was a friend who, somewhat like Nietzsche’s ‘best enemy’, told one the truth about oneself so that one could come to know oneself better. The *parrhesiast* (or friend), however, does not speak with the force of law, or pass judgment according to an absolute standard (i.e. he or she does not produce a normalizing discourse).

Friendship is, then, an essential component of the *epimeleia heauton*. This care for others forms part of a care of the self: ‘the care of the self also implies a relationship with the other insofar as proper care of the self requires listening to the lessons of a master. One needs a guide, a counsellor, a friend, *someone who will be truthful with you*’ (Foucault, 1997: 287, my emphasis).

This does not mean, however, that friendship ought to be practiced solely for self-interested reasons. Friendship, of course, may *originate* in the realm of social exchange (like practices of networking). Foucault notes – taking the Epicurean model of friendship as his example – how friendships often begin through a search for ‘utility’. However, the nature of this utility is distinct in that such utility is provided not in the form of material or social advantages, but in *happiness* and *trust* (2005: 194-195). In short, friendship may originate in practices of network, in the realm of social exchange; but friendship, its affective intensity and the exchange of soul services it comprises, *exceeds* the realm of social exchange through such intensity and its potential for transformation enabled through such relationships. Whilst networking for the academic is situated with a system of social rewards, prestige and success; friendship is instead connected with the exchange of soul services in the *epimeleia heauton* for the ‘subjectivation of a true discourse in a practice and exercise of oneself on oneself’ (ibid: 333). So practiced, friendship is *transformational*.¹⁷

§3.3 Friendship as Resistance

Friendship, under the *epimeleia heauton*, can be fashioned as a practice of resistance to governmentality. The friend, as I noted above, does not produce a normalising discourse. Rather, the friend forms part of the subject’s *epimeleia heauton*, that is, that subject’s subjectivation of true discourse. This friendship is distinct from practices of networking since it is precisely focused on refashioning the subject’s relation to truth, rather than objectifying it within a pre-established regime of truth; and due to its affective and transformative intensity. It, thus, resists normalisation and opens up the possibility for – and is a practice of – transformation through ‘short-circuiting’ those institutional and normalised social relations. Foucault’s context was slightly different here, but the point resonates:

Institutional forms can’t validate [those] relations with multiple intensities, variable colors, imperceptible movements and changing forms. [*Affective*] relations short-circuit [*institutional forms*] and introduce love where there’s supposed to be only law, rule, habit (Foucault, 1996b: 137, my additions, my emphasis).

17.As Coker notes discussing Nietzschean friendship, one does not love the friend ‘as they are’, but rather, for what they are *becoming* (1993: 116).

Again, it is a double movement of resistance (to repeat what I noted in §2.3), and again to parallel Butler's suggestion that fashioning one's self as an ethical subject involves *desubjugation* and *self-making*:

α. A strategic refusal of the subject's objectification in the neoliberal regime of truth and its normalising *conduct of conduct* which governs subjects as sites of human capital.

β. A transformative and experimental affirmation of the self that seeks to constitute itself otherwise.

Conclusion

In this paper, I first connected Foucault's work on governmentality to his work on the *epimeleia heauton*. Governmentality's operation seeks to objectify the subject's conduct within the regime of truth of political economy. Similarly, neoliberal governmentality's operation captures the academic's practices of writing and networking in its regime of truth. Refiguring practices of writing and friendship, however, as components of the *epimeleia heauton*, constitutes the refusal of such objectification. Indeed, it constitutes an experimental practice of freedom through which the subject makes the truth 'her own'. The academic can look to herself as a site of practices of resistance.

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