

Foucault 2.0: Discipline, Governmentality and Ethics

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Resumo

A importância cada vez mais reforçada da globalização, em conjunto com a expansão da internet e o desenvolvimento de tecnologias pioneiras, tais como a inteligência artificial, *machine learning* e as tecnologias de *block chain*, têm dado origem, no século XXI, a umnexo complexo de relações mutáveis que se adequa a uma continuação e uma recontextualização da atividade exploratória e analítica filosófica que Michel Foucault iniciou no século passado. Neste sentido, o principal objetivo desta tese prende-se com uma examinação das lições que podemos tirar dos conceitos de Foucault, e em particular, no contexto da organização empresarial contemporânea e de ética empresarial.

Esta tese acompanha a trajetória do tema através da obra de Foucault nas áreas de poder, governamentalidade e ética, tendo como cerne especial a questão de como a análise de Foucault pode ser aplicada no contexto social, contemporâneo, *high-tech*, e *online*, no qual o tema se insere. O tema abordado, hoje em dia, é constituído de uma forma bem diferente a qualquer abordagem feita no passado, considerando, agora, que se trata de um sujeito dividido, um tipo de “*dividual*” Deleuziano que ocupa o mundo físico e o mundo virtual ao mesmo tempo. Para entender como o sujeito moderno se constitui no ambiente socioeconómico e tecnológico atual, uma metodologia quase-Foucaultiana é usada. Contudo, em vez de analisar estas práticas em hospitais, sanitários, escolas ou clínicas, pretende-se focar nas empresas do século XXI, olhando-as como microcosmos de um macrocosmo social, económico e tecnológico mais abrangente. Isto implica investigar a organização empresarial do século XXI – os seus discursos, os seus mecanismos de poder, a sua dominação e controlo, a sua *managementality*, e a noção de cuidar de si e como se constitui como um sujeito trabalhador contemporâneo. Por último, pretende-se apontar para uma nova perspetiva sobre a ética, sobretudo, na área de negócios.

Palavras-chave

Michel Foucault, ética empresarial, ética, subjetividade, neoliberalismo, século XXI.

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Abstract

The rise of globalisation, along with the proliferation of the internet and the development of groundbreaking technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning and blockchain technology has, in the twenty-first century, given rise to a complex nexus of mutable relations that lends itself to a continuation and recontextualization of the kind of philosophical explorations and analyses that Michel Foucault started in the previous century. This then is what this thesis sets out to do, with the ultimate goal of seeing what lessons we can learn from Foucault, particularly in the context of the modern organisation and business ethics.

This thesis tracks the trajectory of the subject through Foucault's work on power, governmentality, and ethics. Central to this, is the question of how Foucault's analysis may be applied to the contemporary networked, high-tech social context today's subject finds himself in. I contend that today's subject constitutes itself in a way that is very different from the subject of any preceding epoch. The subject of today is a divided subject, a type of Deleuzian "dividual" who occupies both the physical world as well as the virtual one. In order to understand how the modern subject constitutes itself within the current socio-economic and technological environment, I use a quasi-Foucauldian methodology. However, instead of analysing practices in hospitals, sanitariums, schools or clinics, my focus is on the twenty-first century enterprise - on companies and corporations as microcosms of a larger social, economic and technological macrocosm. This entails a thoroughgoing investigation into the twenty-first century organisation - its discourses, its mechanisms of power, domination, and control, "managementality", and the care of the self or the self-constitution of the contemporary working subject. Ultimately, this results in an attempt to unearth an entirely new perspective on ethics, particularly in business.

Keywords

Michel Foucault, Business Ethics, subjectivity, neoliberalism, twenty-first century

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Introduction

Had he lived to see the twenty-first century, one could almost be certain that Foucault would have been in his philosophical element, for never before have we had a more complex nexus of relations (of power, domination, knowledge, government) that make up the social matrix and effect the human being as a subject. The advent of globalisation as we know it today, coupled with the proliferation of the internet and the development of certain groundbreaking technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning and blockchain technology, has given rise to a web of relations that lends itself, precisely because of its complexity and its constant state of flux, to a continuation of the kind of philosophical explorations and analyses that Foucault started in the previous century.

Foucault's line of enquiry from that era, I think, remains exceedingly relevant to the twenty-first century, where we are experiencing some very interesting shifts and changes with relation to power, domination, knowledge, government, and ethics, amongst others. Just consider the so-called "Arab Spring" and the role that online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter purportedly played in this phenomenon at the dawn of the century. Think of the impact of Wikileaks and the classified information released by Edward Snowden; the ability to escape and "live" in virtual worlds such as Second Life and the rise today of the so-called metaverse; the Cambridge Analytica scandal and the manipulation of voters in the United States and the United Kingdom through targeted false information campaigns; and the anti-democratic trends that are becoming alarmingly prevalent in traditional Western democracies.

Foucault's project is therefore one that certainly begs to be carried forward and re-contextualised in this era of whirlwind change that we currently find ourselves in. That is exactly what I will attempt to do in this thesis, together with trying to see what lessons we can learn from Foucault, particularly in the context of organisations and business ethics.

Before I delve into a new history of the twenty-first century à la Foucault however, I want to examine the exact line of enquiry and legacy his researches left us with.

Foucault himself, in an article titled *The Subject and Power* (1982, pg.777) stated that "my objective...has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects". When one reads Foucault's works, from his treatment of discourse in *The Order of Things*, to his apparent rejection of the subject in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, through his elucidation of the nature of power in *Discipline and Punish*, and all the way through to his ethics, with this statement in mind, it becomes abundantly clear that Foucault had a preoccupation with the question of what it is that makes a subject. A strong fascination with how the human subject is constituted is therefore a constant undercurrent bubbling beneath Foucault's work. It is this undercurrent that I intend to bring to the surface and re-

contextualise in the twenty-first century, in this thesis.

[T]he goal of my work during the last twenty years...has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis... [I]nstead...my work has dealt with three modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects. The first is the modes of inquiry that try to give themselves the status of sciences; for example, the objectivizing of the speaking subject in *grammaire generale*, philology, and linguistics. Or again, in this first mode, the objectivizing of the productive subject, the subject who labors, in the analysis of wealth and of economics. Or, a third example, the objectivizing of the sheer fact of being alive in natural history or biology. In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call "dividing practices." The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys." Finally, I have sought to study—it is my current work—the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject. For example, I have chosen the domain of sexuality—how men have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of "sexuality." Thus, it is not power, but the subject, that is the general theme of my research. (Foucault, 1994b, p.326-327)

What sets Foucault apart from other philosophers who have occupied themselves with the nature of the human subject, is that Foucault's overarching method of enquiry into the constitution of the subject is not centered, at first glance, on the subject itself, but rather on the processes, rules and forces at work which simultaneously shape or objectivise the subject and are shaped by the subject. There is always a kind of reciprocal tension at play in Foucault's work, and it is on the basis of this simultaneous focus on the constitution of subject and the consistent logic of tension underlying Foucault's treatment of every topic he deals with, that I want to argue that he did not in fact willy-nilly abandon one line of enquiry for the next (archaeology for genealogy, and genealogy for ethics), as some authors have suggested, but that there is a clear line of enquiry, and indeed a subsequent development of a theory on the constitution of the human subject, which runs through most of his body of work. This then also gives us a very solid foundation from which to understand the constitution of the subject in the twenty-first century.

It is very clear from the quote above that far from killing off the subject, as some have claimed he did, Foucault's was rather an ongoing investigation into the constitution of the subject by means of his particular brand of analysis and methodology - a methodology which tends to turn things on their head, to analyse those things that are on the periphery - seemingly unrelated things (madness, punishment, sexuality) - to expose their reciprocal and structural relationship with the true focus of his interest: the subject. One could even go so far as to say that his blatant rejection of the phenomenological and existential notions of the autonomous subject serves to reveal something far more complex: a Foucauldian subject who is subjected to constant tensional relations, a subject who is simultaneously constituted by discourses, knowledge, relations of power, government, self-government and caring for himself and others. A subject who is constantly re-writing his own story so that he is able to aspire to be the best he can be - an ethical aesthetic subject if you will.

The Foucauldian subject therefore doesn't create meaning or foment history or generate knowledge

¹ The third volume of *The Essential Works of Foucault Series*, which is a collection of articles, interviews and seminars published for an English-speaking audience. Much of the content of this volume comes from the French *Dits et Ecrits*.

independently, but is rather formed by them, through their systemic and regulatory nature, whilst also contributing to their formation at the same time, and through relating them back to himself in a transformative process.

In order to better get behind Foucault's analysis of the subject and its constitution, I would like to kick off by looking at the beginnings of Foucault's interest in the subject through his work on scientific and historical discourses. According to Paras (2006, p.22-23):

Foucault undertook, in *The Order of Things*, a study that had strong surface similarities with his previous major efforts, *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic*. The idea common to all of them was that, through the empirical study of certain historical "discourses" -as, for instance, psychology and medicine- we can discover structural regularities that are of far greater significance than the manifest *content* of those discourses...Foucault had styled *Birth of the Clinic* as an "archaeology of the medical gaze". In a parallel way, *The Order of Things* was an archaeology of the human sciences. It was an attempt to delineate a massive historical discontinuity in not one, but three discourses: biology, economics, and medicine...[and] if three discourses transformed themselves all at the same time, didn't it suggest that something deeper was going on?

I think that this quote illustrates both the beginnings and the crux of Foucault's entire project, even beyond the books mentioned. By attempting to identify and get to the bottom of major historical transformations, or shifts if you will (whether they are evident in changes in the use of discourse, changes in the way in which power manifests itself, or changes in the way in which countries are governed), one can begin to fathom what the structural regularities underlying these shifts mean for the subject and his reciprocal relationship with his world, his society, other subjects, and himself. One can begin to see how the subject is manifested or constituted. It is therefore in the discontinuities that we need to start looking for answers, in the historical shifts in our discourses, our cultural practices, our human behaviour, and in the regularities which pop up out of the discontinuity.

It is for this reason that I think Foucault has often been misread and misinterpreted. By and large he is understood and read on some kind of a linear trajectory, going from archaeology to genealogy, to governmentality, and then on to his ethics. In following this trajectory, he is often thought to have abandoned previous ideas because he found them to be untenable, only to flit on to the next big idea. Some authors do contend that there is an "oblique continuity running through Foucault's researches," but that this continuity "manifests itself particularly in the author's concern to establish an epistemological critique of the strategic practices or structures of knowledge...on the basis of a new understanding of the dominant discourses of Western culture" (Kearney, 1986, p. 284). Or, alternatively, they are narrowly focused on the concept of power as it runs through the works of Foucault.

I believe that this is too narrow a reading of Foucault's body of work which tends to focus on his works as individual tomes that have little or no connection to the others, since they deal with separate issues

(discourse, power, ethics) that are only connected by a thin strand of logic.

But what if we see Foucault's works on knowledge, discourse, power, government, sexuality and, ultimately, ethics, all as part of the *same simultaneously ongoing multi-faceted thought process*, a process whose intention it was to analyse and excavate across a broad range of eras and issues to find the discontinuities and the regularities within - a thought process designed to ultimately hone in on and understand the age-old question of the constitution, the manifestation, of the human subject? A thought process which occurred as a result of Foucault's disillusionment with the philosophical answers to the question of the constitution of the subject which arose from the Enlightenment, and after that, Existentialism and Modernism?

So with this question in the back of our minds, let us examine the rhyme and reason for taking up this position, and also for wanting to move Foucault's project forward into the twenty-first century.

The first point I want to make here, is that Foucault's methodology consistently, throughout his body of work, seeks to elucidate historical shifts or major changes that are reflected in places both obvious, and not so obvious, expected and unexpected. A major historical paradigmatic shift, after all, can only be truly labeled such if it permeates a number of seemingly unrelated loci - hospitals, sanitariums, prisons, schools, politics, language, scientific practices, and so on.

In *The Order of Things* (1994, p. xii) Foucault says:

My main concern has been with changes. In fact, two things in particular struck me: the suddenness and thoroughness with which certain sciences were sometimes reorganized; and the fact that at the same time similar changes occurred in apparently very different disciplines. Within a few years (around 1800), the tradition of general grammar was replaced by an essentially historical philology; natural classifications were ordered according to the analyses of comparative anatomy; and a political economy was founded whose main themes were labour and production. Confronted by such a curious combination of phenomena, it occurred to me that these changes should be examined more closely, without being reduced, in the name of continuity, in either abruptness or scope.

This concern with change, with historical and scientific-disciplinary shifts as it were, is one which always underscores Foucault as we read him. In terms of his investigations into discourse he talks about a shift from what he calls the Renaissance *épistémè*, to the Classical *épistémè*, to the Modern one, which, according to Foucault, is an "anthropologism", or rather "the anthropological formation of man as a self-sufficient autonomous subject requiring no external support for his knowledge" (Kearny, 1986, p.288). In terms of power he talks about the shift from sovereign power to disciplinary power, as reflected in Western penal systems. In his writings on governmentality he talks about the shift from liberalism to

neoliberalism, with which Foucault wants to demonstrate “how the modern state and the modern autonomous individual co-determine each other’s emergence” (Lemke, 2007, p. 44). And in his analysis of sexuality, he talks about the illusion of sexual repression, and how people’s identities, at least in Western cultures, became increasingly tied to their sexuality during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Right now, as we progress into the twenty-first century, we find ourselves once again on the cusp of major cultural, economic and social changes - a major paradigm shift arising from the development and widespread proliferation of the Internet and its related technologies, and the rapid influx of new developments in technology that go far beyond the internet, like blockchain technology, machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence. This ‘cybershift’, brought on by arguably the most significant disruptive technologies in history, has made it possible for millions of people to actively participate in global cultural exchanges, social development, innovation, and business in novel ways. It has also given rise to profound changes in demographics, the global economy, government, and ultimately in the constitution of the subject - the way in which the subject is given identity and gives himself identity. In other words, the Internet and its associated technologies have permeated every conceivable locus in society today and developing technologies like blockchains and artificial intelligence will drive this change even further.

Some might argue that this is exactly why the work of Foucault has lost relevance in the twenty-first century, and why we should shelve him along with certain other philosophical relics. I want to argue the contrary. I believe that Foucault’s project offers us a very useful methodology for the analysis of the constitution of the contemporary subject as he faces this tumultuous ocean of rapid change, data deluge and globalised discourse. We are once again reorganising science, business, and society, and this time at an unprecedented speed. Once again these changes permeate a vast variety of disciplines, discourses, practices and relations in similar ways. Once again, we are faced with a curious socio-historical shift, and in the Foucauldian spirit, I intend to analyse this new shift, to seek out the changes, the ruptures (as Foucault referred to them) that are occurring, as well as the structural regularities that may be emerging from them. How is discourse changing? What impact is this ‘cybershift’ having on relations of power? How is government affected? What happens to the “care of the self” that Foucault talks about? How is his ethics relevant as we forge further into the twenty-first century? And most importantly, where, and indeed who, is the subject within all of this?

In this thesis I will therefore track the (rather non-linear) trajectory of the subject through Foucault’s work on power, governmentality, and ethics in particular, and central to this will be the question of how Foucault’s analysis may be applied to the contemporary networked, high-tech social context and the twenty-first century subject. I will contend that the twenty-first century subject constitutes itself in a way that is very different from the subject of any preceding epoch. The subject of today is a divided subject, what Gilles Deleuze refers to as a "dividual", a subject which occupies both the physical world as well as

the virtual one.

I also intend to use a quasi-Foucauldian methodology to delve deeper into these issues. However, I shall not be analysing practices in hospitals, sanitariums, schools or clinics. My focus will be on the twenty-first century enterprise - on companies and corporations. But I want to take it a bit further than just a pure analysis of discourse, relations of power and the constitution of the twenty-first century subject, or the “dividual” as I will be referring to him.

I want to see if this kind of analysis based on the work of Foucault could be useful in gaining a better understanding of contemporary corporate culture and business ethics. The reasoning behind wanting to do so, is because the technologies that have such a profound impact on our lives and on how we live our lives are by-and-large developed, deployed and controlled by corporations.

There are of course a number of other authors who have also recently started to give credence to the later work of Foucault in particular (notably his work on governmentality and neoliberalism), and its continued relevance to the field of business and organisational studies - authors who also argue that to discard Foucault at this point would be to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Dixon (2007, p. 284), for example, says that “an expanded reading of Foucault’s work on power creates new insights into the way power manifests itself in organisational life [and] broadens organisational scholarship’s understanding that this theorising on power includes not only domination and discipline...”

The fact is that far too many organisational scholars have placed a heavy focus on Foucault’s work up to the publication of *Discipline and Punish* (1977). I feel that this is to abandon Foucault far too early, long before grasping that he has so much more to offer organisational studies than his work on power.

In fact, Foucault himself also altered (but didn’t abandon) his view on power after *Discipline and Punish*. He says (in Dixon, 2007, p.288) “Perhaps I’ve insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of the self.”

Dixon (2007, p.288) argues that the reason why one shouldn’t only focus on power as Foucault outlined the concept in his earlier work is apparent in his own treatment of the concept of power. She rightly contends that Foucault’s line of thought on the subject hardly follows a linear trajectory. Instead we are faced with a train of thought, a theory, that is circular and doubles back upon itself.

Foucault’s concept of governmentality is pivotal in this, as this is the concept upon which this circularity of his thought hinges. It is with governmentality that we see him double back upon himself, amalgamating his later ideas on the technologies of the self with his earlier ideas on the technologies of power. It is with

the marriage of the two that we can start looking at the implications that an analysis of organisational culture from a governmentality perspective has for ethics. We can start examining how Foucault's very particular conception of ethics could help us navigate our way around the sticky issue in business ethics of what kind of philosophical ethical approach is most tenable for contemporary organisations as they employ a new kind of divided subject, and navigate the murky waters of a networked, globalised, and ever-changing economy.

According to Stephen Cummings (in Linstead and Höpfl, 2000 p. 212):

If one looks far enough, two approaches to ethics may be discerned: *codes of behavior* and *forms of subjectification*... Codes of behavior refer to collective rules of conduct that exist over and above individual bodies in the world. They can be used to legitimate, or prove right or wrong, independent actions. Forms of subjectification refer to individuals constituting themselves as subjects of moral conduct through the development of relationships with the self: relationships for self-reflection, self-examination or self-aesthetics, relationships for the decipherment of the self by oneself. Systems of morality comprise both elements, but in some societies the emphasis is on the former, in others on the latter. The emphasis in the West, in the modern age, has been on developing codes with the 'systematicity,...richness,...[and the] capacity to adjust to every possible case and to embrace every area of behavior' (Foucault, 1984:29; Thacker, 1993:14). Forms of subjectification have been sadly neglected.

Cummings (2000 p.212-213) then goes on to argue that with our appreciation that business and organisational activity and management involves ethical dilemmas and issues, business ethics has become reflective of the modern world's system of morality. It is a subset thereof which "brings with it the same emphasis and neglect mentioned above." In other words, business ethics is in the business of classifying what is ethical, and is therefore too narrowly focused on elucidating, developing, and elaborating codes of conduct. What this means is that even though many organisations have woken up to the importance of ethics, they are locked in by the constraints placed on them by the conception of business ethics as being, in essence, about collective codes of conduct, company value statements and so on. As a result, business ethics, as perceived by CEOs and industry leaders, is perhaps not well suited to the unique conditions we face as a result of the cybershift that began as we launched ourselves into the twenty-first century. A paradigm shift which continues to reorder the business landscape as new developments such as blockchain technology and algorithmic management tools arise and mature. It could even be argued that business ethics theory does not pay enough attention to how the twenty-first century working subject constitutes himself as an ethical actor.

In this thesis I want to therefore follow a similar line of thinking as Stephen Cummings. I want to move beyond the ethical theories that are preoccupied with the elucidation of moral codes and the morality of behaviours, and I want to take from Foucault an ethical understanding that is focused on a greater awareness of subjectification and self-subjectification, in the hopes that this approach will offer an alternative way of thinking in business ethics that could be useful to organisations in terms of their

strategic development in this globalised, networked and high-tech environment.

In this thesis I would therefore like to focus more predominantly on Foucault's later works, on genealogy (power), governmentality, care of the self, and his ethics, for a number of reasons. The first is that power, governmentality and ethics are more relevant to the business-focused content of this project. The second reason is that to do a thorough analysis of his whole body of work, including archaeology, would mean incorporating analyses that fall well beyond the scope and focus of this thesis. That is not to say that his earlier work on discourse is irrelevant. As I mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, Foucault should not be read in any kind of linear fashion, since there are patterns of interconnection throughout his work. A thorough understanding of his earlier work is therefore crucial to this study. It is for this reason therefore, that I want to use this opportunity to delve into Foucault's position on discourse, since his conceptualisation of discourse is the foundation, in many respects, for his subsequent work on power, governmentality and so on.

Foucault on Discourse

Foucault started his investigation into discourse in *The Order of Things*, where he looked into...

...the conditions of possibility under which human beings become the objects of knowledge in certain disciplines (what we might call the "human sciences" or the "social sciences"). He was working to discover and explain the rules and laws of formation of systems of thought in the human sciences which emerged in the nineteenth century. His main method for looking at these disciplines, and how they constitute the objects of their study, was through examining 'discourses,' or 'discursive practices'.

For Foucault, a "discourse" is "a body of thought and writing that is united by having a common object of study, a common methodology, and/or a set of common terms and ideas; the idea of discourse thus allows Foucault to talk about a wide variety of texts, from different countries and different historical periods and different disciplines and different genres (Klages, 1997).

Discourse for Foucault therefore did not simply constitute language in and of itself as a system of signs and symbols that denote meaning. Discourse for Foucault focuses on the *how and why* of the use of language rather than on the internal meanings of utterances per se, and the ideas which are expressed through utterances have the ability to effect historical transformations as opposed to simply reflecting them. It is therefore necessary to be aware of the shifts that take place in the expression of ideas through language at given periods through history, across the social spectrum and across cultures, since these changes or shifts will appear at a number of institutional sites within society, and will manifest themselves in forms of conduct as well as in various texts and speech acts.

Foucault was thus interested in discourse as more than just passages of writing or speech which are

somehow connected. For him, discourse provides us with the language to talk about a particular topic at a particular moment in time. Discourse involves generating knowledge through the use of language. It also involves practice and the application of rules that govern the use of the language. “Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others” (Hall, 2001, pg. 72).

Foucault goes even further by arguing that discourse should be seen as an “event”, rather than just words emanating from someone’s mouth or someone’s pen.

It is also here that we need to become aware of an important distinction, namely the one between actual statements, the language used, and the rules that govern them (analysis of language), and analysis of discourse, which asks why it is that one particular statement appeared rather than another. This in a nutshell then, is also what Foucault refers to as “archaeology” - “the attempt to ascertain the rules governing the production of discourse for a given culture at a given time” (Paras, 2006, pg. 33).

Archaeology, however, is a double-edged blade with both negative and positive components. What Foucault refers to as the *negative work*, which must be carried out first, is a strong critique of the traditional execution of the concepts and methods of the history of ideas. This means questioning the use of the analytical categories favoured by the history of ideas, notions of influence, resemblance and repetition, development and evolution, the “spirit” of the times, and its “mentality”. It also means letting go of the traditional subdivisions of discourse, namely the work itself, the genre, and the author.

The *positive* component involves building up a new set of categories which provide the framework within which one can reconsider the history of knowledge (Foucault, 1989, pg. 23-26; Paras, 2006, pg. 33-34).

The archaeologist prided himself on his commitment to a rigorous neutrality where discourse was concerned. His concern was not to interrogate texts so as to ascertain their true meaning: meaning at no point entered the picture. Still less was it to detect the subjective intentions that revealed themselves in discourse. The essential was to observe and weigh the statements themselves, and to discover the structural similarities that made a given kind of statement possible at one time and not another. The history of knowledge was not...the story of the progress of reason...[it was] a process of the formation and transformation of bodies of *statements* according to isolable rules...[Therefore] the painful truth that needed to be embraced was that men were the wholly interchangeable speakers of *systems of thought* that transcended them. (Paras, 2006, pg. 34-35)

I want to have a quick look at the Foucauldian strategy of examining historical shifts or ruptures once again, since this I think forms the bedrock of Foucault’s overall position, throughout all of his works, and is very prevalent in his discussion on discourse.²

² In the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1989, pg.23) Foucault says that “The use of concepts of discontinuity, rupture, threshold, limit, series, and transformation present all historical analysis not only with questions of procedure, but with theoretical problems. It is these problems that will be studied here...”

Hall (2001, p. 74) talks about the “historicisation” of discourse, knowledge and the truth in Foucault: “Things meant something and were true [Foucault] argued, only *within a specific historical context*...In each [historical] period, discourse produced forms of knowledge, objects, subjects and practices of knowledge, which differed radically from period to period, with no necessary continuity between them.” Hall (2001, p. 74) draws our attention to Foucault’s investigation into mental illness by way of example. He says that for Foucault, mental illness is not an objective fact, a constant through all historical periods and something which is the same across cultures. Madness as the object of a discursive formation could only appear as a meaningful or intelligible construct within that discursive formation. Foucault (1989, pg. 32),³ makes the point as follows:

It would certainly be a mistake to try to discover what could have been said of madness at a particular time by interrogating the being of madness itself, its secret content, its silent, self-enclosed truth; mental illness was constituted by all that was said in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its developments, indicated its various correlations, judged it, and possibly gave it speech by articulating, in its name, discourses that were to be taken as its own.

Just consider the historical progression in the stigmatisation and treatment of madness: in the Middle Ages psychiatric conditions were routinely put down to demoniacal possession or witchcraft, and the ‘madmen’ of that era were routinely tortured and eventually murdered in the name of justice and the cleansing of society. This was followed by the ‘madhouses’ of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where ‘madmen’ were disciplined and restrained with whips and chains and physically punished for their affliction. Then came humanitarianism, which paved the way for a kinder, more rational, and more humane approach. In the nineteenth century, we see the pathology of insanity being investigated and its clinical forms classified, described and logged in great detail. The ‘madman’ thus became an object of study.

In “the twentieth century psychopathology [was] elucidated, and psychological treatment given ever widening scope and sanction...the regime in mental hospitals [was] further liberalised, and the varieties of care articulated into one another, individualised, and made elements in a continuous therapeutic process...” (Porter, 2002, pg. 5). In the twentieth century, we also began to see the potential for “rehabilitation” or “curing” madness through the various individualised treatment regimes for the care of the mentally ill.

And now, in the twenty-first century, there is an unprecedented acceptance of psychiatric conditions, a lifting of the taboos and stigmas regarding some of these conditions, and a subsequent willingness to speak freely about and admit to being afflicted by such a condition. There is far less shame in seeking professional help for it as opposed to concealing it, hiding from it, or denying it. There is also an even greater emphasis on individualised treatment as well as quicker diagnosis of certain psychiatric

³ L’archéologie du Savoir, 1969.

conditions, since the ability to collect vast amounts of behavioural data through computer, mobile, and wearable technology has increased.⁴ We are also increasingly seeing certain psychiatric conditions such as depression and addiction becoming 'normalised'. They've become common treatable illnesses, like influenza, as opposed to being stigmatised, isolating mental afflictions, at least in Western cultures.

For each historical period, there has therefore been a different and distinctive definition of 'madness', and certain distinctive practices for dealing with madness were put into place based on the definition of the age. The definition of the age is the result of a body of statements or a corpus which is formed and used by multiple users, and which are governed by rules and conventions of which these users are largely unaware.

Thus, it was only after a certain definition of 'madness' was put into practice, that the appropriate subject - 'the madman' as current medical and psychiatric knowledge defined 'him' - could appear. It follows from this then, that the knowledge and practices around a certain subject or topic (madness, sexuality, punishment, justice, education, business, whatever the case may be) are at all times historically and culturally specific. They cannot exist outside of the specific discourses they are attached to in a meaningful way, "i.e. outside the ways they were represented in discourse, produced in knowledge and regulated by the discursive practices and disciplinary techniques of a particular society and time" (Hall, 2001, pg.75).

A good example of such a discursive formation which is culturally specific can be found in South Korea. There is a prevailing belief that sleeping in a closed room whilst running an electric fan may result in death. As a result of this, all electric fans sold in Korea have a built-in timer which turns the fan off after a certain period of time. In fact, the Korea Consumer Protection Board (KCPB) even issued a consumer safety alert related to "fan death" in 2005, citing research on data related to summer accidents which was collected by the Consumer Injury Surveillance System (CISS). This is what the KCPB (2005) had to say on the subject:

If bodies are exposed to electric fans or air conditioners for too long, it causes bodies to lose water and hypothermia [sic]. If directly in contact with a fan, this could lead to death from the increase of carbon dioxide concentration and decrease of oxygen concentration...From 2003-2005, a total of 20 cases were reported through the CISS involving asphyxiations caused by leaving electric fans...on while sleeping. To prevent asphyxiation, timers should be set, wind direction should be rotated and doors should be left open.

The subject of fan death in Korea is one which often rears its head in the media in summer and which is spoken of quite commonly, despite the fact that numerous medical experts have emphasised that such deaths can usually be attributed to causes other than the fact that the deceased had an electric fan running. This matters very little to the average Kim in Korea however, and most will not buy a fan without a timer, and nor will they sleep in an enclosed space with the fan running for any extended period of time.

⁴ Consider for example a parent or health care provider monitoring a potentially anorexic child's internet searches, or obsession with logging calories with a smartphone app.

(The disciplinary or regulatory effect of this particular discursive event.)

The point I want to make here though, is that "fan death" is something that most people outside of Korea would never have heard of, and it would make very little sense for someone to attribute a death to someone by citing an electrical fan running in an enclosed space as the direct cause of that death in Portugal, South Africa, or Australia for instance. Thus it is only within the Korean context that "fan death" could appear as a meaningful or intelligible construct at all, that it can become a meaningful discursive formation, and where it will have a regulatory effect.

Now Foucault argues that our knowledge about practices and around topics for study and discussion hinges on these discursive formations which are historically and culturally specific. In other words knowledge is produced in and regulated by "the discursive practices and disciplinary techniques of a particular society and time" (Hall, 2001, pg.75).

At the foundation of such discursive formations, lies what Foucault refers to as *épistémès*:

An *episteme* represents a general field of knowledge which functions as the 'historical *a priori*' of the given epoch. It serves as a sort of 'intellectual underground' which all of the scientific minds of that epoch unconsciously tap or presuppose. It [is] the total configuration of structural relations which regulates the manner in which a multiplicity of scientific discourses emerge, predominate and interact in any period...The *episteme* pre-exists the human subject and conditions the specific form of its every thought and action. In particular, it decides the fundamental relation which exists between things...and our understanding...This relation between 'things' and 'words' differs from one epoch to the next depending on the *episteme* which informs this relation (Kearney, 1986, pg. 286-287).

Thus each epoch, each era which can be marked by a historical shift as circumscribed by Foucault has at its foundation its *épistémè*, and each *épistémè* represents a new revolution in knowledge. The *épistémè* of the Renaissance gave way to the classical *épistémè* for example, and this in turn gave way to the modern *épistémè*. According to Paras (2006, pg. 23-24), this epistemic shift is not a superficial change in people's opinions and beliefs either. Rather what such a shift entails is a change in the nature of knowledge in and of itself "at that archaic level that makes possible both knowledge and the mode of being of that which is to be known" (Foucault in Paras, 2006, pg. 23). An interesting occurrence which Foucault picks up on is that in the modern *épistémè*, man himself becomes both the subject and the object of knowledge, in other words the knower and the thing to be known, and this was something that was unthinkable in the classical *épistémè*. This is also what Foucault (in Paras, 2006, pg. 24) meant when he declared "before the eighteenth century man did not exist."

In this thesis, I discuss in quite some detail what kind of *épistémè* the twenty-first century has resulted in, and its effects on knowledge and subjectivity.

Foucault and the Subject

It is at the juncture where Foucault becomes interested in knowledge working through discursive practices in particular cultures at particular times, that the thread of the constitution of the human subject that runs throughout his work becomes quite evident.

Foucault positions the evolution into the modern *épistémè* in about the eighteenth century. In fact, this epistemic shift is a very important one which receives attention throughout Foucault's entire body of work, as this is the very shift he says that gave rise to the human sciences, the shift to the Enlightenment, to liberalism and later to modernism and neoliberalism. With it came the shift to viewing man as both the knower and the subject to be known, as someone who studies as well as the thing being studied, as a psyche, a body, an entity to be disciplined through 'humane' institutionalised or "normalised" practices as opposed to physical force and coercion, as a subject to be governed by reason and rule of law. This shift is where sovereign power gives way to disciplinary power, where intellectual knowledge encroaches on and overshadows spiritual knowledge, where sexual deviancy is defined, and where economics focuses on labour as apposed to bartering and exchange.

Foucault, in his essay titled *What is Enlightenment* (1984, pg. 37)⁵ in fact states that:

Modernity is often spoken of as an epoch...And then we find ourselves asking whether modernity constitutes the sequel to the Enlightenment and its development, or whether we are to see it as a rupture or a deviation with respect to the basic principles of the 18th century...I wonder whether we may not envisage modernity rather as an attitude than as a period of history. And by 'attitude,' I mean a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. A bit...like what the Greeks called an ethos.

This particular essay, albeit a short one whose main objective it is to provide an answer to Kant's views on the Enlightenment and subjectivity, nonetheless reveals a great deal more about Foucault's own project than has generally been conceded in the past, and I believe that this is quite an important text in the overall understanding of Foucault's thought processes, independently of his critique of Kant.

I have been seeking, on the one hand, to emphasize the extent to which a type of philosophical interrogation -one that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject- is rooted in the Enlightenment. On the other hand, I have been seeking to stress that the thread that may connect us with the Enlightenment is not faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude - that is, of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era (pg. 39-40).

Foucault argues (p. 40) that this philosophical ethos referred to in the above means analysing ourselves as

⁵ This was originally presented as a lecture at the University of Berkeley in 1983.

beings who are to some extent historically determined by the Enlightenment, and that this kind of analysis needs to consist of a number of historical enquiries which are as precise as possible and “oriented toward the ‘contemporary limits of the necessary’, that is, toward what is not or is no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects” (pg. 40). This I think was the crux of Foucault’s position all along. His historical enquiries from the very beginning aim to be very focused and precise. His focused investigations into madness, hospitals, schools, the penal system, sexuality, government, population and so forth are all aimed at elucidating the constitution of the subject, and are based upon the assumption that historical shifts, (and the Enlightenment in particular) are major events or sets of events which occur at certain points in the timeline of the development of a society. Because these shifts are complex historical processes or events, they include “elements of social transformation, types of political institution, forms of knowledge, projects of rationalization and knowledge practices [and] technological mutations” (pg. 40). It is these elements that warrant precise analysis in order to get us closer to an understanding of the constitution of the modern autonomous subject, and which lies at the root of the philosophical ethos he refers to in the above. The caveat, however, is that the Enlightenment, above and beyond any other historical rupture, brought with it a permanent mode of philosophical and scientific analysis if you will, which is indispensable to the constitution of the subject in any subsequent era we have experienced to date. The Enlightenment allowed the subject to create himself and also to constantly critique and reinvent himself.

This philosophical ethos therefore constitutes a critique of what we do, say and think by means of an historical ontology of ourselves. He also calls this ethos a “limit-attitude”: in order to be critical we do need to reflect on and analyse the ‘contemporary limits of the necessary’. But as opposed to Kant, instead of knowing what limits knowledge so as to renounce transgression, the key is rather to change the critique based on limitation into a practical critique that makes transgression possible. The result of this is that criticism is no longer put into practice in a search for formal structures with universal value across the board, “but rather as a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying” (Foucault, 1984, pg. 42). This then steers criticism clear of transcendentalism and metaphysics, and combines the two methodological tools in the Foucauldian toolbox which, in my opinion, should be seen as complementary cogs in the same machine rather than as two chronological phases in a linear path - namely archaeology and genealogy. Foucault argues that criticism should be genealogical in design and archaeological in method:

Archaeological - and not transcendental - in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom...[T]his work done at the limits of ourselves must...open up a realm of historical

enquiry and...put itself to the test of...contemporary reality, both to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and to determine the precise form this change should take...I shall thus characterize the philosophical ethos appropriate to the critical ontology of ourselves as a historico-practical test of the limits we may go beyond, and thus as work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings (pg. 42-43).

It can be inferred from the above that Foucault's methodological approach into his investigation of the constitution of the autonomous subject has three interrelated facets. The first is to examine, at close range, the predominant discourses within a certain period or within a particular historical event. The next is to reflect on the limitations we are presented with, limitations imposed on us by relations of power, but which we are also able to push to the limit because of our capacitive nature. Foucault articulates this idea in the form of a question: "How can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?" (pg. 44) The third refers to the subject's ability to act on and react to these relations, the freedom with and extent to which he is able to change the rules of the game as it were.

Foucault identifies three areas that are of import to him in his investigation into the constitution of the subject: "relations of control over things, relations of action upon others, relations with oneself" (pg. 44). Furthermore, there are three axes

...whose specificity and whose interconnections have to be analyzed: the axis of knowledge, the axis of power, the axis of ethics. In other terms, the historical ontology of ourselves has to answer and open series of questions; it has to make an indefinite number of inquiries which may be multiplied and specified as much as we like, but which will all address the questions systematized as follows: How are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge? How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations? How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own actions? (pg. 44)

Now just as Foucault saw a certain shift occurring circa 1800, I think it is safe to say that we are once again facing a major historical shift as we forge into the twenty-first century, a shift which is heralding a permanent change in the way in which the subject constitutes itself, a shift I would like to dub the "cybershift" since it has to a large extent been brought about by unprecedented technological advancements and so-called disruptive technologies.

Therefore, in following the areas of importance defined by Foucault, and as a starting point for carrying his project forward as it were, I will begin by looking at discourse, knowledge, the intensification of power relations, and their implications for the freedom and autonomy of the twenty-first century subject. This I will do against the backdrop of Foucault's own treatment of the subject of power in *Discipline and Punish*. And in typical Foucauldian fashion, I will analyse twenty-first century power relations in part through an analysis of the the twenty-first century corporation. This will take me through to the next area of importance, namely the subject's ability to act upon the actions of others, and here I will delve into the issue of the subjectivation, subjectification and the autonomy of the subject a bit further, with particular reference to Foucault's *homo economicus*. Using the Foucauldian line of enquiry as a model or a rough guideline, I will attempt to make a case for a divided subject subject (a dividual) who is just rising from

the rupture caused by the current historical shift, *homo informaticus*, and his subjectivation under contemporary "manageriality". The last area of importance identified by Foucault was the self's relationship with itself. Many authors see this as a "turn" in Foucault's work, this pivot which leads into the third of the three axes of his work, his ethics. But, in fact, when you read Foucault carefully, it becomes clear that this is a natural progression for him. It is not a turn by any means. Rather, it is just the addition of the missing cog that makes the Foucauldian machine run - a missing cog that finds its origins once again in Foucault's analysis of the Enlightenment and his subsequent search for better answers than those that came with or after the Enlightenment.

In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2001, pg. 309-310) Foucault argues that prior to the Enlightenment there was a "knowledge of spirituality", which was characterised by the subject's ability to turn his gaze inwards, onto himself. With the advent of the Enlightenment however, and the emphasis on rationality, "the knowledge of intellectual knowledge finally completely covered over the knowledge of spirituality." He argues that with the Enlightenment, where man becomes the focus and the object of intellectual pursuit, precedence is given to knowledge of the world, and spiritual knowledge becomes grounded in religious faith. Foucault argues however that spiritual knowledge and the knowledge of the world are not in fact mutually exclusive. He says:

[I]t seems perfectly clear to me that it is not in any way a matter of constituting knowledge of the human being, of the soul, or of interiority, alongside, in opposition to, or against knowledge of the world. What, then, is involved is the modalization of the knowledge of things, with the following characteristics. First, it involves the subject...either rising to the summit of the universe to see it in its totality, or striving to descend into the heart of things...Second...there is the possibility of grasping both the reality and the value of things. And what is meant by "value" is the place, relations, and specific dimension of things within the world, as well as their relation to, importance for, and their real power over the human subject insofar as he is free. Third, this spiritual knowledge involves the subject's ability to see himself and grasp himself in his reality. It involves a kind of "self-viewing"...Finally, the effect of this knowledge on the subject is assured by the fact that the subject not only finds his freedom in it, but in his freedom he also finds a mode of being, which is one of happiness and of every perfection he is capable (pg. 308).

Foucault reaches back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and begins to talk about 'technologies of the self' when he refers to this ability of the subject to turn his gaze inwards upon himself whilst still grasping his outer reality. And it is here that it becomes exceedingly clear that Foucault has never been responsible for the "death of the subject" nor for a kind of subsequent resurrection as some have contended. The subject itself is always present for Foucault, but it is a subject whose mode of constitution has been subject to an evolutionary process through various historical shifts, and a subject which, post-Enlightenment, came to be constituted through its ability to be shaped by power relations, to exercise power over others, to take stock of his inner self, to take care of himself and of others, and to strive towards a kind of ethical and spiritual betterment.

The subject that Foucault kills off is not the actual subject per se, but rather the rational philosophical concept of the subject born in and around the 1800's. I think that this is what Foucault was referring to when he said "before the eighteenth century man did not exist...The classical *épistémè* was articulated

along lines that in no way isolated a domain proper and specific to man...man, as a dense and primary reality, as a complex object and sovereign subject of all possible knowledge, finds no place there” (Foucault in Paras, 2006, pg. 24). The subject that Foucault rebels against is the Cartesian conception of the subject born from the discourses and practices of that particular period in history, a subject which is grounded in scientific analysis and classification, a body severed from its own spirituality.

When Foucault reaches back to the ancients for answers on the constitution and self-constitution of the subject, it is precisely because he couldn't find any satisfactory answers within the writings that emerged from the Enlightenment or beyond. It is also precisely because of his critique of the subject in his earlier works, that he is able to formulate a kind of theory on the constitution of the subject. His ethical aesthetic subject.

I will therefore explore this development of Foucault's ethics in this dissertation, as juxtaposed against the broader discussion of the constitution of the subject, and in particular the implications for the subject of the twenty-first century. I will also explore how using this kind of analysis enables us to better understand business and business ethics in the twenty-first century, and in fact how business and technological ethics are becoming increasingly critical to the understanding and functioning of Western society.

Just as there are four characteristics which Foucault sees as constituting the spiritual knowledge described above -this knowledge which lies at the basis of his notion of ethics- Foucault's ethics itself encompasses four main tenets. The first is what we may refer to as ethical substance, and it includes that part of ourselves or our behavior (our feelings) which forms the domain that is important in making ethical judgements. The second is the mode of subjection, or that which concerns the way in which people are urged to recognise their moral obligations (through divine law, as imposed by the demands of reason, as being rooted in convention or as derived from the Ancient Greeks, in striving for the most beautiful form of existence possible). The main point concerning the mode of subjection however, is that it provides the connection between the self and moral code. The third tenet of Foucault's ethics concerns the ways in which we transform ourselves in order to become ethical subjects, the self-forming activity we employ in order to become moral subjects. And the last tenet is referred to as the 'telos', and this represents the kind of being to which we aspire to be when we act in moral ways (Davidson, 1986 p. 228-229; Oksala, 2005 p. 159).

It is this development of Foucault's ethics that I will explore in the second to last chapter. I believe that Foucault was on his way to developing a comprehensive theory on the constitution of the subject (whether that was his intention or not), that his notion of ethics reflects an ongoing concern with subjectification, and that he had far from abandoned his earlier notions of disciplinary power.

I will therefore focus a great deal on Foucault's treatment of the subject in his ethics, and in particular on the relationship between the twenty-first century subject, knowledge and truth.

I also believe that there are quite a few similarities between the brand of ethics Foucault was beginning to

expound and Aristotelean virtue ethics, which I will briefly explore, since I am of the opinion that this is key to understanding ethics from a perspective which does not strictly favour moral codes and codes of conduct above all else. I therefore want to argue, like Davidson (in Hoy, 1986), that Foucault leaves us with a very useful tool for analysis in the field of ethics through his isolation of the relation of the self to itself as a separate component of ethics, and that this allows us to look at ethics from an entirely new angle. It allows us to shift focus from, but without losing sight of, the moral code or codes of conduct. This tool may also be the key to understanding and analysing ethics at a time when we are undergoing powerful cultural changes, and where the moral and ethical landscape has become significantly more complex to navigate as a result of the particular shifts that the twenty-first century is bringing about - at a time in which deontological and consequentialist approaches may not be sufficient, particularly in business ethics.

I think that we are riding on the crest of the wave of a Foucauldian rupture, and that this particular epistemic and historical shift, this cybershift if you will, brings with it a new philosophical ethos. It therefore deserves a thoroughgoing analysis if we are going to make sense of what it means to be an ethical subject in the twenty-first century.

It is my intention to conduct a kind of analysis of this rupture, this cybershift, in the Foucauldian style, in the hope of gleaning a better understanding of the ethical challenges that face us as a result of the major historical shift we are undergoing.

I will borrow from Gilles Deleuze in my analysis of the subject that is emerging from the cybershift, and argue that today's subject is a divided entity, a "dividual", who constitutes himself as part data. I believe that this kind of analysis may be useful in garnering a better understanding of contemporary organisations, management, corporate culture and the subject as a worker. The logic behind this is simple, and that is that organisations are in essence microcosms which reflect and reproduce society at large, so this will in turn hopefully shed some light on some of the broader cultural issues that face us at this very moment in time, within this new historical shift. I will also argue that more than ever before, the innovations, products and actions of large tech corporations play a pivotal role in how the contemporary subject constitutes itself, making it critically important to give renewed attention to business ethics within the larger framework of society and what it means to be a subject in this day and age.

I will thus be drawing heavily on the methodological tools left to us by Foucault, and will undertake a kind of three-pronged analysis of organisations and organisational culture as it stands now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Essentially, I will attempt an ontology of the twenty-first century subject, and will ask, à la Foucault, how are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge? How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations? How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own actions in an increasingly borderless, multi-dimensional world? What is happening to the truth in the twenty-first century?

Foucault excavated the sanitarium, the prison, the school, the hospital, but I will take my chisel to the contemporary company or organisation for the most part.

To refer back to the very first quote at the beginning of this introduction,⁶ I will try to discover if and how the productive subject, the subject who labours is "objectivised". I will seek to unearth the dividing practices at work in Western societies and organisations, and will lastly delve into self-subjectification in the new networked organisation. This will entail a thoroughgoing analysis of the twenty-first century organisation - its discourses, its mechanisms of power, domination and control, "manageriality", and the care of the self or the self-constitution of the contemporary working subject. Ultimately, this will result in an attempt to unearth a new perspective on ethics, particularly in business.

⁶ [T]he goal of my work during the last twenty years...has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. [I]nstead...my work has dealt with three modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects. The first is the modes of inquiry that try to give themselves the status of sciences; for example, the objectivizing of the speaking subject in *grammaire generale*, philology, and linguistics. Or again, in this first mode, the objectivizing of the productive subject, the subject who labors, in the analysis of wealth and of economics. Or, a third example, the objectivizing of the sheer fact of being alive in natural history or biology. In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call "dividing practices." The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys." Finally, I have sought to study—it is my current work—the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject. For example, I have chosen the domain of sexuality—how men have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of "sexuality." Thus, it is not power, but the subject, that is the general theme of my research (Foucault, 1994, p.326-327).

Chapter 1: The Death and Resurrection of the Panopticon

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter I intend to commence with a thoroughgoing discussion of Foucault's work on power and surveillance. However, I would like to set the Foucauldian scene first, for it would be impossible to conduct an in-depth analysis of the aforementioned without looking at what led Foucault to power and surveillance in the first place.

Foucault's work on power is deeply embedded in his fascination with what he refers to as the rupture or the historical shift that took place in the nineteenth century.

As noted in the introduction, Foucault's methodology consistently, throughout his body of work, seeks to elucidate such historical shifts, to shine a light on the major changes which are reflected in places both obvious, and not so obvious, expected and unexpected. These shifts can be identified and excavated through a thorough analysis of for example hospitals, asylums, prisons, schools, politics, language, and scientific practices; and the shift that occurred circa 1800, was a pivotal one for Foucault. As will be discussed at a later stage, it is also this shift which highlighted for Foucault some major issues that arose at this time within philosophy, especially with regards to the dominant perspectives on subjectivity. He recognised that there were some inherent logical contradictions which arose within philosophy during this particular paradigm shift.

Broadly speaking, these shifts or ruptures that Foucault refers to are characterised by changes in the relevant *épistémè*, and by *épistémè* Foucault means the existing field of different forms of knowledge within a certain period of time, the different configurations of the knowledge of different periods, as well as their historical conditions of possibility (Oksala, 2005, pg. 21-22). In terms of his investigations into discourse therefore, he talks about a shift from the Renaissance *épistémè* to the classical *épistémè*, and to the modern one. The epistemic shift that interests Foucault the most however, is the one from the classical to the modern, since this is the one where scientific discourses are given precedence, where rationality trumps, and where man is no longer just the inquisitor, the seeker of knowledge, but himself becomes an object of knowledge to be sought. According to Paras (2006, pg. 23-24), and quoting Foucault,

[i]t was only in the mid-seventeenth century, or a mere hundred and fifty years prior to the dawn of

modernity, that the “Renaissance” *épistémè* had given way to the classical one. In this case, as in the more recent shift, “the fundamental arrangement of the entire *épistémè* of Western culture [was] modified.” In both instances, it was not a matter of a superficial shift in people’s opinions and beliefs; it was rather a question of “modifications that altered knowledge itself, at that archaic level that makes possible both knowledge and the mode of being of that which is to be known.” If, Foucault would have suggested, he had foregrounded the circa-1800 transformation, it was because the modern *épistémè*, and it alone, had given rise to man.

By this Foucault means that this is the point at which man is no longer just the producer of discourses, but he also becomes the object of discourse, and it is in this sense that discourse then shapes the subject, since these discourses about man permeate the social consciousness, and contribute to the ideas and preconceptions that surround the human subject, and invariably influence his actions and his treatment of others.

Discourse for Foucault is, in other words, not a strictly linguistic notion, but rather has the characteristic of encompassing both language and practice. Discourse is *productive*. “Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others” (Hall, 2001, pg. 72). In a nutshell then, discourses or discursive events shape popular consciousness and consensus at a particular time and within a particular culture, thereby producing the knowledge that emerges from that particular epoch. They also underlie all the predominant norms and practices of that epoch.

This then is also where it starts to make perfect sense for Foucault to delve deeper into the question of the constitution of the subject, and the inherent logical inconsistencies in the dominant philosophical perspectives on the subject which arose at this time, during this particular historical shift.

The intrinsic logic goes something like this: Discourses reflect the current *épistémè* of the day, and therefore our knowledge and our modes of being. An analysis of the discourses, or rather the discursive events of the day will therefore shed light on the epistemic shifts that have taken place, and on how the subject is made and perceived at a particular point in time. In terms of the epistemic shift from the classical to the modern, Foucault came to the realisation that man, the subject himself as the new object of scientific knowledge, was now for the first time effectively being classified, categorised, controlled on a psychological level, and, as a result, disciplined. But herein lies a logical contradiction, for with this shift whereby man became both the subject and object of knowledge, man as the knowing subject, by making himself into an object of study, tried to reveal to himself how it is that he could know himself thoroughly as a knowing subject. This is an impossible task says Foucault, because it means rooting man’s transcendental subjectivity in his empirical subjectivity. Foucault says that man is therefore constituted as

⁷ Refer back to the discussion of “fan death” in South Korea in the introduction.

an “empirico-transcendental doublet” within this shift from classicism to modernity:

[T]he threshold of our modernity is situated not by the attempt to apply objective methods to the study of man, but rather by the constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet which was called *man*. Two kinds of analysis then came into being. There are those that operate within the space of the body⁸...and function as a sort of transcendental aesthetic; these led to the discovery that...there is a *nature* of human knowledge that determines its forms and that can at the same time be made manifest to it in its own empirical contents. There were also analyses that...functioned as a sort of transcendental dialectic; by this means it was shown that knowledge had historical, social, or economic conditions, that it was formed within the relations that are woven between men...there was a *history* of human knowledge which could both be given to empirical knowledge and prescribe its forms...[M]odern thought has been unable to avoid... searching for the locus of a discourse that would...make it possible to analyse man as a subject...(OT, pg. 318-319).

This conundrum of the “strange empirico-transcendental doublet” therefore led Foucault to want to delve further into the constitution of the subject, perhaps towards finding his way out of this contradiction that we've been left with, and towards a more tenable approach to subjectivity than the established approaches of the day.

Oksala (2005, pg. 80) argues that one of the central issues for Foucault in *The Order of Things* was the extent to which subjects are determined by rules and structures which are unknown to them. This stems directly from the conundrum outlined in the above, for the problem with modern subjectivity is that it has become characteristic of man's mode of being that he appears both as the origin of history and knowledge, and also as the product of a history and a body of knowledge. This introduces the problem of man as the subject not being able to grasp the origin of his own historicity or knowledge because it is impossible for him to occupy the position of a primordial observer. In his essay titled "What is an Author?" (1977a, pg. 137-138), Foucault explains that far from discarding the subject, we need to re-examine the notion of the modern subject: "it is a matter of depriving the subject...of its role as originator, and of analyzing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse." There is therefore a field of knowledge, of rules and structures, which governs discourse and which remains unknown to the modern subject.

I will argue throughout this thesis that Foucault never actually eliminated the question of the subject, but simply framed it in a different way. He wanted to avoid the trappings caused by approaches such as Phenomenology and Marxism, whilst still asking under what conditions something like a subject can make its appearance.

What the Classical era left us with, was that philosophy became tied up with the paradoxical question of overcoming the epistemic limitations of the subject precisely by classifying and delineating the subject

⁸ The theme of the body is one which rises to prominence in *Discipline and Punish*, and is a central focus for Foucault when he examines the question of the constitution of the subject, for it is with the advent of the scientific study of the subject as a body with its own empirical contents that the nature of our treatment of the subject underwent a transformation.

and making those limitations the condition for the possibility of knowledge. The positivists and the Marxists, for example, accept that initial knowledge of the body, or society, is present, and this in turn is used to account for the production of knowledge. This, says Foucault, leads to a circularity, a theory which constantly doubles back upon itself, and one way of overcoming this problem, is to recognise historicity in the constitution of the subject, as well as the fact that the subject is self-constituting.

Foucault's aim thus became an attempt to figure out what *the conditions of possibility* are under which the subject is able to appear, to be an agent for change, and under what conditions we may be able to speak of the subject as being autonomous or free.

Oksala (2005, pg. 87) claims that

the methodological 'disappearance' of the subject in Foucault's thought does not signal the disappearance of freedom... Rather than thinking of the subject in terms of individuals, and of freedom as something they have or do not have, he suggests that we attempt to think of the subject as a discursive effect and freedom as a non-subjective opening up of possibilities for multiple creative practices. This does not mean that he denies the possibility of understanding subjects as...agents...He is trying to find freedom on a level that orders and regulates subjective expressions and initiatives.

This I think is where the necessity arose for Foucault to turn his attention to the study of power in *Discipline and Punish*. Archaeology and the analysis of discourse in the question of the constitution of the subject was incomplete. He had to start taking non-discursive events into consideration if he was to fully understand the relationship between man, freedom, and agency - both from the perspective of critiquing the predominant views that arose from the Enlightenment and the shift from the classical to the modern, and finding a tenable philosophical alternative.

But why make this methodological move with penal methods and the prison as a point of departure?

Foucault himself, in *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, explains the rationale behind his choice of the prison for analysis in *Discipline and Punish* as follows:

It must be asked...how it came about that a prison, a recent, unstable, criticizable and criticized institution, was planted so deep in the institutional field that the mechanism of its effects could be posited as an anthropological constant...(Foucault, 1994, pg. 27).

In other words, the effects, the practices which one may identify through the microcosmic analysis of the prison, may be traced into the macrocosmic realm of greater society precisely because the mechanism of its effects can be seen and traced as an anthropological constant.

Now it would seem at this point that Foucault was breaking away from discourse to focus entirely on non-discursive practices and on relations of power. Oksala (2005, pg. 95) argues that this interpretation is misleading, since it would mean maintaining a strong distinction between that which is discursive and that which is non-discursive. She argues that this is erroneous, since archaeology already grounds discourse very firmly in *practice* (in fact Foucault refers to both discourse and power as being 'productive'), and in doing so provides a very distinct approach to the relations between discourses and non-discursive domains such as institutions, economic practices, political processes and so forth. She says that archaeology "aimed to determine how the rules that govern a discursive formation may be linked to non-discursive systems", and that Foucault was very explicit in his position when he "stated in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that discourse poses the question of power, because it is by nature an object of political struggle" (Oksala, 2005, pg.95).

As I noted in the preceding sections, a central philosophical claim for Foucault is that scientific objects, including man himself, are constituted through discursive practices in history. In other words, the very basis of our knowledge is grounded in historically situated discursive practices and events. Oksala (2005, pg. 96) argues that the move from archaeology to genealogy is just a further development of this philosophical claim in that it was a natural move for Foucault to analyse discourse, discover that discourse and non-discursive practices are closely related, and to then extend his analysis to include the non-discursive. She says that "Foucault's genealogy in the 1970's also looked more comprehensively at the tie between discursive and non-discursive practices through the notion of power/knowledge" (Oksala, 2005, pg.96).

In other words, there is a deep interconnection between discourse and non-discursive practices because knowledge and power are always unretractably related to one another and cannot be understood independently of each other. She argues that Foucault makes this explicit by saying that when he talks about the *épistémè*, he is referring to a specifically discursive 'apparatus', and that the apparatus in its general form has both discursive and non-discursive characteristics. In fact, in *The Confession of the Flesh*, Foucault (1980, pg. 94) defines what he means by the term 'apparatus' by saying:

What I am trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a wholly heterogenous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions - in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements.

In other words, the apparatus that Foucault refers to provides the conditions under which it becomes possible for scientific objects to emerge and, as we saw before, man as a subject is also a scientific object. Thus the constitution of the subject is only possible under the conditions provided by this 'apparatus'. Oksala (2005, pg. 97) writes that

while archaeology facilitated partial analysis of the subject by approaching through the discursive subject positions made possible by the episteme and produced through a set of formative rules, the introduction of genealogy as Foucault's method in the 1970's provided a way to present a more comprehensive account of the constitution of the subject. Genealogy analyzes the constitutive effects of non-discursive practices as well as of the scientific truths dependent upon them.

Perhaps Foucault's most influential and possibly his most misunderstood work then, was *Discipline and Punish*, which marks the methodological shift from archaeology to genealogy, from a focus on the discursive, to incorporating the non-discursive.

Foucault opens the first chapter of *Discipline and Punish* with a very graphic, bloody, and dramatic account of the inhumane public lynching of a man called Damiens, and directly afterwards he juxtaposes this against a very mundane excerpt from a very 'humane' timetable outlining a day in a modern prison.

Not only does this juxtaposition once again point directly at that historical shift which lies at the basis of Foucault's analysis of discourse and épistémès in his previous work, but here he uses the juxtaposition to illustrate the point that discipline, punishment, and displays of power underwent a shift from needing a public forum, from being exercised by a sovereign and exerted over a physical body in feudal times, to becoming more subtle, more hidden, more strategic, more ubiquitous and exercised both by institutions and the self, not only over the physical body, but also the mind, as society became more industrialised. A bit further on in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault also uses the Panopticon as the metaphor, the symbol, a discursive as well as a non-discursive event to illustrate the exercise of disciplinary power in the increasingly humanitarian world of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the way in which that power disseminates or infuses itself into the very fabric of society.

Starting off his book with such a startlingly graphic polarisation of the violent and the banal is quite a clever strategy, and a clear play on his previous work on discourse, in that Foucault is fully aware of the fact that the gruesome account of the public lynching of Damiens will immediately invoke a feeling of revulsion in the modern reader/subject, a reader who is conditioned by the modern épistémè he is a product of, and that the description of the prison timetable afterward will leave the reader/subject safely within his modernist/humanist comfort zone again. Foucault also leads into the first chapter of *Discipline and Punish* with this juxtaposition because it points to that epistemic shift that took place whereby we see punishment centred first as physical violence inflicted directly on the body of the criminal as a public spectacle, and then as we shift into the modern and more humane épistémè, punishment is no longer inflicted directly onto the body, but rather takes the form of the deprivation of the physical freedom of the criminal through incarceration and disciplinary practices. Foucault says, in *Discipline and Punish* (pg. 8-11), that:

By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the gloomy festival of punishment was dying out...It was as if the punishment was thought to equal, if not to exceed, in savagery the crime itself...but it also marks a slackening hold on the body...The body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it or to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property. The body, according to this penalty, is caught up in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions.

As with the concepts of knowledge and power referred to earlier, boundaries and limits, and indeed freedom, are also central concepts for Foucault, and by extension so is the delineation between body and 'soul'.

Foucault argues that taking away the physical freedom of a prisoner through imprisonment is still a form of taking a hold of the physical body, but the effects are more psychological now, as the punishment “acts in the depth of the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations” (D&P, pg.16), in other words the soul. This in turn leads us to ask that if there is a power which is able to permeate into and control the subject at the level of his thoughts, his will and his inclinations, then how can we possibly speak about the autonomy or freedom of the subject?

This then becomes a very important question for Foucault, not only in *Discipline and Punish*, but also subsequently. This distinction between soul and body, and the effects of control that reaches down into the subject's very soul marks the beginning of Foucault's line of questioning which will eventually lead him to the care of the self and the “aesthetic life” in his ethics. It is a search for the autonomous subject which is brought to light in this particular work in the distinction between body and soul, and the role each plays in the eventual make-up of the subject.

Foucault (pg. 23) says that *Discipline and Punish* is “intended as a correlative history of the modern soul...; a genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules...”

This shift then from his previous archaeology to genealogy should not be seen as a break from one to the other, but rather as a natural progression, as the establishment of two complementary axes in a particular line of enquiry, and one which has its roots in Foucault's enduring fascination with that historical rupture or epistemic shift which gave rise to the modern interpretation of the subject as being an object to be known, as the target of scientific study and classification. In fact, he explicitly says that one of the points of concern for him in *Discipline and Punish* is “in what way a specific mode of subjection was able to give birth to man as an object of knowledge for a discourse with a ‘scientific’ status” (pg.24). In other words, how did it come about that we created the logical inconsistency which comes to light when we look at the modern philosophical construct of the human subject through the archaeological lens? In *Discipline and Punish* (pg.191) he frames the same question in a different way: "One is no doubt right to pose the Aristotelean problem: is a science of the individual possible and legitimate?"

1.2. Disciplined Bodies

From the outset in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault makes it clear that he is interested in subjection, and how modes of subjection are able to shape the modern subject.

Foucault tells us that power underwent a shift, from being exercised in a corporal manner, directly over the body of the subject by an authoritative entity either in the form of the sovereign himself, or by a representative of the sovereign, to becoming more subtle, to classifying, segregating, and directing bodies through disciplinary means as opposed to pure brute physical force. He also asserts that there is a direct correlation between this shift, and the historical shift from a feudal economy to an industrialised free market economy, which is a thread he will pick up again after *Discipline and Punish*, when he elucidates his concept of governmentality.

...(T)he body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but...its constitution as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection...the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body. This subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence or ideology;...it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use of neither weapons nor of terror and yet remain of a physical order. That is to say, there may be a 'knowledge' of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning... (D&P, pg. 25-26).

This is a subtle reference back to *The Order of Things*, where he talks about man as an “empirico-transcendental doublet”, and where he says that there are two ways of looking at man that arose in the nineteenth century, namely man as the object of empirical study, through a positivist lens if you will, or man as a product of his historical, social or economic conditions, as the Marxists do for example. Both interpretations deny man certain conditions of his subjectivity, thereby problematising the entire notion of subjectivity. Foucault is trying to get beneath this problem of the constitution of the subject, to understand its workings, and I think not to commit ‘subjecticide’, but rather to rescue the subject from the extinction it faces under such other interpretations.

This I think therefore is the crux of Foucault’s focus in *Discipline and Punish*: the elucidation of the shape the subject takes on as it is moulded by the changing, shifting forces of power and subjection as it makes its way through history, and how the subject body becomes something not just to be controlled, but also something which is capable of production - all against the backdrop of the search for a more tenable interpretation (if indeed it exists) of the subject than the ones constructed by the positivists, Marxists and phenomenologists.

I am therefore in accord with Milchman and Rosenberg (2009, p.63), who argue that Foucault makes the subject the focus of his work in *Discipline and Punish*, and not power per se, and that what this means essentially is that a subject for Foucault at this point represented an “historical creation or product, and that the prevailing, and changing, power relations in a society or culture entail different modes by which a

subject 'shows up' or appears", and by which a subject is able to produce effects of his own.

The modes of production whereby subjects are made, historically, through the process of objectification (becoming an object for scientific discourse, something to be studied), Foucault later dubbed *assujettissement*, (which has by and large been translated into English as 'subjectification' and 'subjectivation'). This process of subjectification is one of flux, characterised by constant change as the prevailing discourses and relations of power in the social web change. But subjectification also has another central characteristic, namely productivity. Not only is the subject subjectified, but he is also productive, and as such is self-constituting.⁹

My intention here is not to describe or critique Foucault's general analysis of the historical shift that took place from feudalism, corporal punishment and sovereign power to industrialization, institutionalized punishment and disciplinary power - to focus on power as such. This has been done. My intent is rather to focus narrowly on the development of the subjected yet productive self-constituting subject which is present throughout *Discipline and Punish*. I will therefore be looking at Foucault's genealogy of the subject, insofar as his analysis will shed light on that which is problematic with other philosophical perspectives, and insofar as it may shed a light on how to approach the constitution of the subject in the era post-Foucault, in the networked, globalised era we face in the twenty-first century.

In order to get behind this question of the constitution of the subject in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault starts by analysing what he refers to as the "body of the condemned man". He argues that in feudal times, punishment was primarily doled out on the person's physical body, since there was no other real viable locus for punishing the ordinary man because money and production were still in the very early stages of development. After feudal times however, with the development of a mercantile economy, the nature of punishment underwent a change - to a system of "corrective detention". Societies from the nineteenth century onwards therefore utilise systems of punishment which are situated in a certain "political economy of the body" (D&P, pg. 25). Foucault argues that "it is always the body that is at issue - the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission" (D&P, pg. 25). This political economy of the body then is something that arises along with the modern subject, and as a result of the fact that the subject which arose from the Enlightenment is also the object of scientific discourse. Humane methods of punishment and the possibility for corrective detention and rehabilitation weren't possible before the subject became an object of knowledge to be studied, classified and categorised, since this involved the creation of the mode of subjection through which the modern subject is 'born'.

⁹ Vighi and Feldner (2007, pg. 101) interpret Foucault's notion of subjectification to be distinct from subjection. They say that subjection is what occurs when the subject is constituted through domains of knowledge and tactics of power, whereas subjectification is the emergence of the subject through practices of the self. This argument stems from the idea that Foucault only devoted his later thought to this interpretation of the constitution of the subject and only later stated it to have been a major concern in his work, with the benefit of hindsight. While this may or may not be correct, I believe that this is not giving enough credence to Foucault's earlier emphasis on the fact that the subject is productive, particularly in terms of relations of power and discipline.

Foucault says that under the feudal, monarchic system, you had the body of the condemned man in a polar relationship with the monarchy, whereby the condemned man “represents the symmetrical, inverted figure of the king” (D&P, pg. 29) in that the king exercises surplus power over the condemned, and the condemned are characterised by the polar opposite - a lack of any power. He goes on to argue that the king’s surplus power, which is exercised over the body of the condemned man, must surely give rise to a ‘soul’. And thus the whole point of focusing on punitive power and its trajectory from the monarchic sovereign form to the disciplinary institutionalised kind then becomes the development of a “genealogy of the modern ‘soul’”, a soul which can be viewed as the “present correlative of a certain technology of power over the body” and which is “produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished...[or] over those who are stuck at a machine for the rest of their lives” (D&P, pg. 29). The soul then is born from relations of power, through punishment, supervision and constraint, and this is possible because the soul is where the effects of power and the reference of knowledge are articulated, it is the locus where power relations give rise to certain forms of knowledge, and that knowledge reinforces the effects of the power. It is on the foundation of this then that we have constructed many of our socio-historical analyses and concepts, such as psyche, subjectivity, consciousness, personality and so forth. It is also on the basis of this that the scientific techniques and discourses, and the moral claims of humanism were founded.

But let there be no misunderstanding: it is not that a real man, the object of knowledge, philosophical reflection or technical intervention, has been substituted for the soul...The man described for us...is already in himself the effect of a subjection more profound than himself. A ‘soul’ inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body. (D&P, pg.30)

Power therefore produces subjects.

I am well aware of the fact that in one of the preceding sections it was said that discourse is what produces the subject in Foucault’s work, and at first glance this seems like a shift in Foucault’s own position on the constitution of the subject, but in fact it is not quite so simple. We know that Foucault was very critical of the conception of the subject which emerged from the epistemic shift from the classical to the modern, and in accordance with the ‘conventional’ notion of the subject, we tend to think of individuals as being autonomous, independent, and an authentic source of action and meaning. In Foucault’s estimation however, the subject is produced by the predominant discourses of the day, in that the discursive events of a particular epoch will influence the way in which the subjects of that epoch think, act and interact. For example, if the Korea Consumer Protection Board issues a written warning, published on their website, as a reputable organisation, using pseudo-scientific jargon, warning citizens of the country against death from asphyxiation or hypothermia induced by use of an electric fan in an enclosed space, then the actions

of subjects in that country will be affected in numerous ways. More citizens attribute deaths to a fan running when they report the death of a member of their household both officially and in conversation, which in turn feeds this belief back into the culture of the country. Manufacturers cease to produce fans without a timer because consumer behaviour has changed - people simply don't buy them without that feature anymore. People no longer close their bedroom doors when they sleep at night, thus affecting their behaviour and family dynamic at home. Parents don't allow their children to nap in a closed room next to a fan, and so on. This discursive event thus has a regulatory function whereby people actually change their behaviour, regardless of whether there is actual scientific evidence of fan death being an actuality or not. And people regulate their actions because they believe this particular discourse to be common knowledge, a universal truth. Thus discourse produces knowledge, and knowledge is deeply intertwined with power, and power is what disciplines us and regulates our behaviour. Hall (2001, pg. 79) articulates it in the following way:

It is discourse, not the subjects who speak it which produces knowledge. Subjects may produce particular texts, but they are operating within the limits of the *episteme*, the *discursive formation*, the *regime of truth*, of a particular period and culture...[T]he 'subject' is *produced* within *discourse*. This subject *of* discourse cannot be outside discourse, because it must be **subjected to discourse**. It must submit to its rules and conventions, to its dispositions of power/knowledge. The subject can become the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourse produces. It can become the object through which power is relayed. But it cannot stand outside power/knowledge as its source and author.

According to Detel (2010, pg. 41), subjects - experts, patients, prisoners and so forth, jointly submit to the rules and regulations which arise from certain discursive events. In the example above, ordinary Korean citizens stop using fans for extended periods, they leave doors and windows open as opposed to closing them, and manufacturers start to incorporate certain safety features into electric fans as a rule. In this way all of these people jointly submit to these regulations, and in doing so, produce a new kind of truth. Parents in Korea warn their children against sleeping with the fan on, and so children will follow the rules when they become adults too, and in this way this 'truth' is constituted and reproduced, and collectively a great part of the population becomes disciplined in a certain kind of behaviour surrounding fan usage, and a certain kind of disciplinary power is exercised over and by this collective, a power which is not power in any negative sense, but which is productive.

Relations of power are by no means necessarily or even usually, repressive. However they instantiate methodological or operational rules and are anchored in scientific as well as in other institutions, and whether or not they are followed is what makes the distinction between the rationality and irrationality, truth and falsity - and in the process the historical contingency of this set of rules is systematically veiled. To be sure, the mechanisms and forms through which these discourses (in the technical sense) come to have the standing they do can be examined - in scientific literature, for instance, or in popular presentations, at congresses and in the educational system. But what is crucial is that the forms of power regulation that these discourses represent are quite simply identical with the methods of the production of truth. This form of power is 'productive' in this sense that it induces people to follow those rules which open up room and possibilities within which their truths can be produced (Detel, 2010, pg. 41).

Foucault (D&P, pg. 102) in fact talks about the mind as being a “surface of inscription for power with semiology as its tool”. He says that by controlling the soul or the mind, through controlling ideas, bodies will become submissive, and with it power becomes all the more subtle and pervasive. This is what Foucault refers to as disciplinary power, but disciplinary power should not be interpreted as a negative thing. Foucault says that we tend to speak of power in purely negative terms, using words such as ‘exclude’, ‘repress’, ‘censor’ and ‘conceal’. But the effects of power are not necessarily negative. Power is productive, “it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production” (D&P, pg. 194). In other words, power produces subjects. Disciplined subjects.¹⁰

In this chapter I would like to argue, along the same lines as Oksala (2005, pg. 94-95), that the seemingly controversial claim made by Foucault that power produces subjects and that the subject is an effect of power, is not in fact quite as controversial as it may seem. The constitution of Foucault’s subject has widely been read as being a causal process, which is erroneous. Oksala (2005, pg. 94) argues that “power relations are immanent to the social reality and have empirical causal effects, but they are also paradoxically ‘transcendental’ in the sense that they are a condition of possibility for the constitution of the subject.” She then goes on to explain that what she means by ‘transcendental’ is that the network of power/knowledge, as discussed in the above, is to be understood as providing the condition of the possibility of the subject, and not as the material cause in the constitution of the subject. “Historical and transcendental constitution are...inseparable in the sense that the conditions of possibility of the subject are to be found in the historical practices and discourses structured by power relations.” What this indicates is that we should understand the Foucauldian subject to be inseparably intertwined with power and with knowledge, in that these form the “grid of intelligibility for its actions, intentions, desires and motivations” (Oksala, 2005, pg. 95). What this means in essence then, is that if Foucault is read from this perspective, he is not in fact saying that power forms the subject in only a material, external or causal way. “Bodily manipulation produces or constitutes modern forms of the subject by being an integral component of biopower,¹¹ which not only controls subjects, but also constitutes them through the normalizing effects of scientific truths” (Oksala, 2005, pg. 103).

Central to the constitution of the Foucauldian subject and the normalising effects on the body of the

¹⁰ At this point there are some burning criticisms pertaining to the Foucauldian subject, particularly with regards to agency, or the subject’s freedom to commit acts, as well as the problem of morality. Many authors have pointed out that if power produces (docile) subjects, then what of the subject’s autonomy to act and to make decisions, what of intentionality, and what of the Foucauldian subject’s ability to be inherently ethical/moral or to make independent value judgements - there is a prevailing view that Foucault has dealt a deadly blow to the autonomous subject at this point. I will argue in this thesis that this is precisely what Foucault was addressing when he started expounding his ideas on the care of the self, and that implicit in the idea of the care of the self, is autonomy. The deathly blow he dealt to the subject was the elimination of a certain philosophical construct of the subject, and what he leaves us with is an alternative interpretation.

¹¹ This is a concept that I’ll explore in detail further on.

subject, is his analysis of the Panopticon, which seeks to uncover the practices and effects of surveillance on the body of the subject, both in terms of power and normalisation.

1.3. The Panopticon

As already noted in the preceding, Foucault talked about an historical shift which marked a distinct transformation in the penal system from penal practices being exerted directly over the criminal's physical body through an exercise of sovereign power ordained by the king or his deputies, to the forms of incarceration and discipline brought about by prison systems inspired by Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, whereby power could now be exerted over both the physical body and the 'soul'.

Foucault, in *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth* (1994c, pg. 35), describes this transformation of penalty as follows:

The transformation of penalty does not belong simply to a history of bodies; it belongs more specifically to a history of relations between political power and bodies. The coercion of bodies, their control, their subjectivation, the way in which that power is exerted on them directly or indirectly, the way in which they are adapted, set in place, and used are at the root of the change we have examined. A *Physics* of power would need to be written, showing that physics was modified relative to its earlier forms, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, at the time of the development of state structures.

A new *optics*, first of all: an organ of generalized and constant oversight; everything must be observed, seen, transmitted: organization of a police force; instituting a system of records...establishment of a *panopticism*.

A new *mechanics*: isolation and regrouping of individuals, localization of bodies; optimal utilization of forces; monitoring and improvement of the output;...the putting into place of a whole *discipline* of life, time, and energies.

A new *physiology*: definition of standards, exclusion and rejection of everything that does not meet them, mechanism of their reestablishment through corrective interventions that are ambiguously therapeutic and punitive.

I would like to go through this quote in some detail and discuss each point that Foucault makes in its turn, as I think that this quote, in a nutshell, outlines the thought process behind *Discipline and Punish*, how it is still deeply rooted in his previous work, and how it subsequently developed into his later thoughts on governmentality and beyond as well. Implicit in it of course is also, as always, the question of the subject.

1.3.1. A Physics of Power

Foucault says that at the root of the shift from the feudal system to the Enlightenment, and in the shift from corporal, sovereign systems of punishment to incarceration and more 'humane' methods of disciplinary punishment was the coercion and control of bodies, and the subjectification of the human

subject. The history of penalty as he sees it therefore is much more than just an analysis of the effects of the changes in penal methods. Rather, it is a microcosm which reflects the larger anthropological macrocosm of society. It reflects the history of relations between subjects and the systems of power, authority and government they find themselves in. It reflects the history of the constitution of the subject within a system of direct and indirect power relations.

The beginning of the nineteenth century marked, for Foucault, the beginning of a complex arrangement within which subjects, or bodies, are analysed, classified, placed, and ultimately how they adapt and change in accordance with being governed in such a way. In other words, when Foucault talks about writing a new physics of power, he wants to elucidate how the subject is constituted through its government, not only in the microcosmic sense, but also in terms of being a subject belonging to a country, a population, and a government. Thus this physics of power has two elements, namely power as exercised both directly and indirectly over the subject: in his home, his place of work and his interpersonal relationships, and also power as exercised over the subject insofar as he belongs to a society which is governed by a state. Here then is where the concept of governmentality, which Foucault expands on after *Discipline and Punish*, begins to enter the picture. This is a concept which I will discuss in much further detail in a subsequent chapter, but will describe here very briefly, since it is so closely related to the theme of this chapter - the constitution of the subject 'under' disciplinary power.

Let us suffice it to say that Foucault uses the concept of governmentality as a "guideline" for a "genealogy of the modern state". Tomas Lemke (2007, p.44) contends that there are two notable points that one has to keep in mind when considering Foucault's notion of governmentality. The first point is that governmentality represents Foucault's working hypothesis with regard to the reciprocal manner in which technologies of power, forms of knowledge and modes of intervention are manifested. In other words, power and its exercise becomes rationalised in government. It is also this manifestation of technologies of political power and forms of knowledge which is the critical link with the analysis of penal systems, and the Panopticon in particular, and is a thread which I have already identified as manifesting itself in Foucault's earlier discussions on discourse. Thus it is a natural progression in Foucault's quest to make sense of the constitution of the modern subject. We have seen that discourse forms the basis of knowledge, and that knowledge is very closely intertwined with power, but of course there can be no discussion of power without elucidating the most overt form of the exercise of power and its effects on knowledge and the constitution of the subject: through the state; through government and its institutions.

The second point that Lemke (2007, p.44) makes is that Foucault steers clear of giving us an analysis of the development and transformation of political-administrative structures in favour of a focus on the multiplicity of diverse relations between the institutionalisation of governmental technologies and historical forms of subjectivation. In other words, with governmentality, Foucault wants to demonstrate "how the modern state and the modern autonomous individual co-determine each other's emergence" (Lemke, 2007, p. 44). Thus, even in his discussion on government and political forms of power, the constitution of the subject (through discourse, knowledge, power both direct and indirect, and as we shall

see later, care of the self) remains the central question, the pivot around which Foucault's whole body of work centres.

1.3.2. A New Optics

Central to Foucault's analysis of the transformation of penalty as a history of the relations between political power and bodies, lies panopticism.

What transformed penalty at the turn of the century was the adjustment of the judicial system to a mechanism of oversight and control. It is their joint integration into a centralised state apparatus - but also the establishment and development of a whole series of...institutions - that serves the main apparatus as a point of support, as forward positions, or reduced forms. A general system of oversight and confinement penetrates all layers of society, taking forms that go from the great prisons built on the panopticon model to the charitable societies, and that find their points of application not only among the delinquents, but among abandoned children, orphans, apprentices, high school students, workers, and so on... the nineteenth century founded the age of panopticism (Foucault, 1994, pg.32).

The Panopticon was Jeremy Bentham's architectural solution to some of the issues facing eighteenth-century prisons. Bentham's design was a circular building, segmented into individual cells for inmates, all of which face a central control tower. In the control tower would be a prison guard who could not be seen by the inmates because of the way in which the building is lit. The building was therefore specifically designed for constant surveillance at all times and the idea was that the inmates, because they couldn't know whether they're being watched or not, would regulate their own behaviour, as opposed to having to be coerced into submission. This would make them docile by their own self-regulation, thereby exerting a more subtle and strategic power over them than the previous strategy used in society at large, and in penal systems in particular, of top-down sovereign power exercised through brute physical force or coercion.

The Panopticon however, was never intended to be a purely penal structure. Bentham conceived of its application in a variety of roles -in schools, asylums, hospitals and factories for example, to ensure that pupils, madmen and workers all toe the line. The Panopticon garnered quite a bit of disapproval and controversy at the time though, and much to Bentham's disappointment the British Parliament of the time rejected his ideas, and they never fully came to fruition. Thus the original Panopticon itself was never actually built, and basically any interest in Bentham's Panopticon died at that point.¹² That is until 1975, when Foucault resurrected it in *Discipline and Punish* (King, 2001 p. 42) because it "represented a key spatial figure in the modern project and also a key *dispositif* in the creation of modern subjectivity. Panopticism, the social trajectory represented by the figure of the Panopticon, the drive to self-

¹² That's not to say that some prisons, and indeed other institutions, were not modelled on the basic tenets of the Panopticon, or didn't have any shared characteristics with it.

monitoring through the belief that one is under constant scrutiny, thus becomes both a driving force and a key symbol of the modernist project” (Wood, 2003, pg. 235).

The architecture of the Panopticon is a deliberate one whereby inmates are purposely segregated from one another and placed under constant surveillance. Foucault (D&P, pg. 200) describes it in the following way:

Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication. The arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, imposes on him an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is a guarantee of order. If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot...[or] bad reciprocal influences; if they are patients there is no danger of contagion; if they are madmen there is no risk of their committing violence upon one another; if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying...no chatter, no waste of time; if they are workers there are no disorders, no theft...none of those distractions that slow down the rate of work, make it less perfect, or cause accidents. Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that ensures the automatic functioning of power.

As already mentioned in the above, this manner of surveillance has a number of consequences. First, the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if in practice it is discontinuous. In other words, by virtue of its design, an inmate will not know whether they are watched or not, and therefore the effect of the surveillance, of control, is permanently in place, whether there is a watcher in place or not. This also means that the architecture itself becomes the method by which power is exercised over an inmate, regardless of the person who put it in place, or of who the guard or watcher is. In this way, the inmates become “caught up in a power situation of which they themselves are the bearers” (D&P, pg. 201). Power within such an architecture of surveillance then takes on two characteristics, namely that it is both visible and unverifiable. It is a visible display of power in that the inmate can always see and be aware of the point from which the surveillance originates (in the case of the Panopticon, the central guard tower), and it is unverifiable, in that the inmate must never know whether he is being watched or not, but he must nevertheless believe that he may be watched at any given time. The Panopticon therefore functions on what Foucault (D&P, pg. 202) refers to as the dissociation of the see/being seen dyad. Inmates are always seen but without ever seeing, and whoever is in the guard tower sees everything without ever being seen, which in turn has the very important effect of automatising and disindividualising power. The kind of power exerted through the mechanism of the Panopticon has as its principle a certain spatial distribution of bodies, lights, surfaces and gazes, and it doesn't really matter who is at the helm operating the machine, for the effects of the power are homogenous, and the subjection of the watched is rooted in a fictitious relation. The sovereign power of the past is therefore exactly that, a thing of the past - sovereign power exercised directly on the body is no longer of any use (D&P, pg. 202). “He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays

both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection” (D&P, pg. 202-203).

In other words, surveillance creates a web of power relations which is exercised from the top down, but also from the bottom up and laterally between subjects, it is a power which is anonymous and subtle, and it is an apparatus “that produces ‘power’ and distributes individuals in [a] permanent and continuous field” (D&P, pg. 177) where they can self-regulate. Surveillance can therefore be seen as an element of the ‘physics of power’ described above, and has a definitive hold on the body which is obtained through the use of ‘optics’ as well as ‘mechanics’. Optics refers to the play of light and dark, the seen and the unseen, the observer and the observed. Mechanics refers to the play of architectural lines, spaces, demarcations, beams and so forth. And between the two, not one shred of physical violence is needed for coercion. The body itself is not marked in any corporal kind of way (D&P, pg. 177).

The subjection of the body is a very central idea in *Discipline and Punish*, and is also pivotal in the understanding of the constitution of the Foucauldian subject. The Panopticon represents the architecture by which the bodies of inmates are segregated and subjected to processes of classification and examination. The prison timetable which Foucault juxtaposes against the lynching of Damiens is a precise illustration of this process of subjection in that the bodies of the prisoners are manipulated by means of a strict routine, a schedule which they adhere to at all times. It creates discipline, and not only is discipline imposed as well as self-imposed, but it is ubiquitous. Disciplined subjects are both the objects of power as well as the instruments through which that power is wielded.

Foucault (D&P, pg. 170) says that

[d]iscipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. It is not a triumphant power, which because of its own excess can pride itself on its omnipotence; it is a modest, suspicious power, which functions as a calculated, but permanent economy... The success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and their combination in a procedure that is very specific to it, the examination.

These ‘instruments of disciplinary power’ therefore constitute this type of power as a distinct part of the Foucaultian apparatus - as a mechanism which coerces, and indeed shapes, subjects through three axes: surveillance, or what Foucault refers to as optics or hierarchical observation; through classification and mechanics, or rather the arrangement of bodies; and through physiology, which entails normalization, the creation of standards against which to judge subjects, and the objectification of the subject through examination.

1.3.3. A New Mechanics

The mechanics that Foucault refers to relates specifically to the subjection of the body. Oksala (2005, pg. 98) says that this is a very central concept for Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, where he

analyzes the ways disciplinary technologies subject prisoners by manipulating and materially inscribing their bodies. Their bodies are separated from others in practices of classification and examination, but also concretely and spatially. They are manipulated through exercise regimes, diet, and strict time schedules. These processes of subjection are essentially objectifying; through processes of classification and examination the individual is given a social and personal identity: he/she is objectivized as mad, criminal or sick, for example.

What constitutes the mechanics of disciplinary power is this process of classification, whereby the individual is objectivised as mad/sane, sick/healthy and so on. One of the techniques of disciplinary power then entails something which goes beyond power as repression. Rather, we are dealing with “five distinct operations” which have as their effect what Foucault refers to as “normalisation” (D&P, pg. 182-183). The five operations he refers to comprise the following: individual actions are related to a whole field of actions, and this then forms the field of comparison, “a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed” (D&P, pg. 182). Individuals are also differentiated from one another but against a yardstick which indicates a minimal threshold or an optimum to be strived for. A value is attributed, in a hierarchized and quantitative manner, to the abilities and nature of individuals, and through doing so the “constraint of a conformity” which must be attained is introduced. And lastly, there is a limit which is demarcated, and which “will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the normal” (D&P, pg. 183). These five operations that constitute normalisation can therefore be summarised by function as comparison, differentiation, hierarchisation, homogenisation, and exclusion. Foucault (D&P, pg. 184) says that:

Like surveillance and with it, normalisation becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age... In a sense, the power of normalisation imposes homogeneity; but it individualises by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another. It is easy to understand how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences.

Here Foucault transports us back directly to his argument in *The Order of Things*, where he says that the subject was created in the modern age because he became an object of scientific discourse. Foucault argued in *The Order of Things*, that the way in which we use language to express and consolidate our knowledge underwent a profound change from the nineteenth century onwards. In a much quoted passage from the preface of this work, Foucault says that with this epistemic shift from the classical age to the modern age,

language loses its privileged position and becomes, in its turn, a historical form coherent with the density of its own past. But as things become increasingly reflexive, seeking the principle of their intelligibility only in their own development, and abandoning the space of representation, man enters in his turn, and for the first time, the field of Western knowledge. Strangely enough, man - the study of whom is supposed by the naive to be the oldest investigation since Socrates - is probably no more than a kind of rift in the order of things, or, in any case, a configuration whose outlines are determined by the new position he has so recently taken up in the field of knowledge... it is comforting, however, and a source of profound relief to think that man is only a recent invention, a figure not even two centuries old, a new wrinkle in our knowledge, and that he will disappear again as soon as that knowledge has discovered a new form (OT, pg. xxiii).

In other words, at the time that power shifted in form from the sovereign kind to the disciplinary kind, as illustrated in the analysis of the transformation of penal practices, we also began to classify man, to analyse him, to make him an active part of our field of knowledge by comparing him, and creating behavioural and scientific standards for him from which deviation would result in a certain classification as being 'other' than the norm. This process of classification, of the normalisation of the subject therefore not only had a discursive basis, but was also embedded in non-discursive, disciplinary practices. Thus, when Foucault took on the idea of normalisation in *Discipline and Punish*, it was an extension of a question he was already dealing with in *The Order of Things* (pg. xxiii), namely "on what conditions was Classical thought able to reflect relations of similarity or equivalence between things, relations that would provide a foundation and a justification for their words, their classifications, their systems of exchange? What historical *a priori* provided the starting-point from which it was possible to define the great checkerboard of distinct identities established against the confused, undefined, faceless, and, as it were, indifferent background of differences?"

In a previous section, I argued that Foucault's work should be read as an integrated whole, a nexus of ideas that all fuse around the nuclear question of the constitution of the subject. I also argued that archaeology, with discourse as its focus, should be seen as one axis of investigation that feeds into this central core of the question of the constitution of the subject, and that genealogy, with power as its focus, represents a different axis. This idea of the mechanics of disciplinary power then, of the classification, the physical ordering of subjects and also the ordering of subjects through disciplinary power, represents a part of the genealogical axis, but is rooted within the same question as the archeological one Foucault posed in the quote from *The Order of Things* above.

On what conditions were we able to differentiate subjects, categorise them, class them as normal/deviant, mad/sane, the same/other? This idea of the 'same' and 'other' which is not only evident in the discursive practices outlined in archaeology, but also in genealogy insofar as bodies become subjected through a mechanics of classification, separation and so forth, is an important constituent in the subjectification of the individual. Moreover, this idea also underlies how we define the norms and standards we apply in our classifications, and how we exclude and reject everything that doesn't meet these normative standards.

In essence, Foucault is asking which discursive and non-discursive events created the historical *a priori*

from which it is possible for subjects to have a certain identity. This then is what I read Foucault's central philosophical question to be: What are the conditions of possibility under which the subject is constituted? In this, Foucault reveals his own historicity, and where his particular project has its roots.

1.3.4. A New Physiology

When Foucault refers to a new physiology which may be identified in the analysis of the transformation of penal methods as an illustration of how bodies come to be subjected under disciplinary power, he is referring to the “definition of standards, [the] exclusion and rejection of everything that does not meet them, [and the] mechanism of their reestablishment through corrective interventions that are ambiguously therapeutic and punitive” (Foucault, 1994, pg.35). And the overarching mechanism within which all of these factors culminate, is the examination. Foucault says that the examination combines the techniques of optics - surveillance or an observing hierarchy - with the new mechanics - the normalisation of judgement. He calls this “a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them...In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth” (D&P, pg. 184).

In other words, in the examination we find overt discursive events which are responsible for the subjection of individuals by means of the establishment of a knowledge base pertaining to subjects, in combination with the non-discursive, subtle and pervasive mechanism of disciplinary power, also designed to control and subject. This is possible because the examination perceives subjects as objects for scientific assessment, whilst also objectifying those who are subjected. In other words, it became possible for man to become the object of scientific discourse through the examination, which has the function of superimposing power relations on top of knowledge relations. The examination's system of classifying, grading and labelling the human subject not only highlights a whole domain of knowledge, but carries within it the power of subjection. Moreover, the examination is a very widespread phenomenon, infused into a myriad of everyday practices “from psychiatry to pedagogy, from the diagnosis of diseases to the hiring of labour” (D&P, pg. 185).

In the examination then, knowledge and power are intimately intertwined with one another. Foucault (D&P, pg. 186-187) gives the example of the school: “The examination enabled the teacher, while transmitting his knowledge, to transform his pupils into a whole field of knowledge...- the examination in the school was a constant exchanger of knowledge; it guaranteed the movement of knowledge from the teacher to the pupil, but it extracted from the pupil a knowledge destined and reserved for the teacher.”

Foucault then goes on to explain that the examination has three major characteristics which constitute it

as a mechanism which is illustrative of the formation of both knowledge and disciplinary power.

First of all, the examination is a kind of an extension of panopticism in that it “transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power” (D&P, pg. 187). As we saw in the prior discussion related to what Foucault terms “optics”, disciplinary power is exercised through its ubiquitousness and through its invisibility whilst subjecting individuals by making them always visible. Under surveillance, the power is unseen and pervasive, but it exists because the subject is always within its gaze. It is this constant visibility which assures that disciplinary power retains its hold over individuals, and if you take the visibility away, or the subject’s awareness of the surveillance, then the power is rendered useless. Now just as surveillance holds subjects in place for fear of being seen, the examination holds the subject in place by ensuring that he is objectified. What this means essentially, is that the examination is the mechanism by which the subject is objectified - classed, categorised, and as a result surveilled, and since he is subjected to the examination, and expects it, he is disciplined.

The second characteristic of the examination is that it “introduces individuality into the field of documentation” (D&P, pg.189). Here once again we see Foucault relating back to his previous work on discourse, and fusing it with disciplinary power in an attempt to describe the constitution of the subject. He argues that “the examination...places individuals in a field of surveillance [and] also situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them” (D&P, pg. 189). In other words, the examination is what makes the objectification of the subject possible in the first place, and because this creates discourses which manifest themselves as universal truths, as common knowledge, it becomes possible for the subject to be brought into existence and to be identified or classed as mad/sane, unintelligent/intelligent, delinquent/non-delinquent, sick/healthy and so on. These documents which capture and fix individuals then ensure that subjects are constructed, classified, and subsequently disciplined.

Take the education system as an example. In some countries a common practice exists whereby pupils are placed in ‘streams’ by virtue of their examination results in especially mathematics and languages. Thus students who obtain the highest grades in these subjects are all put in a class together, and are given certain privileges (the ability to participate in regional, national or international conventions and olympiads, they receive better tuition from better qualified teachers etc.). The students who obtain the lowest grades are also lumped together, and are given ‘remedial’ tuition. One of the major criticisms that this kind of streaming has been under fire for in educational systems across the globe, is that once a child has been placed in a lower stream, it becomes almost impossible for them to move up to a higher stream because they are judged to be ‘slow’ and are taught at a slower pace, thereby broadening the gap between the ‘slow’ and the ‘bright’. A child’s identity also becomes bound up with the common acceptance, the ‘knowledge’ gained from the examination, that he is of a lower caliber than the rest. Such a pupil therefore remains constrained by the classification imposed on him through the examination, and this classification is one that will follow him in the form of his academic records even if he moves from one school or district to another. A more worrying concern is also that such a pupil will, by virtue of this classification, by and large see himself as being ‘slow’ and will not recognise any latent potential at excellence he may have

within himself. He therefore bases his own self-identity, his own subjectivity, on the categorisation and classification thrust upon him through the examination process because he believes it to be true; he believes it to be true because this 'truth' is bound up in a corpus of knowledge, of universal truth perpetuated by teachers, school administrators and other 'experts', and even parents.

What makes this kind of streaming in schools possible is the examination, which has the function of homogenising individuals.

Foucault (D&P, pg. 190) articulates the sentiment I tried to capture through the example above as follows:

Thanks to the whole apparatus of writing that accompanied it, the examination opened up two correlative possibilities: firstly, the constitution of the individual as a describable, analysable object... in order to maintain him in his individual features, in his particular evolution, in his own aptitudes or abilities, under the gaze of a permanent corpus of knowledge; and, secondly, the constitution of a comparative system that made possible the measurement of overall phenomena, the description of groups, the characterisation of collective facts, the calculation of the gaps between individuals, their distribution in a given 'population'.

The third characteristic of the examination as outlined by Foucault is a kind of extension of the second, in that the "examination, surrounded by all its documentary techniques, makes each individual a 'case': a case which at one and the same time constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power" (D&P, pg. 191). Individuals have become objects of study, objects which may be described, judged, measured, compared with other individuals, and also trained, normalised, excluded from a group, classified and so forth. Foucault says that under sovereign power, which preceded the advent of disciplinary power and with the historical shift to the Enlightenment and modernism, individuals, insofar as there were written records of them, were in a position of sovereignty, and any written records of them had the express purpose of memorialising them. Ordinary individuals escaped recording. The examination, and with it the age of disciplinary power, changed all that. Each individual now attained his own status, his own individuality, and he was linked to his individuality by those characteristics which made him a 'case'. In other words, the examination is "at the centre of the procedures that constitute the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge" (D&P, pg. 192), since it creates the individual as a case, in his individuality, and makes a subject who he is by virtue of how well he fits a certain description of the norm, how he can be classed, distinguished from others etc.

Foucault says that in a disciplinary society, such as was created during the historical shift that took place circa the nineteenth century, subjects become more strongly individualised, and power was exercised over individualised subjects by means of surveillance rather than through overt or ceremonious displays of strength, through observation as opposed to heroic story-telling or commemorative accounts, and through comparative methods of measurement and adjudication which refer to a standard of what is considered 'normal'. The direct result of this was the implementation of a "new technology of power and a new

political anatomy of the body” (D&P, pg. 193). This new technology of power, the new political anatomy of the body then, is what is in essence disciplinary power. And disciplinary power, Foucault says, is what produces the modern subject:

The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an ‘ideological’ representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called ‘discipline’. We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (D&P, pg.194).

1.4. Conclusion: Unveiling the Subject

In this chapter I have argued that Foucault’s project is not an analysis of discourse or power per se, and neither does he seek to dispense entirely with the idea of autonomous subjectivity. Rather, Foucault’s is a search for an alternative view of modern subjectivity than those offered to us by phenomenology, Marxism, the Hegelians, the positivists, and so forth. Foucault’s works should be read as a direct critique of the modern construction of a subject which is ahistorical and autonomous, which is the originator of meaning and knowledge. Foucault’s intention I think was never to invalidate subjectivity as such, but rather to oppose a particular modern construction of subjectivity so as to pave the way for the construction of new subjectivities. This is a point, I believe, that many of his critics have missed.

I tend to agree with Beatrice Han (2009, pg. 2-3) when she says that Foucault’s critics for the most part made a fundamental error in that they approached his work from the perspective of their own preconceptions of what is meant by ‘man’¹³. She argues that Foucault’s conception of ‘man’ is a complex one in that he’s not referring to “the ‘human person’, nor to any ‘substantial I’, nor to free consciousness.”

Oksala (2005, pg. 103) makes a similar point. She says that Foucault never denies that there are actual subjects influencing their environments or historical events for that matter, but what he is in fact rejecting is the view that the subject has a “foundational status”. She then goes on to argue that Foucault launches his critique of modern subjectivity on a number of different levels. On the ontological level, he wants to do

¹³ She uses the criticisms of Garaudy (a Marxist) and Sartre as examples. “They each have something quite different in mind when they speak of ‘man’: Garaudy is referring to the religious notion of the human person as a bearer of rights endowed with a special status (a conception further developed by Kant’s focus on the capacity of rational beings for self-government and the moral worth that derives from it, by opposition to ‘mere things’ which have a price but no intrinsic value). By contrast, Sartre rejects such moral abstractions and sees man in a secular way, as ‘surging from negation’. This ‘surge’ alludes to *Being and Nothingness*’ definition of consciousness as a nihilating power which separates itself from the world through the very movement by which it projects itself into it. As pure negation, consciousness cannot be identified with any of the contents that are given to it (it has no essence); nor can it be determined by them. Thus at an historical level, agents may be dependent on their socio-economical insertion (their ‘situation’) but the latter can be ‘overcome’ through practical engagement” (Han, 2009, pg. 3).

away with any metaphysical claims that put forward a subject which is a static substance or has a certain enduring “essence”.

Foucault also isn't happy with the phenomenological interpretation of the subject and wants to historicize the subject even more than the phenomenologists do. She explains this as follows:

He does not only historically situate pre-existing subjects, but also puts forward a stronger version of historical constitution. Historically variable practices not only condition what is possible to know about a subject, but they also engender its experiences. Human sciences and the disciplinary practices tied to them constitute not only conceptual objects or identities, but also the subjects who materialize them (Oksala, 2005, pg. 103).

She then goes on to say that Foucault's critique also extends to the epistemological and ethical/political levels. Foucault's criticism of phenomenology, which he puts forward in *The Order of Things*, was intended to highlight the fact that attempting to ground knowledge in subjectivity puts us on very shaky ground. Foucault wants to show that there is a logical inconsistency in such a point of view, since the subject itself is dependent on discursive structures which he shows change with historical or epistemic shifts. It is therefore impossible for the subject to have a foundational role in the constitution of meaning (Oksala, 2005, pg. 104). In terms of the political/ethical level, Foucault's critique arises from the idea that the subject which arises circa 1900 is always entangled with modern forms of subjection, an idea which will be discussed in far greater detail in the upcoming chapters.

So what then are we talking about when we refer to a “Foucauldian subject”?

In this chapter I attempted to start to outline both Foucault's critique of the modern subject, and how this critique starts to form the basis for a new philosophical understanding of subjectivity, and I think the following important points emerged from the preceding discussion:

The first is that Foucault historicises the subject, and he does so by looking at how human analysis and perception of the subject changed through history. He argues that when we closely scrutinise the cultures of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there is an overall preoccupation with God, the world, and the resemblance between things. In those eras human beings were given a privileged position in the world, but it was not until after that, when man became an object for scientific study and discourse, that subjectivity really became a pressing question. Man's mode of being as constituted in modern thought enabled him to play two roles, namely as both product and source of knowledge.

The second point is that Foucault argues that with this shift, knowledge becomes what Oksala refers to as a transcendental condition for the constitution of the human subject - and Foucault's analysis of the effects of the examination in *Discipline and Punish* supports this. Oksala (2005, pg.102-103) uses an example from Beatrice Han's discussion of a course taught by Foucault in 1974, in which he analysed the effects of truths specific to medical discourses related to hysteria.

Medical discourse elaborated a theoretical object, following a process made possible by the hospital structure and therefore by the techniques of subjection practiced on the patient. But by the same token, this discourse generated a real object corresponding to its knowledge. The conceptual objectification of the illness hysteria was therefore doubled by a second material form of objectification, in which the hysterical woman reproduced in her very person the phenomena.

In other words, the very construction of a theory on hysteria, coupled with techniques of classification and examination, is what made it possible for medical professionals to paste a label of 'hysterical' on a patient in the first place, but the interesting thing is that the patient herself then takes on this label, and by extension becomes truly hysterical. Thus knowledge, coupled with the forms of subjection that come with placing the body of the subject in an institutionalised and disciplined environment, creates the subject.

Which brings me to the last important point: discourse and power make subjects, and this was not possible before subjects became the objects of scientific discourse, examination, surveillance, normalisation and control. Or put differently, power and knowledge are the conditions of possibility for the constitution of the subject, inasmuch as the subject is also a source of power and the originator of knowledge.

In this chapter I also argued that there are three analytical axes that feed into the central question of the constitution of the subject in Foucault's work. So far, I've outlined the two axes which are commonly thought to lead to a Foucauldian obliteration of the subject.

I have however just touched the tip of the iceberg, and I plan to pursue this line of questioning even further by looking at what Oksala refers to as the political/ethical level of his criticism. In chapter 3 I will delve into the concept of 'governmentality' and how that fits into the Foucauldian excavation and elucidation of subjectivity, and after that I will look at Foucault's ethics, which represents the third analytical axis, which is the one which I believe is the most important, since this is the one through which Foucault attempts to construct an alternative subjectivity to the ones presented to us by other philosophical models. I will of course always ground my discussion of each analytical axis in an analysis of the current historical and epistemic paradigm shift we find ourselves in.

I will therefore kick this analysis off by exploring the relevance of Foucault's findings in *Discipline and Punish* to the contemporary, twenty-first century subject. I will consider the implications of a Foucauldian analysis of relations of power and discipline in the current historical context, and for the contemporary subject, particularly in the workplace, since this will tie into the later question of how viewing subjectivity from a Foucauldian perspective can provide us with an alternative approach to business ethics.

Chapter 2: Bodies at Work in the Web

2.1. Introduction

As I noted in the introduction to these writings, I believe that we are on the cusp, once again, of a major cultural, economic and social shift, another rupture in our history, to use a Foucauldian turn of phrase. This is a profound paradigm shift in humanity, brought about by lightning speed developments in personal computing and the proliferation of the Internet, social networking, mobile technologies and artificial intelligence.¹⁴ I would like to refer to this rupture, this paradigm shift, as *the cybershift*.

This cybershift has made it possible for millions of people to actively participate in global cultural, economic, educational, and discursive exchanges in real time, all the time, through cyberspace. Knowledge is now no longer confined to regions, cultures or the walls of brick and mortar libraries or institutions. A vast body of knowledge is always at our fingertips, just waiting to be tapped by anyone with a browser, on any number of different computing devices. We have direct access to experts on almost every subject at any time from any location, and there is increasing access to live feeds, videos, lectures, blogs, podcasts, webinars, and so on. The exclusivity of knowledge and education is fast becoming a thing of the Industrial Era past. Want to take an Ivy League course in computing? MIT currently offers some of the exact same courses online as they do for offline students, for anyone to access from anywhere in the world, free of charge. Small business and entrepreneurial opportunities are not confined to local neighbourhoods, cities or countries anymore either. Individuals and small companies can now develop niche markets and create sustainable income by marketing worldwide. Companies can compete globally online. For many entrepreneurs there is no longer a need to invest heavily into a physical location in order to start up and run a successful company. Anyone with an internet connection, not just those with capital, wealth or power, has access to creating businesses in any location. Moreover, the physical borders that hampered inter-cultural communication have dropped away, and in current times global cultural exchanges are the norm. All of these factors are contributing to the shaping of contemporary culture and by extension, the twenty-first century subject. In the words of Cowen (2009, pg.9) “There is quite literally a new plane for organizing human thoughts and feelings and we are jumping on these opportunities at an unprecedented pace. If we look at how culture is supplied, distributed and enjoyed, the last...years have brought more change than any comparable period in human history.”

Thus the cybershift, which is characterised by the growth of vast computer networks, has rapidly reshaped the material basis of contemporary society. Economies have become globally interdependent to a much larger extent than ever before, and new forms and channels of communication have sprung up which

¹⁴ The widespread adoption of many of these also gained immense traction as we entered 2020 and have had to change how we work, socialise and receive our education through the Covid-19 pandemic.

enable knowledge creation and sharing between individuals. All of this has fundamentally changed the relationship between economy, state and society. These changes shape life, while being simultaneously shaped by life (Castells, 2010, pg. 1-2). The cybershift therefore brings with it some fundamental implications for discourses, relations of power across societies, and ultimately subjectification and the constitution of the contemporary subject.

The aim of this chapter then, is to further explore Foucault's notion of power and subjectification as laid out around the time that *Discipline and Punish* was published, and to investigate if and how this is relevant to or impacts the twenty-first century networked subject, the subject which is caught up in this latest and arguably most ground-shaking historical rupture yet, the cybershift. Like Foucault, I would like to ground this analysis in an analysis of an institutionalised societal construct: the contemporary workplace. Before I commence with such an analysis however, I would like to note that Foucault wanted us to see that the institutions, cultures, and ultimately the subject that result from a particular shift in history, must be analysed by closely examining both the discourses and the power relations that emerge from such an historical shift. In other words, we need to look closely at what Foucault (1984, pg.44) referred to as the "axis of knowledge" and the "axis of power".

We know that knowledge is the concept that interlinks discourse and power to a great degree for Foucault. In fact, it would probably be safe to argue that the cybershift represents a new epistemic shift which does not underscore the scientific discourses of the modern *épistémè* that Foucault studied, but rather the scientific-technological discourses that mark the *épistémè* of the twenty-first century. Reaching back to the introduction to the first chapter, it was noted that by *épistémè* Foucault meant the existing field of different forms of knowledge within a certain period of time, the different configurations of the knowledge of different periods, as well as their historical conditions of possibility (Oksala, 2005, pg. 21-22). In this chapter, and also in the subsequent chapters, I will explore this idea of a new epistemic shift a bit further, since I believe that the field of the different forms of knowledge has undergone a radical transformation in the last decade and a half or so, with some very important consequences for the constitution of the twenty-first century subject.

I also noted in the preceding chapter that the *épistémè* underlies discourse, and that Foucault saw discourse as being *productive*. Discourse is what produces knowledge, since it is what constructs the topic and defines and produces the objects of our knowledge (including the subject as an object to be known). Discourses shape popular consciousness and consensus at a particular time and within a particular culture, thereby producing the knowledge that emerges from that particular epoch. They also underlie all the predominant norms and practices of that epoch, including those that give rise to relations of power. Foucault (in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986, pg. 222-223) articulates this idea as follows: "(P)ower relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted 'above' society as a supplementary structure whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of ... A society without power relations can only be an abstraction."

Power for Foucault, as he conceived of it around the time he wrote *Discipline and Punish*, has two senses:

political relations of domination and submission, whereby productive and subjected bodies are produced; as well as something intrinsic to the act of interpretation, whereby for instance the knowing subject, the objects to be known, the modalities of knowledge, and the perception of subjects as objects of knowledge to themselves become apparent (Bannet,1989).¹⁵

In terms of the first sense, there are some who argue that with the cybershift we are experiencing right now, power is in effect diffusing, since the information revolution is having the effect of flattening bureaucratic hierarchies and replacing them with vast global, networked societies, cultures and subcultures. There are even some who argue that governments in themselves are becoming less central to people's lives because people are now able to cut across territorial jurisdictions (Nye, 2010). I will at a later stage come back to these types of assertions and show how they are refuted, but suffice it to say for now that we can observe, at the very least, that the perceived egalitarian communities of people who come together in cyberspace in reality still organise themselves into hierarchies. These communities often rely on meritocratic principles of organisation, and in accordance with this the most skilled and experienced members of the group provide leadership, and help to integrate contributions from other members (Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Moreover, if people became objects of scientific knowledge to be analysed, judged, classified and subsequently disciplined in the nineteenth century, we now have vast databases with all sorts of bits and bytes of information on just about every individual on the planet readily available for analysis and classification. In the twenty-first century we not only produce reams and reams of data, but we have become the data. Which brings us to the second sense: never before have we had such a rich tapestry of relationships to interpret before, or so many windows into the workings of this tapestry of relations. People are now more networked and connected with one another than ever before, through mobile phones, webcams, intranets, social networking sites, and many more, making the interpretation of relations of power easier and more complex at the same time, and power relations within themselves simultaneously more empowering and disempowering, more disciplined and freer. It is perhaps easier to trace relations of power in a space that has no physical boundaries shielding the subjects to be known, and where so much of people's private lives are (most often voluntarily) exposed for analysis, but the sheer amount of data that has to be ordered in the process is extremely difficult. It is also empowering, since this knowledge or window into other individuals, groups and even governments transforms the subject into a knowing subject as never before, but at the same time, by virtue of the fact that the knowing subject is himself connected and leaving an electronic trail in his wake, he is also an object to be known –often more intimately than one would like to admit- to a greater extent than ever before. To draw a comparison with Foucault's earlier work: the psychiatrist of the nineteenth century examined a subject closely and based on that examination diagnosed and classified the subject, categorising him as, for example mad/ sane. This of course still happens in modern psychiatry, but one marked difference lies in the exposure of the psychiatrist himself. The nineteenth or twentieth century psychiatrist was the examiner, not the

¹⁵ Foucault was influenced to some extent by Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's 'will to power'. Bannet (1989, pg.131) in fact argues that Deleuze made it possible for Foucault to "see the will to power as inherent in systems of interpretation and to distinguish it from systematicity". He thus made it possible to look at power not only in terms of hierarchical relations of domination and submission, but also in terms of being inherent to society as a whole, in the competing and coexisting forces of interpretation, knowledge and truth.

examined, in that within his relationship with the patient he remained largely unknown to the patient on any level other than being the one conducting the examination and issuing the diagnosis. The twenty-first century psychiatrist is in a completely different position. He is a networked subject who probably has social media accounts (like Facebook or LinkedIn), has most likely made online purchases, registered for memberships on websites, and he possibly has an online CV or a website advertising his work and his practice. He is, in other words, much more exposed than his predecessors. He is in fact an object of knowledge to be known and classified himself, and as such any patient can google him, find out where he qualified, what articles he has written, what his professional interests are, who he has professional relationships with, and possibly even where he lives, who he is married to and what his phone number is. And so the examiner becomes the examined with just a few clicks of a mouse, and the dynamic of the patient-doctor relationship changes completely.

Power can also only be exercised over individuals who are free.¹⁶ The issue of freedom and the extent to which individuals are free, if indeed we can say that anyone is free at all, is a widely debated issue, and a whole discussion on its own, but let us suffice it to say that from Foucault's point of view, it is when individual subjects are faced with a field of possibilities, a number of choices, and a range of behavioural prospects, that they have what we may term freedom. In the twenty-first century, we have more freedom than ever before if freedom is to be defined in this way.¹⁷ In the words of Greenfield (2008, p.6), "now the mobility of the cellphone, the iPod and the laptop have empowered us further, this time in relation to freedom over our *space*. The portable screen has put us continuously in touch with one another, interacting and controlling."

So the following questions arise: how are subjects interacting with one another in this networked, webbed society we find ourselves in, and how can we reinterpret Foucault in order to get a better idea of the relations of power at play within this new globalised, networked high-tech culture? Are we indeed freer than in any other preceding epoch, as some authors have been wont to argue? This chapter will investigate these questions, and will attempt an analysis (à la Foucault) of current relations of power and domination, and the subjects constituted in the cultures and societies that are springing forth from the current (epistemic) cybershift. These questions will form the basis of my investigation into the constitution of the networked, twenty-first century subject in this chapter. I will therefore pick up some of these questions, in addition to the question of what the conditions of possibility are under which the twenty-first century subject is able to make its appearance, in the subsequent chapters as well.

Foucault analysed the asylum and the prison. I want to excavate the most prolific institution of our

¹⁶ Foucault does not see slavery for instance as a form of power being exerted. Foucault distinguishes sharply between relations of power, and the utilisation of violence or force for coercion.

¹⁷ I will address the problem of freedom in the twenty-first century environment in far greater detail in a subsequent chapter, since it is far from this simple.

century: the corporation.

The modern corporation, like the prison, is an anthropological constant, a microcosm reflecting the trends and characteristics of the wider societal macrocosm, and looking at the changes occurring in corporations and corporate practices since the turn of the twentieth century can give us great insight into the paradigmatic shifts that have occurred on the macrocosmic level over the last century and into this one. As with the prison, the modern corporation, through an analysis of the discourses and relations of power at play within it, can give us some insight into the constitution of the subject of our epoch.

To this end, I want to start off by noting that the mammoth company or corporation that we are so familiar with today first came into being with the advent of the Industrial era in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and continued to proliferate well into the latter part of the twentieth century. Many of these companies became machine-like industrial giants, employing vast work forces which were organised into strict hierarchies and job functions in order to operate with the same kind of efficiency that was seen to be characteristic of the machines created by many of these companies. This era was dominated to a great extent by characters like John P. Morgan, a very influential leader at the turn of the twentieth century, who was involved with some of the American giants: AT&T, General Electric, and United States Steel (which became the first billion-dollar corporation in the United States). The tenet of the time was to consolidate small companies into large monopolies, to regard hierarchies as sacred, and to mass-produce goods at an ever increasing speed for a rapidly expanding consumer market. Investments were furthermore made in hard assets, such as raw materials, factories, equipment and the like. This era regarded the fast and furious accumulation of capital through mass production of prime importance, and the way in which to do this most efficiently, was to organise work forces into vast production lines. As for the hiring of such production line drones, the practices of the day were either draconian or Darwinian. In fact, there is an account of a factory owner in Philadelphia in the United States who reportedly had his foremen throw apples into a crowd of potential employees. The ones who were quick enough to catch an apple and strong enough to keep hold of it, were given jobs. As for the selection of executives, weak competitors to the behemoths like GM and US Steel were simply pushed out of the way, whilst the stronger competitors were bought up and their owners or founders given executive level positions in the resultant giant (Peck, 2013, p. 4).

All this changed somewhat after the Great Depression and World War 2 however, particularly in the United States. Companies lacked well-trained managers, since the war had diverted hiring by firms to conscription for the war effort. Enterprises therefore had to find employees who were able to ascend the corporate ladder quickly, and this meant that hiring practices had to change radically. Companies now found themselves devising formal hiring and management systems, which were based, in part, on studies of human behaviour, as well as on the techniques developed by the military during the war “when huge mobilisation efforts and mass casualties created the need to get the right people in the right roles as efficiently as possible” (Peck, 2013, pg.4-5). It was therefore around the 1950’s that IQ tests, math tests, vocabulary tests, Rorschach tests, and a string of aptitude and personality tests came to be widely used by

large corporations on a regular basis in an effort to find the right candidate for a job opening. Once a candidate had been employed this process of evaluation and examination did not end either. Various tests and evaluations were also used when the time came to promote workers into bigger roles (Peck, 2013, pg. 5). It was the era of “Taylorism”¹⁸ - an attempt to apply scientific methods to management practices.

The 1980’s and 1990’s however saw a major paradigm shift occurring in terms of our thinking about business. This shift was also made all the more clear, and indeed became popularised, by the advent of the so-called management gurus, like Peter Drucker, Alvin Toffler, Tom Peters, Bob Waterman, amongst many others. Through this paradigm shift, and the myriad of books written on the subject of corporate culture, management and leadership, the mechanistic, hierarchical organisation as described above came to be seen as dehumanising and devoid of the kinds of values that should ideally predominate in business. This paradigm shift gave rise to an immense amount of literature, a lot of which hit best-seller status, and almost all of which dealt with the notion that companies are essentially human institutions and as such have cultures of their own, as opposed to consisting of mere Taylorist production lines churning out goods for a greedy and ever-expanding consumer market. The driving force behind this paradigm shift was, to a great extent, the advent of technology (computers, satellites, mobile phones and so forth). A whole new realm of enterprise also arose, where the focus was not on manufacturing goods, but rather on developing knowledge-based products and services. The consequence of this was that people became valuable commodities, in the same way that the machinery and the production lines of the industrial era were valuable. People, human capital, became indispensable to companies by virtue of the fact that for a vast amount of job functions specialised knowledge and capabilities (brain work) was now a prerequisite, whereas in the manufacturing era unskilled or semi-skilled physical labour had been in greater demand.

All this resulted in the breaking down of not only the strict hierarchies within companies, but also in the dissolution of many of the huge manufacturing conglomerates and giants into smaller, more manageable firms. The rather mechanistic approach to business at the turn of the century therefore started to fall back somewhat in the 80’s and 90’s, and the old mindset of rigorously examining, classifying and managing every aspect of the employee’s work life started to give way to the vastly different point of view that employees should be given the space within which to take on more responsibility, to act and think for themselves (within limits), to be creative and innovative, to take responsibility for the work expected of them without adhering to such strict working hours and schedules, and most of all to share knowledge and to communicate and deliberate with one another on an ongoing basis. In other words, Taylorism gave way to “managerialism”.¹⁹

In terms of hiring practices, there were also some significant changes that occurred around this time. Companies by and large forewent all the batteries of tests that potential hires had had to undergo since

¹⁸ Taylorism is based on the work of Frederick Taylor, who published a book titled *Principles of Scientific Management* in 1911. He was famous for writing that “the best management is a true science, resting upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles.” (Kiechel, 2012, pg. 3-4)

¹⁹ There is a strong connection between managerialism and neoliberalism, which I will explore in detail in a subsequent chapter.

the 1950's. This practice was replaced by the ad hoc interview, often with managers asking off-the-cuff questions during these. Peck (2013, pg. 5-6) credits this change with a number of factors. First of all it became more commonplace for employees to switch jobs, which caused all that thorough testing to become a drain on the company's finances and human resources. Then there was the civil rights movement which started in the US in the 1960's, but which spilled over into other corners of the globe as well. This movement resulted in legislation in many countries which attempted to curb discriminatory hiring practices. This in turn made companies wary of tests that could later be shown to be biased in some way or another, and resulted in companies adopting less formal qualitative hiring procedures (Peck, 2013, pg.6) - procedures which are still largely in use today, but which are rapidly giving way to new hiring practices based on the new technologies we have at our disposal in the twenty-first century.²⁰ This extends not only to hiring practices, but also to management practices in general, and in human resources management in particular.

Imagine a top corporate executive...Instead of finding out what's going on in her company by asking her subordinates, she consults a digital dashboard that tells her everything from who is at their desk to how happy they are about it. Any measurement that falls outside historic norms or deviates from industry standards is flagged in red. Within minutes our manager knows what issues to focus on today...whether it's employee engagement or the size of her sales staff's social networks. This might sound far-fetched, but it isn't far removed from the services offered by a growing number of companies. What the services have in common is a willingness to use data to drive decision making in an area that has traditionally been an analytical backwater: human resources. The result is something academics have dubbed "people analytics," and it treats the humans in an organisation just like any other asset in the supply chain: as something that can be monitored, analysed and reconfigured (Mims, 2015, pg.1).

Whilst the quote above makes contemporary corporate environments seem positively Orwellian, it is in fact fast becoming a practiced reality. There are a number of companies that have sprung up in recent years which are in the business of developing exactly these kinds of hardware and software solutions. One such a solution is the sociometric badge. This is a badge which hangs around an employee's neck, and captures their formal and informal interactions with others, as well as their speech (tone of voice, speaking speed, etc.) and body movement. Each badge usually generates around 100 data points per minute. This data is then made available to the employer, who can use it to assess, for example, how well a team is functioning or where productivity can be improved. These badges are in use at a number of companies, such as the Bank of America (in one of the call centres).

The data provided by such badges is not limited to this either. Japanese firm Hitachi has recently unveiled a new sociometric badge which is aimed at measuring happiness. The badge utilises an algorithm based on your physical activity (how fast you walk, how often you nod in agreement etc), and then the data obtained is aggregated to provide an overall happiness score for the workplace. Individual data is not provided to the employer however, since there are obvious ethical issues with this (Peck, 2015, pg. 18;

²⁰ Lately there has been somewhat of a resurgence of this approach of extensive testing during the hiring process, as software has been developed to automate much of the testing process. This old practice is therefore being reimplemented in a new way, and this comes with a host of new problems, which will become clear further down the line when I discuss the world of work in the twenty-first century in more detail.

Dredge, 2015). Another application aimed at recording worker happiness is called Mappiness, which is being used as part of a research project at the London School of Economics. The iPhone app beeps you several times a day, and asks you how you are feeling, who you are with, where you are, and what you are doing. The data remains anonymous, and the purpose of the app is to ascertain how happiness is affected by the local environment. This app is reportedly being used in several white-collar companies and health settings in an attempt to boost efficiency (Rustin, 2015). Yet another such application is the HR software analytics tool developed by Volometrix. This software sifts through every email and every calendar item for every employee and then compiles that data in such a way that the program can see who is doing what, and with whom. The system can then send an automatic email to individuals in the company to encourage them to increase the size of their networks etc, just like a human manager might do with employees who are lagging. The data collected by the program supposedly remains anonymous to protect the privacy of employees. Companies using this software include Qualcomm Inc., Boeing Co., and Symantec Corp. (Mims, 2015, pg. 2).

These companies are not the only ones partaking in such practices either. In fact, torrents of data are routinely collected by companies. Data which is stored in the cloud or on corporate servers awaiting analysis. This includes employee emails, web searches, intranet messaging, external instant messages, and much more. Bloomberg for example apparently logs every employee's every keystroke, while Harrah's casino in Las Vegas tracks the smiles of their wait staff as well as their croupiers, since the company has managed to quantify the impact of smiling on customer satisfaction (Peck, 2015, pg. 19).

These bits and bytes of data are then mined for all sorts of information, such as productivity levels, relationships with colleagues, ability and willingness to collaborate, amongst others. Software applications sift through correspondences looking for language patterns

and what those patterns reveal about our intelligence, social skills and behaviour. As technologies that analyse language become better and cheaper [more] companies will...run programs that automatically trawl through the e-mail traffic of their workforce, looking for phrases or communication patterns that can be statistically associated with various measures of success or failure in particular roles (Peck, 2015, pg. 19).

This practice of collecting, storing and analysing employee data has become widely known as "dataveillance" (Clarke, 1994). It has largely been put into practice because of the ease with which a digital persona can be monitored, and because a large amount of data can be collected and analysed in a much more economical fashion than through the physical observation and classification methods of bygone eras.

In fact Mims (2015, pg. 2) even goes so far as to say that managers are starting to become preoccupied with quantifying corporate culture. He gives the example of an approach to people analytics and dataveillance used by companies such as Uber, Box and Airbnb, which sets out from the premise that happy employees are productive employees, and therefore managers regularly use an application called CultureAmp, which allows managers to take short surveys to see how happy their workforce is.

The effect of all this has been to turn data into a kind of currency in the modern corporation. “The more of it you have, the more power and influence you wield” (Mims, 2015, pg. 3).

So let us take a closer look at how this relates to Foucault.

Foucault was indeed correct when he assumed that the trends and tenets of the means by which we dole out punishment and treat prisoners, madmen and so on can be traced through to other institutionalised societal constructs as well. As we saw in the above, there were clear changes that occurred in the ways in which labour and workers were organised as the world shifted from an agrarian feudal system of production, to a free market economy characterised by industrial production, to knowledge and service- based work, to today’s high-tech working environment.

In terms of sovereign power being exercised directly over the body of the criminal, I think it is safe to say that the feudal system did much the same for the worker before the shift from feudalism to industrialisation occurred in the nineteenth century, insofar as the body of the worker belonged, in essence, to the feudal lord who owned it and ruled over it. This correlative relationship between the economy and punitive practices was not lost on Foucault either:

“...[W]ith feudalism, at a time when money and production were still at an early stage of development, we find a sudden increase in corporal punishments - the body being in most cases the only property accessible; the penitentiary..., forced labour and the prison factory appear with the development of the mercantile economy. But the industrial system requires a free market in labour and, in the nineteenth century, the role of forced labour in the mechanisms of punishment diminishes accordingly and ‘corrective’ detention takes its place” (D&P, pg. 25).

The feudal system made property of labourers, who were always at the mercy of the feudal lord, and workers within this system had no choice but to labour the farms and fields owned by the monarch and the nobility. However, as farming gave way to more industrialised forms of production, the feudal system gradually began to disappear and to give way to capitalism and industrialism, which is characterised by routine. And routine, as Foucault illustrates with the juxtaposition of the torturing of Damians with the prison timetable in *Discipline and Punish*, is an apparatus that produces disciplinary power.

This shift to industrialism, especially circa the nineteenth century and into the twentieth therefore, is characterised by a shift from predominantly sovereign power under the feudal lords, to disciplinary power under the new industrial magnates that arose from the shift to the mercantile economy and capitalism²¹.

²¹ This is not to say that sovereign power disappeared or gave way to disciplinary power altogether. Indeed, it still exists today in the form of law and prohibition. This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 3.

2.2. Disciplined Bodies at Work

Antonio Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebooks* (1999, pg. 591) said that

[I]ndustrialism...has been an uninterrupted, often painful and bloody process of subjugating natural (i.e. animal and primitive) instincts to new, more complex and rigid norms and habits of order, exactitude and precision which can make possible the increasingly complex forms of collective life which are the consequence of industrial development, [and] up until [Industrialism] all changes in modes of existence and modes of life have taken place through brute coercion, that is to say through the dominion of one social group over all the productive forces of society.

In the early 1930's, Gramsci therefore already saw in the transition to Industrialism what Foucault pointed out in *Discipline and Punish* - that there was a marked shift in the way in which societal institutions were constructed and operated, and consequently how power was exercised over subjects. Industrial development necessarily led to new and complex forms of collective life as people left the agrarian life of working the land and streamed into the cities to pursue work in factories. This led to the creation of order, the normalisation of subjects, and a pseudo-scientific approach towards the surveillance, ordering, examination and normalisation of subjects²², and, at least in Gramsci's estimation, a kind of suppression of humanity at the level of human nature itself.

There are two often-written about protagonists in this early twentieth century story of industrialism and management practices as pseudo-science and discipline based: Frederick Taylor and Henry Ford.

Frederick Taylor, an engineer by trade and a product of the nineteenth century discourse of 'science' and 'progress', originally laid out his ideas on the techniques of "scientific management" in a book titled *The Principles of Scientific Management (1911)*. These were soon adopted prolifically by businesses, particularly manufacturers, and, despite very staunch opposition from certain influential leaders and economists who believed scientific management to be dehumanising, continued to exert a great influence over management practices very long after in a myriad of ways.

Taylor was of the view that management practices should be grounded in "watchfulness", in other words in observation and the gathering of proven facts, never in rumour, hearsay, or speculation. He advocated the importance of quantitative analysis and management practices which are preoccupied with time,

²² The effects of this shift were of course interpreted very differently by the two authors, in particular with regards to their respective interpretations of power. Foucault saw this shift to industrialism as the advent of the ubiquitous infusion of disciplinary power into society and its institutions, whereas Gramsci (1999, pg. 591-592), a Marxist, saw industrialism as something that gave rise to new forms of production and work through "incredible acts of brutality which have cast the weak and the non-conforming into the limbo of the lumpen-classes or have eliminated them entirely."

order, precision, productivity, and optimum efficiency (Sprague, 2007, pg.1; Pitsoe and Letseka, 2013, pg. 27). He emphasised “standardisation, time and task study, systematic selection and training, and pay incentives. In motivating the employees to work to their fullest capacity, Taylor maintained that higher productivity would be maintained if productivity and remuneration were combined” (Pitsoe and Letseka, 2013, pg. 27).

Scientific management was thus heavily focused on disciplinary practices and technologies:

Under scientific management the “initiative” of the workmen (that is, their hard work, their good-will, and their ingenuity) is obtained with absolute uniformity and to a greater extent than is possible under the old system; and in addition to this improvement on the part of the men, the managers assume new burdens, new duties, and responsibilities never dreamed of in the past. The managers assume, for instance, the burden of gathering together all of the traditional knowledge which in the past has been possessed by the workmen and then of classifying, tabulating, and reducing this knowledge to rules, laws, and formulae which are immensely helpful to the workmen in doing their daily work (Taylor, 1911).

Soon after its publication, Taylor’s book was translated into numerous languages, including Chinese and Japanese. Taylorism, or at least some of the principles outlined by Taylor,²³ thus became a much reviled yet widely practiced management strategy across the globe, particularly in manufacturing settings, where workers were paid higher wages, but they became part of the industrial machinery as it were, thereby “reducing productive operations exclusively to the mechanical, physical aspect” (Gramsci, 1999, pg. 598). In fact, Frederick Taylor’s ideas on management are not so very far removed from Jeremy Bentham’s ideas on inmate management in prisons. Both theories rest on the assumption that a set of mechanistic and prescriptive norms can be applied which would render the inmate or the worker willingly submissive.

Taylorism thus feeds directly into much of what Foucault discussed in his earlier works, and in fact Foucault, without making direct reference to Taylor or his book, describes the factory under scientific management in the following way:

This was the problem of the great workshops and factories, in which a new type of surveillance was organised. It was different from the one practiced in the régimes of the manufactories, which had been carried out from the outside by inspectors, entrusted with the task of applying the regulations; what was now needed was an intense, continuous supervision; it ran right through the labour process; it did not bear - or not only - on production (the nature and quantity of raw materials, the type of instruments used, the dimensions and quality of the products); it also took into account the activity of the men, their skill, the way they set about their tasks, their promptness, their zeal, their behaviour. But it was also different from the domestic supervision of the master present beside his workers and apprentices; for it was carried out by clerks, supervisors and foremen (D&P, pg. 174).

²³ “...Taylorism in its pure form was rarely implemented. However, Taylor’s principles continue to underlie much of managerial ideology and technologies of work organisation” (Bahnisch, 2000, pg. 55).

When one considers Foucault's argument that the modern subject was made through a process of objectification to become an object of scientific discourse (or through subjectification as Foucault calls it), it is clear that the working subject under Taylorism, particularly in the twentieth century, is exactly that: a disciplined subject who is constituted through minute divisions of labour, repetition of simple, mechanical bodily movement, predetermined work methods, and constant classification, all under the watchful gaze of the next person in the hierarchy.

Hierarchical observation therefore, is a central tenet of Taylorism, in that the working environment is carefully divided into physical or manual forms of labour, and intellectual or mental forms of labour. The Taylorist approach implemented a kind of hierarchical line structure that "placed workers under supervision of nested tiers of managerial personnel and established clear lines of command across the organizational hierarchy [and]...constitutes a pyramidal field of visibility wherein each tier in the organizational hierarchy is subjected to the direct observation of immediate superiors" (Berdayes, 2002, pg. 40). Even the physical arrangement of workers within the workspace was modelled, in a manner reminiscent of the panopticon, to reflect these hierarchies and to allow supervisors a direct line of vision to their subordinates.

One company that went from a sovereign type of system to later really taking Taylorist principles to heart by imposing a ubiquitous system of surveillance throughout the organisation, was the Ford motor company.

In the earlier days (circa 1910 or so), Ford had foremen who regularly patrolled the shop floor with stopwatches and charts assessing worker performance. He also had what was referred to as "the Service Department". According to Coopey and McKinlay (2010, pg.114-115),

the Service Department was the hub of an elaborate system of labor spies who monitored supervisors as well as workers...Informal collusion between supervisors and their immediate workers to create some slack in production speeds was a consistent target for covert surveillance...[U]p to 10% of the Ford workforce were 'servicemen'...Officially, the serviceman's duties were innocuous: to patrol the aisles, watch for leaks in equipment, keep fire aisles open, watch for violations in safety rules, man the gates, park cars and stand guard in the grocery. In reality, their job was to patrol the factory in pairs, dressed in civilian clothes, often leather jackets, distinguished by the 'A' badge on their lapel, the better to ensure their visibility and, equally, to hint at their unseen presence...Foremen, even those prepared to enforce Ford's tight discipline, had to be reminded that they were also being monitored and were subject to company rule.

This was a system driven by sovereign power under Henry Ford I (who ran his corporation like a monarch) and his small army of privileged servicemen that instilled terror into workers and foremen alike. However, as the middle of the twentieth century drew near, views on management began to change,

and so did industry standards.²⁴ At Ford, Henry Ford II took over from his grandfather, and this led to great changes for workers and supervisors alike, which meant that there was a distinct shift in the relations of power within the organisation from sovereign power to disciplinary power. One of the first things that the younger Ford did at this time, was to establish a personnel office that dealt exclusively with the factory foremen, thereby centralising their hiring, firing, promotion, and payment. The Service Department also no longer had the purpose of being a system of labour spies. Rather, foremen were given wage increases and more responsibility, but they were also given certain privileges that widened the gap between them and the workers they were in charge of supervising. Coopey and McKinlay (2010, pg. 118-9) describe the changes at Ford as follows:

(Foremen) were given individual desks to the side of the line, as well as separate dining rooms, private locker rooms and reserved parking lots. For foremen, the identification badge worn by all Ford employees was replaced by a card carried in the wallet rather than worn on the lapel...The main administrative innovation was the introduction of the Salaried Employee History record system. Apart from demographic information, this system tracked training, levels of responsibility and seniority...(and) a supervisory reprimand was no longer to be a matter of physical confrontation, but was now to involve a centralised, formalized reporting system. This system categorized forms of discipline -time-keeping, quality, insubordination- and allowed comparisons between different sections of the plant, and it could be cross- tabulated by type of worker involved.

What should be noted here, is that the intensity of worker scrutiny or surveillance did not change much under the new Ford regime, but the way in which the surveillance was administered changed somewhat. Whereas former foremen moved around the factory floor watching the workers, with the servicemen walking around watching both the foremen and the workers, and any transgressions were confronted physically and dealt with harshly, the surveillance now became more rational, more efficient, more cost effective and more bureaucratised. Now workers on the line were under the constant gaze of the foreman as he sat at his desk "scientifically" assessing their movements, timing them, and scrutinising the quality of the products of their labour, all while being acutely conscious of the increased divide between worker and manager. The carceral gaze of the corporation did not begin and end with the foremen and the assembly line workers either: Ford, through the newly established personnel office for foremen and all its procedures and regulations, also tried to manage its managers by intensifying the administrative gaze on managers. In fact, McKinlay and Starkey (1998, Kindle ed, ch.7, The corporate panopticon, para. 18) argue that this intensification of the scrutiny of managers led to the proliferation of disciplinary power throughout the organisation, and "engendered a psychology of conformity". They liken it to the 'velvety grip' first conceived of by William Whyte - the manager needs to accept control, but above and beyond that, he has to accept it as if he liked it. In the Ford motor company being higher up the hierarchy did not give you shelter from the interminable carceral gaze either. Quite the opposite. "The higher the office, the greater the individual's visibility and the greater the pressure for conformity."

²⁴ General Motors also overhauled their management practices around this time, for example.

This was Taylorism through and through, whereby the bodies of the factory workers were carefully arranged along a production line under the almost constant surveillance of a foreman who was creating performance flow charts, using a stopwatch and generally classifying and comparing each labourer in an effort not only to ensure their discipline, but also to 'know' them in a systemic and pseudo-scientific way and to then capture this knowledge as written data. It was a system in which foremen and management were so visible to administrative watchfulness, that they conformed to all the rules and stipulations laid out for them to follow, never missing a report, skipping a form to be filled in, allowing a worker to lose time or become less efficient, while always being meticulous in providing data of their own for the administration to file away.

All this also points again to Foucault's notion that, in disciplinary societies, man became both the subject and the object of knowledge.²⁵ This then is also a problem that is illustrated quite well by Taylor's scientific management, or, for that matter, any kind of management technique that aims to put scientific principles to use in the management of people: the people interpreting the science and putting it to work, are already shaped by the discourse of the science itself. The foreman wielding these scientific discourses on the shop floor as absolute truth or knowledge over subjects who are also inscribed by these discourses expects, to a certain extent, uniform outcomes from such "science-backed" principles of management precisely because they are accepted as grounded in scientific knowledge or absolute truth by the foreman in question. This too then becomes a logically impossible task since our business, management and scientific discourses change and vary across corporate cultures, industries, country cultures, and through the passage of time and history, and cannot therefore be accepted as universally true²⁶ or result in uniform outcomes. In fact, they may very well serve to perpetuate stereotyping in the workplace.²⁷

This does not however curb the scientific discourses put to use through Taylorism from becoming a disciplinary force through the implementation of the scientific principles of management. Quite the contrary, these discourses become part of the very identity of workers and managers alike, and a technology of power that has certain truth effects. Individuals in the workplace are transformed into subjects who draw meaning from and understand their reality through the lens of their participation and practice of scientific management, and in so doing they become complicit in their own discipline.

²⁵ Foucault saw this as a logical contradiction since man, a knowing subject, is making himself into an object of study in an effort to show himself how it is that he can know himself thoroughly as a knowing subject. This is a futile effort according to Foucault, because it implies that man's transcendental subjectivity can be rooted in his empirical subjectivity. Thus man is constituted as a "strange empirico-transcendental doublet", which means that he appears both as the origin of history and knowledge, as well as the product of history and knowledge. This means that man could never truly be the originator of knowledge, since he cannot be a primordial observer, but only a product of the history, knowledge and discourses that in fact helped to shape him (OT, pg. 318-319; Foucault, 1977a, pg. 120-121, 136-138).

²⁶ "Foucault consistently distanced himself from any social theory which claimed universality. Respectful of Marx, he was, however, dismissive of any attempts to understand every institution -clinic, asylum, factory- as expressions of a singular class project (McKinlay and Starkey, 1998, Kindle ed, ch. 7, Constructing manageable organisations, para 2).

²⁷ Consider, for example, the gender divide in an automobile factory setting like Ford, where the discourses that shape gender stereotyping in the workplace means that the scientific management of men on the production line might mean something entirely different than for women. Or consider commonly held beliefs and stereotyping around race, for example that an Asian man is less suited to heavy physical work on an assembly line than an American man of African or European descent.

In terms of the physics of power that Foucault refers to in *Discipline and Punish*, it is clear that Taylorism operates through a “new mechanics” (as Foucault would put it) - a careful arrangement of bodies in the office and in the factory, bodies which are required to perform mechanical skills in the most efficient manner possible, and within time constraints set and meticulously applied and monitored by the management, and at the same time is also the apparatus put into place to exercise oversight and control over the working bodies on the assembly line. This has the effect of objectifying the worker and normalising the work process. The individual actions of the worker are expected to conform with the management plan, or rather the standards set by management that the worker has to conform to or else be classified as incompetent and dismissed. Thus we see workers scrutinised and then further classified as, for example, efficient/inefficient, competent/incompetent, compliant/non-compliant, motivated/unmotivated, conscientious/unconscientious, a team player/not a team player. As noted before, all of this occurs under the watchful gaze of the management, which is responsible for analysing, recording and comparing employee performance and then classifying the worker accordingly, thereby making them knowable, calculable and comparable, whilst at the same time infusing the workplace with sustained discourses intended to support this process of objectification through spoken and unspoken codes of conduct and written work orders and guidelines. Caldari (2007, pg. 65) describes the Taylorist working environment as follows: “Each boss is only a technical guide over a narrow area for a large number of workmen and does not have any personal connection with them: the relationship between bosses and workers becomes ‘slight and impersonal’...Personal relationship is replaced with the transmission of written orders that take the place of personal control.”

It is interesting that Taylorism relied very much on passing written instructions on to workers, and although it was widely criticised, many companies took up the practice of laying down written codes in accordance with which employees were supposed to perform their duties and regulate their behaviour in the workplace. Such codes of conduct of course are a typical Foucauldian disciplinary apparatus, and fed into the network of writing that was put in place by what Foucault refers to as a “new physiology” of power, spearheaded by the concept of the examination, and culminating in the normalisation of the subject. The instruction cards handed off to workers became an essential mechanism of their discipline since its intention, in a similar way to the process of examination, was to “capture and fix” the worker in “a whole mass of documents” (D&P, pg.189) since they not only provided the instruction, but deviation from the instruction would be recorded and kept in a personnel file. Part of this mass of documents were forms as well. Forms were used to record the time and movement involved in each task on a factory shop floor. These forms were tailored for each task under study, and precisely laid down each element contained within a work process. This allowed management to measure each worker's performance and to compare it against the standard deemed ideal for each task (Berdayes, 2002, pg. 43), thereby systematically normalising the behaviour, actions and even gestures and motions of the working subject

on the shop floor. Taylorism therefore sought to engineer the assembly line, turning it into a carefully choreographed performance directed by forms and documentation, "the stopwatch and the clock, and the colonizing subjectivity of management" (Bahnisch, 2000, pg. 54). As far as ordinary line workers were concerned, under Taylorism they became mere cogs in the disciplinary machinery of the organisation. Every move on the assembly line was to be precisely directed and calculated by the obedient foreman, who did the thinking for the assembly line, but always within the parameters of the rules and regulations set out by the corporation. In fact, *examining* the workers on the assembly line carefully and observing even their smallest work habits was one of the most important objectives of scientific management, since it was believed that this would promote efficiency and productivity. Taylor himself spent a great deal of his time "studying the characteristic twisting of an arm or the arc of a person's back engaged in repetitive labor" (Berdayes, 2002, pg.43), and from the data gathered on every minuscule movement of hand, leg or torso, he was able to construct the ideal way of moving, the ideal posture, and the ideal tempo of movement. This meant that the work of the line worker became totally deskilled (albeit well paid), thereby reducing the work to the mechanical movements of disciplined subjected bodies (Bahnisch, 2000, pg. 54)

incentivised to remain disciplined and docile through increased remuneration.²⁸ And so scientific management became completely reviled for its dehumanisation of the assembly line. Nonetheless, filtered, slightly watered-down interpretations of this management style quickly permeated the corporate fabric of the United States and much of the rest of the industrialised world, and many of its principles are still quite evident, albeit in a more evolved form, in many industries and companies today. Examples that spring to mind are automobile manufacturing, computer manufacturing, call centres, and even fast food restaurant chains like McDonald's.

Like the body is the target of carceral discipline through hierarchical observation, physical arrangement, and thorough examination in Foucault's prison, the body is also the locus of control in the factory of the twentieth century. As I discussed at length in the preceding paragraphs, Taylorism basically brought active bodies together on the assembly line and throughout the corporation, ordered them, and rendered them docile through the discourse of science and productivity. According to Bahnisch (200, pg.57), in this kind of working environment "individual identity is indeterminate, and management's construction of discursive strategies and technologies of power contribute to the constitution of workers' subjectivity through social relations of power." He then goes on to argue that any analysis of Taylorism that sees it purely as a strategy of control and administration whilst ignoring the effect of these technologies of control and discursive strategies on the constitution of the working subject, is in fact "privileging an essentialist and humanistic concept of the subject. Rather, the subject should be seen as being constituted by a plurality of disciplinary mechanisms, techniques of surveillance and power-knowledge strategies." A strategy of control in the workplace, such as that engendered by scientific management, produces social

²⁸ Although Taylorism to us today seems to be positively Kafkaesque, for all intents and purposes Taylor himself believed that he was doing workers a great service. Their pay was increased, and he had a "sweeping interest in rearranging work environments to do away with unnecessary effort and to reduce fatigue and injury" (Berdayes, 2002, pg. 47).

relations, behaviours and practices that have a marked impact on the formation and evolution of an individual's identity.

An example of this is given by Oswald Jones (2000), who recounts his days working at a Hotpoint factory in the UK between 1973 and 1984. This particular factory was strong on the application of Taylorist principles, and had a department of "work study engineers (WSE)" dedicated to ensuring the efficiency of the production lines as they assembled washers and dryers. At Hotpoint this department made use of a system called "simplified pre-determined motion time study (SPMTS)". With this system, the WSE "noted each activity the operator performed in carrying out their work activities and then referred to a table which indicated the appropriate time for that activity. It was still necessary to study individual workers but standard times could be calculated away from the shopfloor...SPMTS systems were regarded as being much more objective than traditional time study because the rating of operator effort was removed" (Jones, 2000, pg. 640). Jones recounts how the WSE's went to lengths to create a persona of competence and efficiency on the shopfloor when they were being observed by assembly line operators and foremen. "This meant being smartly dressed with a collar and tie, not standing with hands in pockets, nor being too friendly with workers" and carrying with them "professional accoutrements such as stopwatch and clipboard" (pg. 642). Behind the scenes, in the separate and closed work study office, things were quite different however. The atmosphere was relaxed, with easy banter going on, and there was always time to talk about football and such like. One of the senior engineers in the WSE department who reported to the departmental manager also had a marked influence on the way in which things were done in the department. He did this by giving himself and the role of work study elevated importance and by "constructing negative views of other organizational actors. Senior managers were incompetent or stupid; shopfloor supervisors...were 'as weak as piss' in dealing with operators; production and design engineers had no concept of efficient production..." (pg.643). Furthermore, the WSE all went to great lengths to construct very masculine identities for themselves, and often regaled each other with tales of their masculine prowess both at work and outside of it. Interestingly, Hotpoint had been taken over by a new managing director in 1974, who was not in favour of holding onto the WSEs, since he was broadly anti-Taylorism, but couldn't do away with the system entirely because of its reliance on using remuneration to justify its existence, and senior managers relied heavily on the WSE department's system as a mechanism for motivating and directing shopfloor workers. And so the WSEs were kept on, but with some minor changes to their functions, notably through the implementation of the aforementioned SPMTS system (a slightly different approach to traditional time study methods). These changes, and particularly the new culture of human resource management that was beginning to seep in through the changes made by the new CEO, probably had quite a bit to do with the macho identities forged by the WSEs, who masculinised themselves in order to compensate for an increasing sense of disenfranchisement within the company and the subsequent loss of a sense of empowerment.

According to Knights and Willmott (1989, pg. 548), "life at work and beyond is readily colonised by the personal pursuit of institutional and interpersonal confrontations of social identity and the accumulation of power and wealth associated with it." It follows from this that the machismo in the WSE department that Jones (2000) describes is part of such a pursuit of an institutional social identity, and certainly

carries with it a sense of power. The more the WSEs regaled their exploits to one another, the more they competed with one another, egged each other on, the more they internalised this macho subjectivity, and the stronger and more empowered they felt individually, as well as within the group. Foucault (1982, pg. 208) said that "there are two meanings of the word *subject*...subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to." The WSEs at Hotpoint were shaping their sense of self through not only the dynamic and relations of power within the department itself, but also in response to the relations of power they were subjected to within the company as a whole. In the second sense of Foucault's definition, we become subjugated as our sense of self is shaped through these relations enacted upon us by others, in this case colleagues and management, and "attachments to this symbolic sense of self become strengthened - a disciplinary process whose 'rewards' are often conditional upon maintaining existing definitions and distributions of valued resources" (Knights and Willmott, 1989, pg. 543). Thus the WSE constitutes himself with this macho identity at the office, and sustains it himself because not doing so would lead to exclusion, probable ridicule and possibly being denied opportunities for promotion and career development.

When we start to investigate the effects of Taylorist management practices (as in the example above) it becomes clear that they, like the Panopticon, very clearly illustrate how subjects constitute themselves as docile bodies within a system regulated by disciplinary mechanisms of power and control.

There is an important question that arises from an investigation into the effects of Taylorist management practices however: why would shopfloor labourers work *willingly* and *freely* under such a system where they are just a cog in a machine, another brick in the wall, where they are systematically measured, examined, classified and judged? Why would they accept being subjected to and subject themselves to this kind of disciplinary system? The factory floor after all is not a prison and any employee is free to walk out of there at any time. Of course the carrot of motivation and control at the end of that disciplinary stick, at least under Taylorism, was money. The Taylorist workplace promised larger salaries and bonuses paid for performing to the expectations laid down by the company and the "scientific" principles those expectations were supposedly based on. Non-compliance and non-conformity meant loss of income and possibly a loss of livelihood, and the use of scientific discourse as a basis for these management practices meant that subjects were more likely to accept that the discipline is based upon universal truth and sound reasoning, and was therefore to be accepted and adhered to. As we saw in previous sections, the predominant discourse behind Taylorism was also a predominant discourse in the wider societal environment, and was therefore embedded in social practices at that time both in and outside of the workplace. Of course once they are embedded in social practice, they come to achieve a certain standing as being true or of sound knowledge. Moreover, as I discussed at length in the previous chapter, knowledge and the technologies of power that reproduce certain discursive practices are inextricably fused, and as such are also always subject to reaction and resistance, making discourse and power both fluid and productive. Jones (2000, pg. 634-35) raises an interesting point: he brings up the problem of the

experience of the subject as both a subject and an object of the organisation, which, if we follow the Foucauldian trajectory, occurs when the subject becomes an object for scientific analysis, examination and classification.²⁹ He says that this creates an ambiguity at the very heart of subjectivity, which leads to subjects opting to use certain coping mechanisms in the face of their subjection on the shopfloor. These are strategies for coping, in other words reaction, which lead to greater resilience in the face of the disciplined subjection. He says that there are three such types of strategy:

Indifference, which is when subjects isolate themselves from the rest by not recognising or acknowledging shared social constructs. This is the subject who bases their identity in the lone wolf who puts his head down and does his own thing, but still within the parameters set down by the organisational environment. He flies under the radar as it were, trying to avoid the organisational gaze which would open him up to judgement. *Subordination* is where the individual simply follows the orders given to him from above, without question, while denying their own creativity. They are the company's 'yes men', who essentially turn themselves into a completely docile body to be directed by others. Lastly, we have *domination*, where individuals use power asymmetries (for example those between foremen and line workers) and relationships with others to exert control over them in order to protect their own security. This person is concerned with the objectification of others, and will often manipulate others to serve their own self-interest. These coping strategies are all attempts at securing the self in its ambiguous position as both a subject and an object of the organisation, and may furthermore manifest themselves in certain behaviours, such as machismo (as seen at Hotpoint), critical narcissism, idealised substitution, and denial. Critical narcissism for example, entails belittling others in order to aggrandise the self, much like the manager in the WSE department at Hotpoint that was described above did. Machismo is an attempt to compensate for feeling disempowered under the system of disciplinary control, and to thereby attempt to produce power relations of their own where they can dominate and be in control. In other words, it is often employed by subjects using domination as a strategy. Consider for example the elevation or exaggeration of certain skills as "a job for a man", or a job that "separates the men from the boys".

It should be noted here that these strategies play a large part in how the working subject continually constitutes and reconstitutes itself, because they cannot be seen as static, but rather as fluid. For example, a strategy of subordination may be used by an assembly line worker when in the presence of a certain manager or foreman, but a strategy of domination may be exerted over a colleague who is perhaps younger, less experienced, or simply perceived as weaker.³⁰ This is precisely because the worker is both a subject and an object for the organisation and its discourses.

Moreover, the constitution of subjectivity is also often closely interrelated with resistance (which is always an effect of technologies of power), and resistance in the disciplinary workplace can manifest itself in a

²⁹ Even in non-Taylorist modern organisations built around team working and so forth, these practices persist in the form of performance reviews, electronic mail monitoring, amongst many others.

³⁰ A whole related discussion here is that of gender subjectivity, and this is a discussion that would extend well beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice it to say that this kind of domination is often exercised over women in the workplace, but that is not to say that women don't also apply strategies of domination and control as they constitute themselves into working subjects.

myriad of subtle ways, including some of the behaviours mentioned above, and through some distinctive discursive practices. Collins (1992) says that one can find a number of types of employee resistance in organisations. For example withdrawal, or what he refers to as “resistance through distance” (pg. 54-62), and he gives a number of examples of this, for instance the shop steward who keeps all the management at a distance by negating them: “It’s harder to have an argument with someone you’ve got to know, harder to tell ‘em to ‘fuck off’. The further away management are the better. We’ve nothing in common with them” (Collinson, 1992, pg. 58). Through this strategy then, an employee signals their resistance to management practices by keeping the management at a distance, by avoiding them and also by overtly being perceived to avoid being participative or friendly with the management. As another shop steward Collinson (1992, pg.55) interviewed said: “He can call me Eric but I have the right not to call him by his first name.” This strategy of resistance at a distance is an attempt to distance oneself from and deny your own participation in the strategies of control and discipline enacted within and by the organisation, to pretend that you are personally unaffected by the technologies of power at play. This of course is a futile kind of resistance if it is through resistance that one hopes to effect change, since “its weakness is in an indifference to mobilising the indifference collectively, and this leaves power relations unaffected. Moreover, since no relations exist outside power, the illusion of autonomous space created by such resistance cannot be sustained” (Knights and Morgan, 1991, pg. 269). Also, social relations cannot exist in a vacuum from power relations, and for this reason this kind of resistance is an unsustainable illusion (Knights and Morgan, 1991, pg. 269).

Another strategy of resistance that Collinson (1992, pg. 103) points out, is that of joking:

As a central characteristic of working class culture...workplace humour is in part a creatively cultural and practical accomplishment providing a diversion and distraction from the “subjective ravages” and “brutalising conditions” of shop floor life. It is one means by which workers can resist their shop floor subordination. This “living culture” provides an alternative source of meaning and identity for workers whose labour is controlled, commodified and stratified...The data...demonstrate that although workers may insist that they are only interested in money, their search for meaning, enjoyment and particularly for a sense of power and identity significantly shapes their actual subjective experience of shop floor work. It is through collective cultural joking practices...that workers hope to achieve a positive meaning, sense of personal power and validation of identity.

Humour is also often used to veil the use of critical narcissism as described above,³¹ or to dominate, as often happens when a particular person is singled out and made fun of. Oswald Jones (2000, pg. 645), in his description of practices in the WSE department at Hotpoint, goes to some lengths to describe how the

³¹ This tweet republished by The Reader’s Digest Online in a section on office jokes illustrates this type of joke: “Is he replaceable? Only if there’s a 180-pound rock that can keep his chair in place.”

WSEs partook in highly masculinised joking practices,³² for example they gave each other insulting nicknames, and reportedly one WSE, when confronted with a very difficult and demanding task, told his superior “wait a minute Boss, I’ll put on my suit - the blue one with the big red S on the front.” This of course is an instance of workplace humour being used to express frustration at and resistance to being given a very challenging task, without being overtly insubordinate. In this case, the joke masks a serious and oppositional sentiment. The creation of insulting nicknames has the effect of creating cohesion amongst workers and has a similar effect as resistance through distance in that it separates one group from the rest, creating an “us versus them” dynamic, especially in relation to the management.

It follows from this that the conditions for the constitution of the subject in a Taylorist working environment, such as the one at Hotpoint, are characterised by the careful arrangement and choreography of the bodies of the workers, the meticulous examination and classification of these bodies that are rendered docile through the incentive of bonuses and higher wages, and the threat of job loss. And as with bodies in a prison, these workers are kept in order and controlled through hierarchical observation and also discourses that appeal to “science”. These are also the conditions then that make possible certain strategies for coping with and resisting such a mechanistic and arguably dehumanising environment. Of course all of these are the things that produce the working subject under scientific management. Managers and shop floor workers in a factory such as Hotpoint or Ford were not just passive victims of the technologies of power produced by the discourse of scientific management. They were constituted as subjects who either supported or resisted these management practices, or both, but they all participated in the discourses and practices of Taylorism and let it shape who they were as working subjects.

2.3 Working Bodies in the Web

Taylorism, Fordism and other management philosophies with similar principles did not go uncriticised. Theorists like Elton Mayo for example tried to develop sets of managerial principles and practices that were still based on the idea that the ultimate goal of management is to increase productivity, but they tried to ground their work in the human side, in psychology, or sociology. From here developed the human relations school, which contended that workers could not be seen as cogs in a machine, as robotic entities that could be regulated with a stopwatch. One very influential humanist in management theory was Peter Drucker, who saw the corporation as a social institution above all else, and as a social institution, every member had to be respected for their abilities and their potential. Drucker firmly

³² This can often lead to sexism in the workplace, which is also often an attempt at using domination. Another example from Reader’s Digest Online: “A female attorney in a law office found a typewriter on her desk with this note: “We are short of secretarial help and need your assistance.”

Recognizing that this was yet another prank by her male colleagues, she quickly typed a response that forever squelched the jokes: “I wold lov to hep out eny wey I kan.”

believed that if workers were respected and allowed a certain amount of autonomy to think, act and make decisions, then they will be most productive. This humanistic view also gained quite a bit of traction in management literature, and gave rise to quite a few so-called management gurus like Peters and Waterman, and Kennedy and Deal (to name but a few), who all touted the importance of treating workers like people and not machines. Drucker and his contemporaries also for the most part believed that managers had to play an active central role in the company by constantly setting and pursuing objectives for producing the best possible results in terms of both productivity and profit.

And so dawned the age of neoliberal managerialism and corporate governance. According to Lynch (2014, pg. 1), managerialism, or new managerialism as it is referred to in the context of public sector organisations, "represents the organisational arm of neoliberalism. It is the mode of governance designed to realize the neoliberal project through the institutionalising of market principles in the governance of organisations." What this means is that there was, and still is, a contention amongst many proponents of neoliberal corporate governance (and managerialism) that it in fact aids in economic progress because it is based on "dispersed share ownership, fluid markets and a professional management charged with the pursuit of shareholder value" (Talbot, 2013, pg. xxv), with an overarching belief that corporations should be seen as humane, ethical, and implementing practices in line with corporate social responsibility. As I will discuss in the subsequent chapters, there is a clear similarity between this, and Foucault's governmentality, which is the lynchpin for his transition to his ethics.

These management practices - Taylorism and then later managerialism and corporate governance - no doubt continue to influence management practices today, but the cybershift we're experiencing now also brings with it some very significant changes in the ways in which today's corporations are run and the discourses and power relations at play within them.

As I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, there have been several technological innovations that have completely changed the workplace experience for the twenty-first century subject. I started to look into the impact of people analytics, and the evolution of human resources management on the workplace for example. But these are not the only ways in which workplaces have been transforming. Lots has been written about surveillance practices in the twenty-first century workplace, now mainly offices as opposed to factory floors, and about off-site work, telecommuting and so forth. If we look at some of these occurrences through a Foucauldian lens, I think we can gain quite a bit of insight into inner workings of today's corporate office, and as to the constitution of the twenty-first century working subject within the relations of power, resistance and freedom that are brought about, characterise, and sustain today's working environment.

2.3.1. The Panopticon Today

The factory constituted individuals as a single body to the double advantage of the boss who surveyed each element within the mass and the unions who mobilized a mass resistance; but the corporation constantly presents the brashest rivalry as a healthy form of emulation, an excellent motivational force that opposes individuals against one another and runs through each, dividing each within. The modulating principle of "salary according to merit" has not failed to tempt national education itself. Indeed, just as the corporation replaces the factory, *perpetual training* tends to replace the *school*, and continuous control to replace the examination...We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become "*dividuals*", and masses, samples, data, markets, or "*banks*"... The old societies of sovereignty made use of simple machines - levers, pulleys, clocks; but the recent disciplinary societies equipped themselves with machines involving energy...; the societies of control operate with machines of a third type, computers...

Gilles Deleuze, Postscript on the Societies of Control (1992)

2.3.1.1. From a new optics to a cyber optics

If there is one aspect of Foucault's entire body of work that authors from various business studies fields have pounced upon, it is the panopticon and surveillance. Thousands of pages have been written on this in accountancy journals, human resources management journals, business ethics journals, popular management magazines, and many more. There have also been numerous case studies conducted in this area. Many of these articles and case studies conclude with a bleak outlook of the twenty-first century workplace and sketch a corporate world of surveillance on steroids, rampant digital Taylorism, and managers on data-fuelled power trips. At the risk of unnecessarily flogging the same dead horse, I would like to ask whether the panopticon is still alive and well in the contemporary office, and if so, what implications does that hold for the subject, and what is happening to Foucault's disciplinary power?

As I noted in the first chapter, panopticism lies at the heart of Foucault's analysis of the transformation of penalty as a history of the relations between political power and bodies. In my own preceding analysis of the transformation of the workplace as a history of the technologies and relations that form the conditions for the constitution of the working body, I looked at how Taylorism and its practices of timing, measurement and managerial surveillance in the factory fed almost directly into Foucault's institutionalised world of surveillance, examination and disciplined bodies.

But the twenty-first century presents us with a new history, and one which Deleuze already began to foresee in the early 1990's, as is evidenced by the opening quote to this section.

What has transformed the workplace at the turn of this century has been the adjustment of the Taylorist mechanism of oversight and control to a system of datafication - a system characterised by ubiquitous

networking and computerised information gathering as a means of exercising control.³³ Datafication feeds into and emanates from a decentralised apparatus (*dispositif*)³⁴ that transcends physical social constructs and institutions. It is vast, it is virtual, it is cyberspace. In a certain sense we are dealing with an entirely new dimension wherein identities are forged, discourses take place, and communities and hierarchies are formed; a dimension containing architectures built on ones and zeros, and with its own rules and regulations. It is a dimension that is impenetrable by the physical panopticon, since it is a dimension where bodies cannot go. It is a vast unenclosed and unconfined 'space' that at first glance seems to defy control over those whose virtual selves traverse it. Yet it is an apparatus with real power effects that simultaneously infiltrates and feeds off of virtually every facet of the lived-in world, penetrating all layers of society and all institutions in every corner of the world, by collecting and collating data, shaping the lived life with data sets churned out while simultaneously being shaped by interactions with and data collected from the 'real' world. In the words of Atton (2004, pg. 11)

The use of the Internet...is inevitably wedded to practices in cultural and social worlds that exist in other discursive arenas beyond the 'virtual'...The virtual world...equally has its every-day lived dimension that entails the connection between on-line and off-line relationships, where production that appears to have its outcomes in a virtual world is intimately woven into the fabric of everyday life...a world that is represented and determined by social forces and practices that cannot be bracketed off from Internet practices.

But most of all this apparatus or *dispositif* cannot be controlled by the corporation, the state, or any other institution or body, it can only be managed.

Many authors have argued that this apparatus, with the Internet as its vehicle, has given rise to a new panopticism, or has supercharged the effects of the panopticon as Foucault described them. Some of the

³³ In this sense, perhaps Deleuze is correct in his assertion that the disciplinary society is giving way to the control society, but I think that this is too narrow a characterisation, since it doesn't quite encapsulate the power to resist that we gain from being in a networked society, or the duality of our new society between the lived in world and the virtual world. I prefer to think of the new society that we find ourselves inhabiting in the twenty-first century the "management society". This is a point which I will elaborate on quite a bit as the chapter unfolds.

³⁴ Foucault says: "What I'm trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogenous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements.

Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogenous elements. Thus, a particular discourse can figure at one time as the programme of an institution, and at another it can function as a means of justifying or masking a practice which itself remains silent, or as a secondary re-interpretation of this practice, opening out for it a new field of rationality.

In short, between these elements, whether discursive or non-discursive, there is a sort of interplay of shifts of position and modifications of function which can also vary very widely.

Thirdly, I understand by the term "apparatus" a sort of—shall we say—formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an *urgent need*. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function. This may have been, for example, the assimilation of a floating population found to be burdensome for an essentially mercantilist economy: there was a strategic imperative acting here as the matrix for an apparatus which gradually undertook the control or subjection of madness, sexual illness and neurosis" (Foucault, 1980, pg. 194-195).

technologies associated with this apparatus, like CCTV cameras and GPS tracking amongst numerous others, have been referred to as manifestations of a 'digital panopticon', an 'electronic panopticon', or an 'information panopticon' (Simon 2005; Bain and Taylor, 2000; Poole, 2013; Büyük and Keskin, 2012). Of course scholars have interpreted Foucault's insights in fundamentally different ways, and some have questioned the relevance of a discussion around panopticism when it comes to modern surveillance practices (Simon, 2005, pg. 2).

That the Internet has great panoptic-like surveillance capabilities is not in question here however. What is in question, is how the effects of modern surveillance techniques differ from those generated by panoptic surveillance, and how these effects impact the constitution of the working subject.

Modern technologies offer up surveillance capabilities that can be classed into two categories. There are those that can be likened to an electronic eye as it were - cameras, GPS tracking (especially with satellite), augmented reality applications (trying to catch that rare Pokémon also exposes you to being surveilled!), amongst others. These technologies are designed, like an eye, to see where you are or what you are doing, and when.

Then there are those technologies, such as electronic cards systems for accessing office buildings, keystroke monitoring applications, sociometric badges etc., that are designed to capture, sort and collate data that can tell whoever cares to analyse the data what you have been doing and when. This latter form of surveillance has, in recent years, come to be known as "dataveillance" (Clarke, 1994).

There are also two distinctive experiences that underlie both of these kinds of cyber surveillance: the experience of the supervisor behind the camera, the manager of the data collected and collated by the machines involved; and the experience of the employee being observed or surveilled. What is interesting about this new era of the cybershift, is that the individual's world of experience, whether being the observer or the observed, now has two distinct components which are nonetheless closely interlinked with one another. There is the physical, lived-in world of interaction and experience, and then there is cyberspace, where individuals' avatars, their digital selves, or individuals *as data* interact with other 'dataviduals' or cyber institutions, constructs, data sets, and so forth³⁵, each with their own set of connections to the lived-in world, but yet capable of having strong divergences from the individual as a body. As seen in the quote that opened this section of the chapter, Deleuze also refers to this duality of the subject's world of experience.³⁶ A duality which has a distinct effect on the constitution of the subject in that subjects have now evolved into "dividuals". The individual can no longer be seen as a singular entity, but is an entity divided between its physicality and the data, the little bits and bytes of its divided self, that it produces and leaves in its wake. I purposely use the term "datavidual" here to signify that I am in fact

³⁵ This means that we have to reconsider a number of important Foucauldian concepts, such as the body, subjectification, power-knowledge, and normalisation.

³⁶ The Deleuzian interpretation of the divided subject correlates directly with neoliberalism, and I will address this at a later stage. For my purposes here, I am borrowing from Deleuze, and expanding the concept of the "dividual" into something that did not quite exist in the 1990's when he coined the phrase.

referring to the non-physical, cyber division of the individual (a term that I am taking the liberty of borrowing from Deleuze). I also do so with my tongue planted firmly in my cheek, since the adjective “vidual”, refers to obsolescence, or to becoming a widow. In this sense then we are in fact dealing with a kind of a death of the *individual* by data.

Today’s cyber surveillance or cyber optics differs markedly from the Panopticon and the “new optics” as described by Foucault.

In the first place, the architecture of the panopticon³⁷ was deliberate, designed for centralised observation and surveillance from the very start. The Internet on the other hand was originally designed by the US Defence Department to create a covert communications network through which to obtain and distribute intelligence quickly and with a reduced possibility for interception. It was therefore deliberately designed to not be controlled from any central point, and to this end is made up of a vast number of autonomous computer networks that have innumerable ways to connect with one another (Castells, 2010, pg. 6). The architecture of the internet, originally, was therefore explicitly opposite to that of the Panopticon in that it was built not for surveillance, but for counter-surveillance. That it is often used for surveillance purposes today, is a consequence of the networked and ubiquitous nature it attained as it grew and infiltrated our offices, our schools, our homes, and, nowadays, our pockets.

The panopticon, being a physical and centralised structure, is also a highly visible behemoth, always clearly visible (seen), as well as being the locus of the surveillance (seeing). Whoever is entrapped by the panopticon is always reminded of its effects and of the singular centralised nature of the surveillance (being seen). The Internet as an architecture used for surveillance is quite different. Internet-enabled surveillance has duality - it is visibly present when those technologies that function like an electronic eye are overtly at work, but it is also invisibly omnipresent when it takes the form of dataveillance. Moreover, internet-enabled surveillance can be both centralised, as when it is put to use within an enclosed environment - a prison, a school, a factory - and overseen by an entity charged with the task of managing and analysing the data collected, or it can be decentralised or diffused, as when it enables the tracking or tracing of an individual's activities through making a series of connections between different data sets collected in different locations throughout the net.

This decentralisation of internet-enabled surveillance is an interesting development in surveillance for a number of reasons. Firstly, dataveillance has become ubiquitous. Every interaction an individual has with a computer, a camera, a phone, an RFID chip in a card, and many more, leaves behind an electronic footprint, a piece of data, which can be collected and collated electronically, or replicated innumerable times, and then used or managed by any number of individuals or organisations at little cost. Or it can simply be stored, left in limbo, somewhere within the gargantuan mass of data that occupies cyberspace. This has the effect of diffusing the data or information gathered to any number of people, places or

³⁷ And as I noted in the previous chapter, it is the architecture of the panopticon itself that becomes the method by which power is exercised over inmates, workers, pupils or patients.

authorities for interpretation, use, or control, with either positive or negative intent and consequences. An example of this can be found in online purchases. When a customer makes an online purchase they leave behind bits and bytes of metadata such as their name, payment details, address, and details regarding what they searched for and what they bought. This allows the company they purchased from to tailor their next shopping experience by making suggestions based on past purchases and their location. Not only can the company then advertise other similar products available in the customer's area when they next visit the company website, but they can draw inferences from the customer's past purchases too. For example, if a customer is consistently buying boys' clothing for a certain age group, they might infer that they have a child of a certain age, and will then market certain age- and gender-appropriate toys at that particular customer. This information however could also be sold by the online retailer to third party firms who will then use it to send out all manner of advertising, questionnaires and so forth, all of which, when the recipient acts upon such emails, will result in more data being collected on their behaviour as a consumer, the times at which they do things online, and the locations in which they do so (eg. home or work).

Secondly, the decentralisation of surveillance through the use of internet-enabled technologies has allowed for surveillance to transcend enclosed physical spaces and to be applied outside of the panoptic walls of the office, for example. An example of this would be GPS satellite tracking installed in trucks for drivers, or mobile phone location data tracking for sales personnel on the road. Whilst it could be argued that these rely on centralised monitoring, they nonetheless make use of a decentralised type of architecture in that satellite and cellular networks are used to collect the data, which is then relayed to the centralised location where the data is analysed and used in the management of the subjects under surveillance.

Thirdly, whereas the panopticon's surveillance effects were limited to small populations within the panopticon's architecture, the new cyber optics allows for the surveillance of large populations due to the network architecture of the Internet. The new electronic passports that are being issued to citizens in numerous countries is an example of mass surveillance of large numbers of people.³⁸

Lastly, internet-enabled surveillance and dataveillance has largely become, in a sense, democratised and participatory. A fascinating development that came along with the ubiquity of mobile technology (phones, tablets, smartwatches, fitness trackers etc), is the ease with which people are now willing to publicly share their location, and what they are doing. It is quite possible that every Facebook newsfeed on the planet has

displayed at least one "Sam Smith is feeling 🤔 on holiday in  Lisbon, Portugal", or some such post indicating the restaurants friends and acquaintances are visiting, or airports they're flying out of. Applications like Instagram, Twitter and Facebook allow users to share where they are not only by "checking in" through their phone's GPS capability, but also to share pictures of where they are, and to write about what they're doing and where. Others are proudly mapping out their jogging route through their fitness trackers and posting that in their social media accounts, and in some cases even sharing that information with total strangers they interact with occasionally via the tracker's mobile phone app. Others

³⁸ This will be elaborated on in greater detail in the next chapter, which deals with governmentality and biopower.

yet are furiously chasing Pokémon and meeting strangers to battle in real-world locations, or playing other similar games. In doing these things, people are willingly and freely participating in and perpetuating their own surveillance, and exposing their private doings to ever-increasing numbers of people, including colleagues, employers and, in some cases, customers.

Another way in which internet-based surveillance has become participatory is through gamification. Companies across virtually every industry are making use of gamification to engage, motivate, control and manage employee and customer experiences. One such a company is Samsung, which has a social loyalty program on Samsung.com, called Samsung Nation. This program is powered by Badgeville, which is an application that rewards users for engaging with content across the Samsung user community. "Samsung's gamification program is designed to reward brand advocates and customers who want to engage with their community between big purchases. The program, which can be experienced by registering on Samsung.com, has been very successful in surfacing the brand's fans, and increasing participation across their user community" (Duggan, 2012). Gamification programs are not just fun and games however. They contain complex behaviour analytics algorithms that provide corporate management with significant insight into user behaviour across the user community.

From choosing to reward behaviours that align with business objectives to guiding the experience of the user, it is possible for businesses to actually drive important user behaviours, as well as gain deep insight into the health of their community...Harnessing the power of influence and gamification techniques enables complete control of your community, which is increasingly important for any smart business looking to leverage the millions of behaviours occurring on their own properties and experiences (Duggan,2012).

Thus companies are increasingly able to not just manage their employees, but also their customers.

Last but not least, surveillance has become democratised. It no longer only relies on hierarchical observation in that absolutely anyone can easily become the surveillant. This is evidenced by the 'name-and-shame' type campaigns we get on social media. A frequently seen example of this is when people take pictures or video of someone else committing a crime or a selfish act, to then post it online to their social media accounts in order to punish the perpetrator by publicly shaming them. In a certain sense there is really no escaping the electronic eye, since almost every person around you will have a camera and a voice recording device in their pocket with the ability to make your transgressions public, on a global scale, within seconds. Thus the surveillance becomes multi-directional as opposed to hierarchical.

Internet-enabled surveillance also has a number of consequences in common with the panopticon, but there are marked divergences and differences. Panoptic surveillance, as I noted in the preceding chapter, is permanent in its effects, even if the practice of the surveillance is discontinuous. That is, it is permanent in its effects, as long as the subject being surveilled is keenly aware of its presence, and is informed of the possible (continuous or discontinuous) surveillance. The disciplinary effects of panoptic surveillance are contingent upon the explicit knowledge that you are being watched as well as for what purpose, but as we traverse the web and go about our daily lives, we are not usually keenly and consciously aware of exactly

what data is being collected from us by whom and what it will be used for, even if we are aware of being surveilled. This means that the disciplinary effect of dataveillance can become diluted, since the awareness of being surveilled becomes a vague thought as opposed to a constant conscious reminder. Unlike panoptic surveillance, which does not have to be continuous to be permanent in its effects, dataveillance is also necessarily continuous, since it does not require a human watcher, but is machine-driven. Computers are designed to continuously run in the background, collecting data, and when there is an anomalous behaviour or action, it automatically flags it for human analysis or intervention. It is this architecture of electronic surveillance that makes it both similar to and different from panoptic surveillance. With electronic surveillance, as with panoptic surveillance, it is the explicit sign of the presence of a supervisor that induces the disciplinary effect. It is for this reason that some businesses, like small shops, have fake or dummy CCTV cameras strategically placed so as to make them obvious, and thereby discouraging prospective thieves while maintaining employee productivity. What needs to be recognised here however, is that it would be incorrect to assume that it is just the seeing/being seen dyad that is responsible for the disciplinary effect of either type of surveillance. Both types of surveillance could not have any power effect in the absence of a cognisant, rational subject who is acutely aware of being surveilled by another cognisant entity. One study jointly conducted by researchers from Wharton and Kenan-Flagler Business School illustrates this point nicely. The authors of the study found that caregivers in the 42 hospitals they focused their research on, were less likely to follow proper hand washing procedures the further they were into their shift, and the more stressful and busy their day was. In fact, hygiene compliance rates were often below 50%. The researchers then wondered whether workers would be more likely to remember to follow the proper guidelines for hygiene if the hospital implemented an RFID based people analytics system that monitored their hand hygiene practices. These were the outcomes:

First, the implementation of RFID monitoring did lead to an increase in hand hygiene compliance, particularly when managers successfully prepared their employees for its implementation. And it lasted at organizations that continued to use the technology – for almost two years before gradually dropping off. However, when RFID monitoring was completely abandoned at a number of the organizations (in many cases due to grants running out), compliance rates dropped to numbers *below* the rates before RFID tracking was even implemented. The habit didn't stick – and things actually got worse.

It is clear from the study that an acute awareness of the surveillance plays a central role in the level of compliance. Also, electronic surveillance of this type doesn't seem to be permanent in its effects either. In the study the compliance began to drop off after two years of being in use, indicating that the subjects under surveillance started to become complacent with the surveillance. What this means, is that for this kind of surveillance to be permanent in its effects, there would have to be a constant visible reminder of the surveillance and the consequences of non-compliance, since the surveilled become accustomed to the surveillance and therefore less mindful of their actions. Whereas the panopticon itself is a constant reminder of the surveillance, electronic systems used for dataveillance are more innocuous. They are not visibly imposing enough. The surveillance therefore has to be actively and strategically managed and

made visible in order to effect compliance for longer periods. As discussed in the previous chapter, Foucault saw the disciplinary power brought about by the architecture of the panopticon as, in addition to being visible, also unverifiable in the sense that the prison inmate must never know for sure whether he is being watched. He must believe however that he is being watched at any given time, and thus the power over him is automatised and disindividualised. With electronic surveillance, and in particular dataveillance, we are dealing with a power that is simultaneously both verifiable and unverifiable. By having a computer system doing the monitoring in the background all the time the effect is the automation and machination of power. This is the verifiable layer. The unverifiable layer is not knowing when the computer system is being monitored and what the information will be used for, or even what historical information or surveillance will be accessed. This is an important point to consider in that the architecture of the panopticon relied on the illusion of the constant gaze of actual eyes to perpetuate its effects, and the purpose was clear: to assure compliance with the rules and regulations, to enforce discipline. The cyberopticon on the other hand relies on the illusion of a constant gaze penetrating through the lens of data analytics, and with it comes a new power effect: the datafication of power, or data as power. All those bits and bytes of metadata that is constantly collected and collated can be used for any number of purposes at any point in time, whether they be by companies for vetting employees or for marketing, or by governments to root out terrorists or spies. Moreover, the gaze is constant, permanent and ever-present and there is no illusory element, in that the anonymity of almost every individual with any kind of telecommunications or internet connection has been all but stripped away as they go about their daily connected and networked existence leaving behind metadata breadcrumbs. There are no shadows to hide in, and the expertise needed to escape the gaze of the cyberopticon are totally beyond the skills sets of the vast majority. According to Schneier (2015, pg. 42),

maintaining Internet anonymity against a ubiquitous surveillant is nearly impossible. If you forget even once to enable your protections, or click on the wrong link, or type the wrong thing, you've permanently attached your name to whatever anonymous provider you're using. The level of operational security required to maintain privacy and anonymity in the face of a focused and determined investigation is beyond the resources of even trained government agents. Even a team of highly trained Israeli assassins was quickly identified in Dubai, based on surveillance camera footage around the city.

Large sets of data that we think we are providing anonymously suffer the same fate. Even when we think we have provided totally anonymous information, it is relatively easy for that information to be traced back to its source. One example of this surfaced from research done by a computer scientist in the 1990's, whereby she "found that 87 percent of the population in the United States, 216 million of 248 million people, could likely be uniquely identified by their five-digit ZIP code combined with their gender and date of birth. For about half, just a city, town, or municipality name was sufficient" (Schneier, 2015, pg. 43). Thus the spatial distribution of bodies surveilled in the cyberopticon becomes relatively inconsequential, since our unembodied selves as data, our 'dataviduals', always leave behind a trail of phosphorous footprints.

These differences between the panopticon and what I have come to term the cyberopticon have several implications for power relations. Whilst disciplinary power is by no means void (we still have electronic 'eyes' and other technologies, that, when individuals are acutely aware of them, will spur people on to comply with behavioural norms and be disciplined) the cybershift has ushered in a new kind of power. The automation, machination and datafication of power means that the subjection of the watched occurs now through *management* or orchestration in addition to discipline. The data and metadata that is collected by the cyberopticon and sorted and flagged for human follow-up and intervention, is actively managed and manipulated by a supervisor or supervisors who have been put in charge of monitoring the system in question, or by algorithms or artificial intelligence applications.

At the beginning of this chapter, I already started to describe how this kind of dataveillance works in companies, where human resources departments are increasingly using people analytics to assess, interpret and evaluate employees' actions, emotions and communications (amongst others), so as to effectively (and often preemptively) manipulate or *manage* their conduct at work. The subjection of the employee is now driven by the data collected by the system and the manipulation and management of that data by a supervisor, in order to manage organisational behaviour and above all drive productivity and weed out non-compliance.

Another curious phenomenon in the subjection of twenty-first century 'dividuals' is that the subject itself is no longer quite the same docile body that it was under the disciplinary panopticon. The subject now has a far more active and participatory role in its own subjection, in that it not only regulates itself under the watchful gaze of the cyberopticon, but it is also, very often consciously, responsible for providing the means of subjection, the metadata collected by the cyberopticon's dataveillance applications. In a certain sense then, the subject is partly responsible for creating the conditions under which its own subjection takes place.

2.3.1.2. From a new mechanics to a cybernetics³⁹

As I noted in the preceding chapter, the mechanics that Foucault refers to is an important element in his discussion on disciplinary power and its effects on the constitution of the subject, since mechanics relates specifically to the subjection of the body. Bodies are subjected by disciplinary technologies through manipulation by means of physical separation, as well as through classification and examination. As noted by Deleuze in the opening quote of this section, the factory has now given way to the corporation, and these practices of spatially arranging bodies, classification, and examination, have given rise to new

³⁹ The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines cybernetics as “the science of communication and control theory that is concerned especially with the comparative study of automatic control systems (as the nervous system and brain and mechanical-electrical communication systems).” If Foucault’s new mechanics relied on the control of bodies through classification based on the automatic and disciplined functioning of these bodies through their nervous system, brain functioning, physical actions and so on, then cybernetics constitutes that and the added automated control of bodies through classification carried out by hardware and software.

practices that were only enabled by what I have come to refer to as the twenty-first century episteme, the cybershift. On the factory floor, Taylorist management practices neatly filed bodies into a production line, timed them, regulated their movement, and ensured that they operate in unison. Such processes of subjection were objectifying in that the individual was given a social and personal identity through classification - workers were diligent/lazy, competent/incompetent, strong/weak, etc - and classification is the mechanics of disciplinary power.

Today we cannot possibly talk about bodies in the same way that Foucault talks about them in *Discipline and Punish*, since we have indeed become divided, or 'dividuals'. Every 'dividual' today occupies two distinct but highly interconnected worlds - the lived-in world where our physical bodies reside, and cyberspace, where our selves as data reside, as dataviduals. To the extent that power relations could be inscribed on the body of the individual, the modern individual has not only a physical body, but also its virtual self. This of course has some profound consequences for a reinterpretation of Foucauldian relations of power. Insofar as sovereign power as repression gave way to the more subtle and pervasive forms of disciplinary governance and self-governance, these are giving way to a new kind of power which goes beyond power as repression or power as discipline, but to power as management - management of the divided self, and management of others, in the lived realm as well as cyberspace.

Foucault argued that disciplinary power came about in part through "five distinct operations" that together resulted in the "normalisation" of the subject. These constitute comparison, differentiation, hierarchisation, homogenisation, and exclusion (D&P, pg. 182-184). As we saw in the preceding sections on Taylorism and the twentieth century working subject, comparison was pivotal to ensuring compliance on the shop-floor. But comparison was also a physical thing insofar as the supervisor collected information on workers to compare through observation of their bodies on the assembly line and their output. Today's 'dividual' is compared and contrasted on the basis of the masses of data collected on him by human supervisors, electronic systems or algorithms, and the metadata he leaves behind either consciously or unconsciously as he goes about his daily existence in the world and in the web. Consider again the people analytics described in the opening section to this chapter, whereby even worker emotions are now data points used for comparison and contrast, in order to efficiently manage not only the worker, and to pinpoint deviances, but to understand how to manage the worker's environment in order to elicit the "correct" emotional responses for optimum productivity. This is therefore a kind of power that not only acts on the body of the subject to render it docile in the sense that bodies are traced and tracked in real time through cameras, gps systems, key cards, amongst numerous others, but it is a power that also has the ability to inscribe the very soul of the subject, rendering the subject manageable through the manipulation or management of emotion. The management of today's subject, the 'dividual' is not as simple as just this however. The 'dividual' as a divided entity that has a 'datavidual' presence in the web, also has the ability to choose, to some degree, what metadata s/he leaves behind as s/he traverses the

web, to carefully build up a persona for the purpose of living up to comparison, and to manage the emotions and opinions they put on display. The dividual is able to construct a cyber-self that conforms exactly with what they perceive to be acceptable in society, with what is considered to be 'normal', thereby executing a kind of self-normalisation if you will, whereby the dividual as datavidual carefully constructs itself to differentiate itself from other dataviduals, but also actively seeks to conform, to perch itself on the "external frontier of the normal" (D&P, pg.183) and to be homogenous. Consider for example the carefully crafted and edited status updates in social media, accompanied by equally carefully crafted profile pictures and selfies. According to Rutledge (2013), from a semantic perspective a selfie can be interpreted to be "a 'little' self, an aspect of identity...Selfies are intimate because they represent a personal experience that is also social, taken for the express purpose of sharing. This gives selfies a level of self-conscious authenticity..." Selfies are much more than just fleeting or momentary documentations of a dividual's lived existence. They, together with the status updates, captions and emojis that underpin them, serve as a careful self-construction of the datavidual as an object of social discourse. As power shifts from the disciplinary kind to the managerial kind the subject constitutes itself not just as an object of scientific discourse to be studied, classified and normalised in its physicality, but as the individual becomes a dividual, he also becomes an object of social discourse to be publicly displayed, evaluated and judged. If there was a death of the subject that came about with the epistemic shift that occurred in the nineteenth century as man became both the originator of scientific knowledge and the object to be known, the cybershift brings with it the 'death' of the individual, and we are faced with a new philosophical conundrum: the divided subject of the twenty-first century is both born and gives birth to himself. He is formed by his lived-in environment with its prevailing discourses and relations of power, but is also able to transcend that formation to carefully construct a different and more ideal form of the self which is put out there for the express purpose of being compared and differentiated, evaluated and judged. This ideal form of the self is not an entirely different persona, a fake, or a dummy self however, and neither is it an icon, a simulacrum in the Platonic sense, or the kind of self depiction or self construction that has occurred within the arts for as long as mankind has been able to create self-portraits.

In order to better explain what I mean with the idea of the datavidual, I would like to draw attention to Jean Baudrillard's (2010, pg. 3) analogy of the nature of a simulation. He compares it with feigning an illness:

Whoever fakes an illness can simply stay in bed and make everyone believe he is ill. Whoever simulates an illness produces in himself some of the symptoms...simulation threatens the difference between the "true" and the "false", the "real" and the "imaginary". Is the simulator sick or not, given that he produces "true" symptoms? For if any symptom can be "produced", and can no longer be taken as a fact of nature, then every illness can be considered as simulatable and simulated, and medicine loses its meaning...

If this description of a simulation holds true, then we can indeed draw a line of comparison with the datavidual in the sense that this online persona, this avatar of ourselves if you will, produces actions,

effects and consequences in the lived world of the (in)dividual - which certainly blurs the lines between true and false, real and imaginary. However, if we follow Baudrillard's line of argument and apply it to the constitution of the contemporary human subject, the dividual with his associated datavidual, we run into serious trouble, because then we, as subjects, can no longer be taken as a fact of nature. Then our datavidual, the simulation, precedes the real, drawing into question our very mode of being.

This issue can be addressed by turning to the problem outlined in Foucault's 1969 essay titled *What is an Author?*, where he talks about how the writing subject, the author, endlessly disappears from the text he produces - that the writing in effect kills the author by vacating him from the text. This idea of the death of the author is not new, and there is plenty to be said about it, in particular as it relates to the work of Roland Barthes as well. But for the argument I want to make here, *why* the death of the author occurs is not pertinent. What is pertinent, is Foucault's argument preceding the question as to *how* this occurs. In order to explain his position, Foucault asks "What is a work?" (Foucault, 1998, pg. 207). He notes that the boundaries of what makes up an author's work rests on an editorial decision and not an objective fact. Many of the texts and notes compiled and used by an author throughout his lifetime, such as a laundry list, are not considered to be part and parcel of the author's body of work:

...[W]e must still ask whether everything that he wrote, said, or left behind is part of his work. The problem is both theoretical and technical...What if, within a workbook filled with aphorisms, one finds a reference, the notation of a meeting or of an address, or a laundry list: is it a work, or not? Why not? And so on, ad infinitum. How can one define a work amid the millions of traces left by someone after his death?...A multitude of questions arises with regard to this notion of the work. Consequently, it is not enough to declare that we should do without the writer (the author) and study the work itself (Foucault, 1998, pg. 207-208).

If the datavidual, understood as a simulacrum in the Baudrillardian sense above, precedes the real, the dividual situated in the lived world as a fact of nature, then one could put forward the argument that the (in)dividual disappears in the process, much like Foucault's author. This datavidual takes on its own life as a simulacrum and also as a carefully curated and constructed work that nonetheless affects its author/creator in the world his body occupies, while simultaneously vacating him from his own datafied self. However, much like asking what makes up an author's work, we should ask ourselves what exactly it is that makes up this datavidual. If we accept that every dividual's datafied self, his datavidual, is made up not only of that which he carefully constructs, curates and manages when he goes about his day online, but also of all the other bits and bytes of metadata he leaves in his wake, then we are accepting that the datavidual comprises both the workbook of aphorisms, and the addresses, laundry lists and so on. In doing this, we are also accepting then that the author is intimately entwined with his work, that the dividual and his datavidual are forever tethered. The creation of the datavidual very much depends upon the actions and the movements of the dividual and on everything he produces online, from the pertinent to the mundane, that which he is aware of and that which he is unaware of - even if these can then be determined again in part by the continual writing, rewriting and overwriting of the datavidual in an infinite loop. Each codetermines the mode of existence of the other. There is no a priori, no precedence.

This leads me to take up the position that the dataidividual should in fact be seen as an authentic division of the self (as opposed to a mere depiction or simulacrum) because while it is a virtual construction, it is firstly a consciously idealised representation of the physical self which is still firmly grounded in its lived experience, but secondly it is also partly constructed from all the metadata generated unconsciously as the individual makes his way around the web on a daily basis. This leads me to another critical observation, which is that while we can still talk about the subjection of the body in Foucauldian terms, we have to now consider that the subject occupying today's world is no longer the embodied subject with its duality of having a physical presence and a "soul", as understood by Foucault and the philosophers who preceded him. Today's subject has plurality, and therefore the mechanics of classification, separation and so forth, while still being important constituents in the subjection of the body and the definition of the norms and standards applied to subjectivity, becomes subverted by the datafication of the twenty-first century subject.

2.3.1.3. From a new physiology to cyborgology⁴⁰

As discussed in the first chapter, the lynchpin for the new physiology that Foucault refers to is the examination. It is through the examination that the Foucauldian subject can also emerge as an object to be studied. It is through the examination that the Foucauldian subject is objectified and classed or categorised, and it is the examination that legitimises the surveillance of the subject. Moreover, the examination situates the subject within a field of writing, of text and documents that have the effect of capturing it, fixing it, and ultimately contribute to the shaping of the subject's identity. The examination is also responsible for the creation of a field of knowledge that surrounds, encapsulates and is wielded and perpetuated by the subject, who is also the object of his own knowledge.

As we saw in the sections preceding this, Taylorism made extensive use of the examination in the workplace, but workplace examination centered on physical observation and the administration of verbal or written tests and reviews. Whilst the examination is by no means falling away in today's institutions (schools, corporations etc), it is rather becoming augmented. Consider some of the people analytics technologies mentioned at the beginning of the chapter - all of these are designed to collect extensive data on what employees are doing, and when. They are surveillance tools for sure, but as Foucault acknowledges in his discussion of the new physiology, optics (observation and surveillance) is an integral part of the examination. Thus we now have ubiquitous data collection to add to the optics that are incorporated into the examination.

⁴⁰ The term cyborgology is a mash-up of Cyborg Anthropology, and is a reference to this relatively new, but recognised academic field within Anthropology. Cyborg anthropologists concern themselves with the relationships between people and the electronic devices they incorporate into their lives, and also with the personae that people create online, and the techno-social interactions that spring forth from these.

Consider also the advent of online testing and the online questionnaire, which has become so commonplace that it almost seems innocuous. These are used not only to score and grade employees or students, to homogenise and to classify or categorise them in the same way as traditional exams and tests, but they are also often subject to analyses run by software applications containing algorithms designed to analyse test results and to create a personal profile that reveals far more about the person who took the test than any exam did in the past. Not only does this make each individual a 'case' in the Foucauldian sense, but each 'case' then becomes a target for 'personalisation' - based on the results of the examination, the classification of the individual and where they place on the scale of standardised expectations. A set of personal recommendations can now be extrapolated and applied to guide both the future actions of the individual, and how they are to be treated. This is already being put into practice as a tool for improving employee performance in large corporations across the globe.

Certainly, it is now possible to capture and analyse far more data about employee work activities than ever before — and it is happening on a regular basis. The promise of Big Data is powerful; it presents opportunities for deep learning about work activities — learning that can lead to significant redesign of work flows and dramatic improvements in office ergonomics and employee quality of life. It also offers the ability to enhance the quality of the work experience and to mitigate workplace risks (e.g., liability insurance costs, health insurance costs, business continuity planning). For example...proactive monitoring of keystroke patterns could enhance productivity by identifying employees who are using the delete key regularly and might benefit from additional training. Or tracking and analysing food consumption patterns in the company cafeteria could identify employees at risk of obesity or heart disease (which could predict health problems and increased absences in the future). (Ware, 2015, pg.3)

If with the traditional examination each individual attained their own status, his own individuality, and he was linked to his individuality by those characteristics that made him a 'case', then the new examinations that are intertwined with data analytics designed to guide and adjust the individual's behaviour in the school or workplace makes him a 'project', something to be managed. And so the examination doesn't just constitute the subject as an effect and object of disciplinary power, or as an effect and object of knowledge, but also as an effect and object of data and an effect and object of management through data analytics.

2.4. Conclusion: The Data-Veiled Subject

In this chapter I argued that due to the new epistemic shift of the twenty-first century, the cybershift, we can no longer conceive of power and subjectivity in quite the same way that Foucault did anymore. The reason for this is that we have added a whole new dimension to our lived experience that never existed before - the Web. In this web-based cyberspace, individuals are subjected to extensive dataveillance, a new form of surveillance that tracks not only our physical movements, but also our digital selves, the cyberselves that are borne out of the data that we consciously generate and put out there, as well as the

metadata we unconsciously leave behind in our wake as we surf the Web. Data, and the ability to mine it, to capture and analyse vast quantities of it efficiently and effectively, has therefore become the driver behind new relations of power that have manifested with the cybershift. If power was interlinked with knowledge in disciplinary societies, then in today's networked societies power is also interlinked with the management of data, especially since we have in certain sense become the data. The automation, machination and datafication of power means that both the subjection and the subjectification of the subject now occurs through orchestrated management as opposed to discipline in the Foucauldian sense. The subjection of the (in)dividual is driven by the data collected by the system and the manipulation and management of that data by other (in)dividuals, software applications and complex algorithms, in order to manage behaviour and above all prevent non-compliance.

Another curious phenomenon in the subjection of the twenty-first century dividual is that the subject itself is no longer the inert docile body that it was under the disciplinary panopticon. The subject now has a far more active and participatory role in its own subjection, in that it not only regulates itself under the watchful gaze of the cyberopticon's electronic gaze, but it is also, very often consciously, responsible for providing the means of subjection, the metadata collected by the cyberopticon's dataveillance applications. In a certain sense then, the subject is partly responsible for creating the conditions under which its own subjection takes place since this dividual, as a divided entity that has a datavidual presence in the web, also has the ability to choose, to some degree, what metadata s/he leaves behind as s/he traverses the web, to carefully build up a persona for the purpose of living up to comparison, and to manage the emotions and opinions they put on display. The dividual is able to construct a cyber-self that conforms exactly with what they perceive to be acceptable in society, with what is considered to be 'normal', thereby executing a kind of self-normalisation if you will, whereby the dividual as datavidual carefully constructs itself to differentiate itself from other dataviduals, but also actively tries to blend in, to be homogenous. And so we come face-to-face with a philosophical problem that is unique to the cybershift, and that is that the networked body in the Web is both born and gives birth to himself. He is formed by his lived-in environment with its prevailing discourses and relations of power, but is also able to transcend that and to carefully construct a different and more ideal but yet relatively authentic form of himself.

An area of importance which I have not explored yet, but for which I've been laying the groundwork in this chapter, relates to the subject's ability to act upon the actions of others and the issue of the subjectivation, subjectification and the autonomy of the subject. Using the Foucauldian line of enquiry into governmentality as a guideline in the next chapter, I intend to make a case for a subject who, as a dividual, has transitioned from the Foucauldian *homo economicus* to the new *homo informaticus*, and will explore his subjectivation under contemporary "manageriality".

Chapter 3: Governmentality and Subjectivation in the Networked Society - From Homo Economics to Homo Informaticus, and the Rise of Managementality

3.1. Introduction

As evidenced in the preceding chapter, Foucault's ideas are by no means new to the field of organisational studies. Authors have been citing him for the better part of 25 years in literature on leadership, management, corporate culture and so forth. Many have explicitly based their analyses of power, discipline, and practices of domination within the organisation on Foucault's earlier theories on power, and indeed the vast majority of studies on organisational dynamics that include any reference to Foucault are usually focused on and limited to the works of the earlier Foucault on power. This is a serious limitation, since Foucault himself, in his later lectures on governmentality and neoliberalism, began to develop his theory of power into a far more comprehensive, complex and substantive working theory. I believe that to ignore this evolution is to reduce the rich tapestry of the totality of Foucault's body of work to a select few bare threads.

What is more, is that this reduction of his work in the field of organisational studies to incorporate only his earlier musings on discipline and power has given rise to a certain degree of skepticism as regards the relevance of Foucault for contemporary organisational studies. However, according to Jones (in Dixon, 2007, p. 283-284), this constitutes a kind of fallacy based on ignorance: "There is a sentiment amongst many today that Foucault's time has passed, that we have now finished with Foucault...Maybe what we have finished with is the Foucault that we have come to know."

There are now a number of authors who are starting to give credence to the later work of Foucault, notably his work on governmentality and neoliberalism, and its continued relevance to the field of organisational studies - authors who argue that to discard Foucault at this point is to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Dixon (2007, p.284) in fact postulates that "an expanded reading of Foucault's work on power creates new insights into the way power manifests itself in organisational life [and] broadens organisational scholarship's understanding that this theorising on power includes not only domination and discipline..."

Dixon (2007) argues that the reason for this lies in the nature of Foucault's treatment of the concept of power itself, especially vis-à-vis its role in the constitution of the subject. She rightly contends that Foucault's train of thought on the constitution of the subject hardly follows a linear trajectory. Instead we

are faced with a line of thought, a theory, that is circular and doubles back upon itself. Many organisational scholars have placed a heavy focus on Foucault's work up to the publication of *Discipline and Punish* (1977). Foucault himself however altered (but did not abandon) his view on power after *Discipline and Punish*. He says (1994c, p.225) "Perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others, and in the technologies of individual domination, in the mode of action that an individual exercises upon himself by means of the technologies of the self."

Foucault's concept of governmentality is pivotal in this, as this is the concept upon which that circularity of his theory hinges. It is with governmentality that we see him double back upon himself, amalgamating his later ideas on the technologies of the self with his earlier ideas on the technologies of power. It is also with the marriage of the two that we can start looking at the implications an analysis of organisational life from a governmentality perspective has for business ethics.

It is critical therefore that we rethink the validity of Foucault in organisational studies to also incorporate his later thought on the technologies of the self, and it is with the concept of governmentality then that we need to kick off in order to fully understand the relations of power at play within contemporary connected organisations, as well as the modes through which the networked data-veiled subject constitutes itself.

In this chapter, I would like to first of all track Foucault's development of the subject, its trajectory from being subjected under disciplinary power, through governmentality and neoliberalism, and towards what we can think of as the last phase of his work before he passed away – his ethics, which will be under discussion again in the subsequent chapters.

I believe that in order to fully grasp Foucault's views on ethics, we need to view his development of the subject throughout his entire body of work, as opposed to categorising his subject into neat little boxes as he moved from archaeology to genealogy to governmentality and then to ethics.

It is exactly this kind of compartmentalisation that has led many authors to contend that Foucault did a sort of about-face turn when he launched himself into ethics. Some have even spoken about his ethics as signifying a "return to the subject", as if Foucault had lost sight of the subject somewhere along the line. In contrast to this, I believe that the subject is the underlying, unifying thread that binds Foucault's entire body of work together. The pivotal question, that which lies at the very heart of Foucault's entire line of enquiry, is the constitution of the subject; and if one follows his analysis of the constitution of the subject from his early work right through to *The History of Sexuality* (notably volumes 2 and 3), one finds that he is asking about the nature of a subject who is produced or constituted within the framework of different relations of power, including the power the subject exerts over himself. When seen in this way, there is a clear line of thought from the subject as being constituted through subjection and subjugation, then subjectification, and finally as an extension of subjectification, through the care of the self in his ethics. Foucault himself (1993, p. 203) made this very clear in his lectures titled *About the Beginning of the*

Hermeneutics of the Self, where he stated that one “has to take into account the points where the techniques of the self are integrated into structures of coercion or domination...[where they come together to] form a contact point.” This point of contact is governmentality - it is the bridge between the earlier subjection of the subject under disciplinary power, and the later constitution of the subject through the care of the self.

By the time he started expanding on the concept in his lectures on neoliberalism and governmentality, Foucault saw subjectification as embodying two interrelated yet seemingly opposing concepts, namely that of subjugation and that of subjection. What this means in essence is that subjectification refers to much more than just the exercise of domination and control, but also to having the freedom to resist, to having autonomy (Milchman and Rosenberg 2009, p.64). This then takes us beyond sovereignty and disciplinary power, and onto governmentality and its neoliberal subject, homo economicus. It is also with homo economicus that Foucault transitions from technologies of power towards technologies of the self - and it is the technologies of the self that become “an important point of focus both in his later understanding of the subject as well as in his effort to rethink the possible forms of morality for us today” (Oksala, 2005 p. 162).

Neoliberalism therefore, is not only a manner of governing states or economies, but is closely linked to the government of the individual subject, and to a particular lifestyle, which means that the individual, together with his/her behaviours and actions (technologies of the self) and his/her formation as a subject, is an inextricable element in any analysis of neoliberalism. Thomas Lemke (1997, p.11) expresses this point in the following way:

Foucault’s concept of governmentality has two advantages in theoretical terms for an analysis of neoliberalism. Given that political leadership is only one form of government among others...the distinction between the domain of the state and that of society itself becomes an object of study. In other words, with reference to the issues of government these differentiations are no longer treated as the basis and the limit of governmental practice, but as its instrument and effect. Secondly, the liberal polarity of subjectivity and power ceases to be plausible. From the perspective of governmentality, government refers to a continuum, which extends from political government right through to forms of self-regulation, namely “technologies of the self”...

With Foucault’s conception of governmentality, we are able to conceive of neoliberal forms of government as not only comprising overt state apparatuses that are institutionalised and specialised, but also as employing indirect techniques for exercising control over individuals without being directly responsible for them (as a sovereign would be for example). Instead, individual subjects are expected to take responsibility for themselves, particularly in terms of what Lemke (1997, p.12) refers to as “social risks” - things such as illness, unemployment, poverty and so on. These problems therefore become issues of self-care. Closely linked to the notion of self-care, is the economic freedom that has to necessarily underlie it,

precisely because neoliberalism is a political rationality that attempts to make the social realm an economically driven one which reduces state welfare and increases the burden of welfare on the individual. This increase in the burden of welfare on the individual by making him a more liberated, economically active subject lies at the heart of the technologies of power, and the relations of domination and self-regulation exercised by the state, institutions and individuals.

This paradoxically liberated yet dominated neoliberal individual is *homo economicus* – man as an economic subject at the root of politics. What characterises *homo economicus*, is that he is a competitive being, whose tendency to be competitive should be nurtured and encouraged. Foucault argues that everything human beings hold onto as objectives to be reached or ends for which means to reach them should be found, including marriage, raising children, and crime, can be understood “economically” – in terms of a calculation of cost for benefit. The subject has therefore evolved into “human capital, and as such, subjects are continually investing in themselves as human capital through whatever they do in order to increase their income, achieve satisfaction and so forth. For Foucault then, this subject who is essentially human capital, *homo economicus*, is essentially an entrepreneur of himself (Read, 2009, p. 5).

In today’s networked world, the world that has come about due to the cybershift or the technology revolution of this century, there are some fundamental changes occurring not only in the way that power is exercised over what I (following in the footsteps of Deleuze) came to term ‘dividuals’ in the preceding chapter, but also in the ways in which they resist relations of power and in turn wield power, as well as in the way in which they are constituted as subjects that are governed and that govern. Using the Foucauldian line of enquiry as a model or a rough guideline in this chapter, I will attempt to ultimately make a case for a subject who is just rising from the rupture caused by the current historical (cyber)shift, a ‘*homo informaticus*’ if you will, and his subjectification within contemporary *managementality*. I will take the notion of self-care into careful consideration to see how and whether it is metamorphosing since the era of neoliberalism has started to transform with the advent of the cybershift. This chapter therefore explores Foucault’s governmentality, neoliberalism and *homo economicus*, before then unpacking the central tenets behind what I have come to term the dividual - this *homo informaticus* who finds himself governed and governing within a system of *managementality* as opposed to governmentality.

3.2. Governmentality

Foucault realised that if the concept of power is on the table and up for analysis, then one would at some point have to necessarily consider the idea of government.

In his lecture titled “*Governmentality*” (1994b, p.201-222), he therefore turns his attention to government, and points out that the same kinds of shifts that occurred that changed the nature of the exercise of and subjection to power, also occurred in government. He argues that the first real form of

government was sovereign government under a king or a prince, which was the form of government for feudal societies. This form of government was more of a ruling over territory rather than population, particularly because the population was largely seen as subject to the king, and government was a question of "advice to the prince" as regards the proper conduct of a prince, their obedience to God, their means of securing loyalty and respect from their subjects and so forth. Foucault points out however, that there was a gradual shift in the way in which sovereign government was approached, which occurred in the sixteenth century, whereby the government of the state by the prince became an important question. This shift can be seen in the works of the likes of Machiavelli, and are indicative of a problematic of government that arose at this time.

How to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor - all these problems, in their multiplicity and intensity, seem to me to be characteristic of the sixteenth century, which lies, to put it schematically, at the crossroads of two processes: the one that, shattering the structures of feudalism, leads to the establishment of the great territorial, administrative, and colonial states; and a totally different movement that, with the Reformation and the Counter-reformation, raises the issue of how one must be spiritually ruled and led on this earth in order to achieve eternal salvation (Foucault, 1994b, pg.202).

The sixteenth century therefore sees the emergence of government as administration as well as ruling over a particular territory populated with subjects that are essentially owned by the sovereign (in addition to the ascetic aspect Foucault mentions in the above). In this era, we see an "art of government" slowly begin to emerge, and by the nineteenth century, this "art of government" is firmly entrenched and underlying the disciplinary society. The disciplinary government has the task of setting up "an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his goods" (Foucault, 1994b, pg.207). He goes on to argue that under sovereignty the king and the law were inseparable, and the law was enforced by the sovereign, who expected absolute obedience. The sovereign even had the right to decide life and death. "This was the juridical form of sovereign power - the right of a ruler to seize things, time, bodies, ultimately the life of subjects" (Rabinow and Rose, 2006, pg.196). With the rise of the art of government, this dynamic started to shift, and the rule of law became a question not of imposition, but of disposition, or of applying tactics, by using laws themselves as tactics to achieve certain outcomes. It marked the emergence of administrative and governmental apparatuses and certain forms of knowledge of the state, such as the "elements, dimensions, and factors of power, questions that were termed precisely 'statistics'." These apparatuses also came into being just as mercantilism and the science of police work (and by extension the prison system) began to rise to prominence (Foucault, 1994b, pg.211-212). Governmental apparatuses employed a range of mechanisms with which to control not just individual subjects, but entire populations, and power becomes exercised at the level of life and its governance (mortality, health, procreation etc.) (Rabinow and Rose, 2006, pg.196). There is a direct correlation here with the discussion in the preceding chapters of Foucault's analyses of the shifts that occurred in broader society as well, from the treatment and classification of the mad, the

incarcerated, students and workers. The shift from sovereign government to the later form that began to emerge in the sixteenth century was based on the increasing importance of scientific analysis and rationality, and once again there is a conundrum to deal with:

(T)he state is governed according to rational principles that are intrinsic to it and cannot be derived solely from natural or divine laws or the principles of wisdom and prudence. The state, like nature, has its own proper form of rationality, albeit of a different sort. Conversely, the art of government, instead of seeking to found itself in transcendental rules, a cosmological model, or a philosophic-moral ideal, must find the principles of its rationality in that which constitutes the specific reality of the state...right until the early eighteenth century, this form of 'reason of state' acted as a sort of obstacle to the development of the art of government (Foucault, 1994b, pg. 213).

Foucault argues that it wasn't until the eighteenth century that the art of government was able to shift out of the juridical framework of sovereignty to a proper political science, because for some time it tried to reconcile itself and coexist with sovereignty. It was due to the emergence of the population as the central problem to what Foucault calls the "freezing of the art of government" during the seventeenth century that the art of government could become unfrozen. Statistical analysis, as a tool wielded by the apparatuses of government and administration, began to quantify certain phenomena related to populations, such as mortality rates and descending spirals of labor and wealth, which meant that the population began to take preeminence over the traditional focus on the family. He says that

it is from the middle of the eighteenth century that the family appears in this dimension of instrumentality relative to the population, with the institution of campaigns to reduce mortality, and to promote marriages, vaccinations, and so on. Thus, what makes it possible for the theme of population to unblock the field of government is this elimination of the family as model (Foucault, 1994b, pg. 216).

The welfare of the population of a country therefore becomes, above all else, the purpose and locus of government in that government acts directly on the population with large-scale campaigns, as well as indirectly through tactics and techniques intended to influence demographics (eg. control of birth rates, migration and immigration), amongst other things. All of this stems from an understanding that population, territory, and wealth are interrelated. In essence therefore, we see a transition in the eighteenth century from the art of government to political science. It is also at this time that discipline, although present and important throughout the transition from sovereignty through to the seventeenth century art of government, moves to the centre stage of political science:

(D)iscipline was never more important or valorized than at the moment when it became important to manage a population: the managing of a population not only concerns the collective mass of phenomena, the level of its aggregate effects, but it also implies the management of population in its depths and its details...Accordingly, we need to see things not in terms of the replacement of society of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a society of government; in reality one has a triangle, sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism the apparatuses of security (Foucault, 1994b, pg. 219).

It is with the shift towards government as more of a political science aimed at controlling the population, and further away from the sovereign control over territory with the population almost regarded as an extension of that territory, that the population becomes a datum, “a field of intervention,...an objective of governmental techniques” (Foucault, 1994b, pg. 219). What occurred at this time then, was that the economy came to be seen as a field within government together with political economy, the science of political intervention in that field. And so arose another triad of government, population and political economy, which together are still evident in states today. This then constitutes what Foucault talks about as the “history of governmentality” (Foucault, 1994b, pg. 219).

Foucault (1994b, pg. 219-220) defines governmentality in the following way:

By this word I mean three things:

1. The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target the population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.
2. The tendency that, over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led toward the preeminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline and so on) of this type of power – which may be termed ‘government’ – resulting, on the one hand, in the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses, and, on the other, in the development of a whole complex of knowledges [savoirs].
3. The process or, rather, the result of the process through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and gradually becomes ‘governmentalized’.

This three-fold definition of governmentality forms the point of departure for Foucault in his exposition of the concept of governmentality, which he continued to develop in later lectures. The first of the three points that he makes tells us that governmentality is what constitutes a government, the different facets that make up a government. It is a government that targets the population, has the health, wellbeing and general prosperity of the population in mind, and employs political economy in order to achieve this. Foucault sees economy not in the conventional sense that is in use today, but more in line with its broader original meaning, that is to say as a meticulous management, through surveillance and control, of the individuals, goods and wealth within a nation for the common good of all - which he compares with the patriarchal management of these elements within the smaller family unit (Foucault, 1994b, p.207).

The second part of Foucault’s definition of governmentality refers to the historical development of Western governments. At first the predominant type of power exercised over a nation’s subjects was sovereign power, which was implemented through force. This was later followed by governments that exercised disciplinary power characterized by techniques of surveillance and ultimately self-discipline that were developed to produce ‘docile bodies’. These in turn evolved to incorporate the development of bio- political forms of power aimed at the collective population. Foucault is very careful however to point out that this isn’t a linear progression whereby one form of government coupled with its particular strategy

for exercising power gives way to the next, since each new form carries with it the residues of the old. And so we are rather faced with the aforementioned triangle of “sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism the apparatuses of security” (Foucault, 1994b, p.219).

The third point he makes refers to the process through which states have become governmentalized since the Middle Ages.

I am aware that this is a rather limited interpretation of Foucault’s notion of governmentality, as it is a concept he developed through the course of a number of his lectures - a concept that grew and eventually incorporated nuances taken from some of his other works too. According to Joseph (2009, p.13) “by the time of his 1982 lectures, Foucault is talking of governmentality as ‘a strategic field of power relations in the broadest and not merely political sense of the term’, something that he relates to his arguments about the government of the self.” It therefore doesn’t do Foucault any justice to define governmentality solely in the narrow form above, but rather to see governmentality against the backdrop of and being related to a number of his other ideas, such as the notion of care of the self, the relationship between power and knowledge, biopower and so forth.

I would therefore like to delve into this concept of governmentality a bit further.

When he develops the concept of governmentality, Foucault traces its gradual unfoldment as from Ancient Greece to contemporary forms of neoliberalism. According to Lemke (2007, p.44), Foucault uses the concept of governmentality as a “guideline” for a “genealogy of the modern state”. Lemke then goes on to argue that there are two notable points that one has to keep in mind when employing an analysis of the notion of governmentality. The first point is that governmentality represents Foucault’s working hypothesis with regard to the reciprocal manner in which technologies of power, forms of knowledge and modes of intervention are manifested. Power and its exercise becomes rationalized in government.

The second point is that Foucault steers clear of giving us an analysis of the development and transformation of political-administrative structures in favour of a focus on the multiplicity of diverse relations between the institutionalization of governmental technologies and historical forms of subjectification. In other words, Foucault wants to demonstrate “how the modern state and the modern autonomous individual co-determine each other’s emergence” (Lemke, 2007, p. 44). As I noted above, when Foucault starts with his analysis of the ‘arts of government’, he is very clear about the fact that he doesn’t want to use the purely political meaning of the word ‘government’ that we use today. For Foucault, the term is used in its original historical state, which means to include management of the state, the family, the household, children and oneself. He therefore makes a very clear distinction between the ‘problematic of government in general’ and ‘the political form of government’ (Lemke, 2007, p.45). What Foucault leaves us with then, is a concept that provides us with a useful tool for the analysis of the transformations that have taken place and continue to take place in contemporary statehood and subjectivity.

Lemke (2007, p.49-50) makes a good case for the use of Foucault's methodology in the analysis of contemporary statehood and subjectivity as well. He argues that such an analytics of government as proposed by Foucault is especially interested in looking at the technologies of government as a way of accounting for transformations in states and their policies. "It proposes a concept of technology that seeks to grasp the materiality of technologies by circumventing two possible pitfalls that either reduce technologies to an expression of social relations or conceive of society as the result of technological determinations." (Lemke, 2007, pg.49)

According to Lemke, there are two ways in which an analytics of government posits the notion of technology in order to avoid expressivism and determinism. Firstly, by distinguishing a plurality of governmental technologies, an analytics of government examines the production of forms of subjectivity, gender regimes and so on in practical terms. There are four different technologies which can be found in Foucault's work. In his earlier works he looked at the technologies used to produce docile bodies, or to exert discipline over the individual, as well as technologies for the regulation of populations. In his later work however, he refers to 'technologies of the self' and 'political technologies of individuals'. The former refers to the ways in which we exercise self control and guidance, and how the individual subject relates to him/herself as an ethical being. The latter on the other hand refers to the ways in which we have come to recognise ourselves as a collective, a society, and as part of culture, a nation or a state. Lemke argues that by these distinct and differing technologies, an analytics of government "avoids the pre-analytical distinction between micro- and macro-level, individual and state. It conceives of both processes and individualisation and practices of institutionalisation as technologies of government" (Lemke, 2007, pg.49). This approach to the analytics of government thus enables us to question the relationships between the different technologies of government, such as the discourse between technologies of the self and political government.

Secondly, this kind of analytics of government hinges on a conception of technology that allows for symbolic devices to be included in the analysis over and above actual physical devices. What this means, is that symbols, discourses and narratives are seen as actual practices as opposed to just being regarded as purely semiotic occurrences. In other words, what we refer to when we talk about governmental technologies, is the complex nexus of procedures, calculations, tools and instruments, and practical mechanisms through which the authorities try to mould the decisions and behaviours of others so as to reach certain objectives. Some of these technologies include, according to Inchausti, Miller and Rose (in Lemke 2007, p.50), "methods of examination and evaluation, techniques of notation, numeration and calculation...; routines for the timing and spacing of activities in specific locations...; formulas for the organisation of work; ...architectural forms in which interventions take place...; and professional vocabularies." Lemke notes that this kind of analysis that draws a distinction between the material and the symbolic, and political technologies and technologies of the self, confronts us with an integral investigative account that flays open the dynamic interplay of a complex web of elements that are often mistakenly separated and viewed in isolation. It also questions the whole idea of narrowly defining the state as an institutional ensemble and instead conceives of institutions as technologies which manifest themselves in institutional settings.

Although Foucault's analysis of the state and the revelation of his notion of governmentality are overtly focused on a genealogy of the modern state, his treatment of governmentality and the state as being made up of various technologies within institutionalised environments leaves us with a much broader framework than just the workings of the governments of nations. Foucault sees governmentality as something that is both internal and external to the contemporary state, and the state itself as a dynamic entity comprised of societal power relations. The result of viewing governmentality in this way means, in essence, that the distinctions between state and society, and between politics and economy, are not definitive differences functioning as borders between one another, but are rather part of and effected by governmental technologies. The consequence of this, says Lemke (2007, p.57-58) is that "what we observe today is not a reduction of state sovereignty and planning capacities, but a displacement from formal to informal techniques of government and the appearance of new actors on the scene of government". In accordance with this then, we are given a framework within which the political changes that we experience today can be understood as a promotion of forms of government which foster and enforce individual responsibility and entrepreneurship in a number of social environments or domains (Lemke, 2007, pg.45).

In fact, one of the lynchpins in the pivot from the sovereign juridical government to the art of government and the modern state is the rise of the importance of commerce, or doing business, in society. Foucault reasons that with the rise in international commercial activity, with mercantilism as a new actor on the scene of government in the sixteenth century, whereby companies began to be established, states started to trade with one another, and monetary circulation between states became firmly established, wealth became tied directly to population. "[E]nrichment through commerce offers the possibility of increasing the population, the manpower, production and export, and of endowing oneself with large, powerful armies. During the period of mercantilism and cameralistics, the population-wealth pair was the privileged object of the new governmental reason" (Foucault, 1994c, pg.69). This population-wealth interconnection became problematic for states however, in that the methods of government that came to be established within sovereignty were either no longer applicable, or became inadequate. Thus arose one of the conditions for the formation of what Foucault terms political economy, which developed as a result of the realisation that "the resources-population relationship could no longer be fully managed through a coercive regulatory system that would tend to raise the population in order to augment the resources" (Foucault, 1994c, pg.69). It is as a result of this that the technologies for the regulation of populations came about⁴¹:

Among the main objects...was population, in which everyone recognised an essential component of the

⁴¹ As noted above, there are four so-called technologies circumscribed in Foucault's work. Thus far I have gone into the technologies used to produce docile bodies, or to exert discipline over the individual in some depth in the first two chapters, but have only begun to explore the third, which constitutes the technologies for the regulation of populations (the fourth will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters).

strength of states. And the management of this population required, among other things, a health policy capable of diminishing infant mortality, preventing epidemics, and bringing down the rate of endemic diseases, of intervening in living conditions in order to alter them and impose standards on them...[This] must be written back into the general framework of a “biopolitics”; the latter tends to treat the “population” as a mass of living and coexisting beings who present particular biological and pathological traits and who thus come under specific knowledge and technologies.

An important concept to grasp in Foucault’s discussion of governmentality then, is this idea of biopolitics as a series of interventions and regulatory controls with the population as its target.

3.2.1. Biopolitics and Biopower

Foucault, in his development of the concepts of governmentality, biopolitics and biopower is, as throughout his body of work, concerned with an analysis of the transition from the Middle Ages, through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and into the contemporary era, with tracking the rise of a great shift in how societies are governed, and ultimately how the human subject is constituted.

As discussed in the preceding sections, Foucault talks about how government under a sovereign focused on territory, and the government of people hinged on the juridical mechanism, with the sovereign laying down the law through direct decree and inflicting punishment on those who break it. During the aforementioned historical shift government slowly began to evolve to become more administrative in character, and by the nineteenth century was focused on the population and on security, with the purpose of controlling, monitoring and optimising the societies under its jurisdiction through the application of new power dispositifs that extend throughout the social body. This is still the era of the panopticon, surveillance and the managed control and distribution of individual bodies that was established in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it is also the start of an era towards the end of the eighteenth century where the art of government gained prominence, laws came to be used as tactics, where policing took on a more pertinent role, and the population, the social body as it were, became the target of a new technology of power that is focused on man as a species.⁴²

During this discussion (in *Society Must Be Defended*) of the shift in the nature of government from the sixteenth century and into the nineteenth century, and the “seizure” of power (Foucault, 2003, pg.243) first over the individual body and then over the social body, Foucault once again reaches back to another

⁴² “Now I think we see something new emerging in the second half of the eighteenth century: a new technology of power, but this time it is not disciplinary. This technology of power does not exclude the former, does not exclude disciplinary technology, but it does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques. This new technique does not simply do away with the disciplinary technique, because it exists at a different level, on a different scale, and because it has a different bearing area, and makes use of very different instruments. Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new non-disciplinary power is applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species.” (Foucault, 2003, pg. 242).

earlier idea, namely that the modern *épistémè* gave rise to man. Foucault now argues that in the nineteenth century, in tandem with the birth of economic thought as we know it today, the political problem of population also arose for the first time. This is because the population could no longer just be seen as a collection of legal subjects under a sovereign, or a collection of bodies whose purpose it is to labour in service of a sovereign. The focus shifted onto the population as “the general system of living beings (population in this sense falls in the category of “the human race”...; the notion, new at the time, is to be distinguished from “mankind”)...” (Foucault, 1994c, pg.70). In other words, for millennia man was seen as a living being, part of mankind, the only animal that has the capacity for rational and political thought, but modern man, a member of the human race, became “an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question” (Foucault, 1990a, pg.143). Or, to put it another way, life became part of politics.

Just as the modern *épistémè* gave rise to man then, so it also eventually gave rise to the “human race”, and the human race is the locus of biopolitics, which amounts to the regulatory control of the species body with all of its biological processes: health, longevity, births, deaths and so on. Biopolitics in other words constitutes the “calculated management of life” (Foucault, 1990a, pg.139-140), and for the first time, the human race is purposely managed at a scientific biological level with the help of data, statistics, studies and so forth. Society, just like man, is the object of scientific observation with human behaviour a problem to be analysed. And so human life finds itself simultaneously outside of history in its biological environment, but also inside human historicity, which in turn is bound up with the implementation of new mechanisms of power. It was only at this time, during this historical rupture that not only man himself became an object for scientific study, but that the phenomena that are specific to the species entered into the order of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1990a, pg.141-142) and the distinction between man as a living being and man as a political subject becomes blurred.

This introduction of “life into history” in the late eighteenth century is the decisive event of modernity, and the techniques of power changed at this precise moment that the lines between family, government and biology fused (Lazzarato, 2006, pg.10-11).

As I noted in the preceding chapters, sovereign power was essentially the king’s right to take what he wanted within his territory, whether it be property, time in the form of forced labour, bodies, or even life itself. Gradually, as government became more sophisticated, and the focus of government shifted from territory to population, mechanisms of power also underwent a significant change. The first change has already been discussed at great length, and that is the shift from sovereign power to disciplinary power, with the locus of the exercise of power relations being the body of the individual. However, as Foucault began to lay out his theory on governmentality, he started to expand his theory on power too. He realised that circa the 1800s, not only did power relations as inscribed on the bodies of individual subjects change to render them docile and disciplined, but another kind of power relation entered the fray in the late nineteenth century - the kind brought about by biopolitics. He argues therefore that power in the context of governmentality came to constitute “two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary

cluster of relations”, and the first of the two poles “centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimisation of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterised the disciplines: an anatomo-politics of the human body” (Foucault, 1990a, pg.139). This first of the two poles then is the effect of the modes of subjection that render bodies docile and disciplined - surveillance, organisation, examination and so forth. It is the administration of bodies which was embodied by the proliferation of the institutions at that time, such as schools, hospitals, factories and so on. It is also this pole that was the focus of the Taylorist methodologies that I described in the previous chapter.

The second pole of this power he describes is the one that focuses on

the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary...The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organisation of power over life was deployed (Foucault, 1990a, pg.139).

It is the calculated management of population controls such as demography, resource allocation, the distribution of wealth, and so on. Together these two poles make up the technologies of power constituted within what Foucault came to term biopower.

An important consequence of biopower is that at this time governance, due to the fact that it was now targeted at the population or the species body, began to transcend the legal framework decreed by the sovereign - a framework that set an exterior limit of what was allowed and what was forbidden. Governance expands its authority beyond the fixed limitations imposed by the laws of a sovereign, and does so through what Foucault (1990a, pg.144) refers to as the “action of the norm”. He says that

The law always refers to the sword. But a power whose task it is to take charge of life needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms. It is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility. Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise and hierarchize...it effects distributions around the norm. (Foucault, 1990a, pg.144).

Just like normalisation is an important consequence of the proliferation of disciplinary techniques, it is also an important consequence of the development of the biopolitical pole of biopower. In addition to having laws and decrees that are prescriptive, the shift in focus onto populations and the life of the human race as a target for control, study and objectification, resulted in some laws increasingly also operating as norms, whilst simultaneously judicial institutions began to be incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses centered on health, education, etc. And so the normalising society arose as the historical outcome of biopower, this power that is focused on the regulation of life at the species level, as well as

discipline on the individual level (Foucault, 1990a, pg.144). This had important consequences for subjectification, in the sense that aside from the laws and codes of conduct that members of society were expected to adhere to and obey, there now arose certain expectations to conform to what was considered the norm in society, and many of these expectations sprung from those things that we consider to be intimately connected to life: the expectation to take care of one's health, the expectation to take care of one's family, to educate oneself, and above all to be productive and contribute to the wealth of the nation - the cornerstones of neoliberalism.

As discussed in the preceding section, Foucault (1994c, pg.69) saw the age of mercantilism, and later industrialisation, ushering in a new dynamic between the population and wealth, whereby governmental reason was focused on this dynamic, which is a condition for the formation of what he terms "political economy". This is a resources-population relationship that can only be regulated through interception into the population on multiple fronts - production, migration, labour, health, education, etc.

Alexander Carnera (2012, pg.73) argues that what Foucault means by "the political economy of life" is that governance through biopower means the management of our multiple potentials for all kinds of actions as human beings. He goes on to say that this is directly linked to the notion of competence, in that competence has become a "political tool for the intervention of life in all human and social spheres" (Carnera, 2012, pg.73). For Carnera, this demand for competence marks the intersection between governmentality and biopower as power over life.

I consider this intersection rather to be comprised of a triffecta of normative expectations as well as potential and the demand for competence. Foucault (1990a, pg.144) says that an effect of biopower is the "distribution of the living in the domain of value and utility." This distribution, which occurs as a result of governmentality - the intervention into life and the population, the social body - uses as its tools things like hierarchization, measurement, and examination, just as these things act on the body of the individual. But ultimately this process of valorization and of distribution hinges on what is considered to be the norm at a particular juncture in time. It is tied to the expectations of its own historicity. Moreover, a power focused on life is necessarily also focused on the realisation of human potential, and this shift from sovereign government to a governmentality that targets life and populations had the effect of making life into a political object, a political object that at its core strives to realise human potential as opposed to longing for something past or established, and to require humans to achieve that in a competent way, in accordance with the standards of the norm. However, in doing so, it changes governance and pushes the existing limits of what is considered the norm, thus rendering it a power with duality: power over life, but also life's power to actualise potential, to create, to invent.

One no longer aspired to the...kingdom of the latter days...; what was demanded and what served as an objective was life, understood as the basic needs, man's concrete essence, the realisation of his potential, a plenitude of the possible...what we have seen has been a very real process of struggle; life as a political object was in a sense taken at face value and turned back against the system that was bent on controlling it. (Foucault, 1990a, pg.145)

Biopower is also what made the development of capitalism, segregation, and social hierarchisation possible. It started with the market town in the seventeenth century, and culminated in the nineteenth century with the controlled insertion of working bodies into the machinery of production, thus giving rise to the idea of man as “human capital”. “The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of biopower in its many forms and modes of application” (Foucault, 1990a, pg.141). Biopower therefore made it possible for man to become human capital within the system of production in the sense that the body of man was given economic value. How these bodies were distributed within the machinery of production, their management, became indispensable to the functioning of not only society, the family and so on, but also of the state.

Consider again the Ford factory discussed in the previous chapter. The careful arrangement of bodies along the production line, their identical positioning along rows, repeating the same movements every day almost brings to mind military training and drilling with the same aim: “to make productive the capacities of the body in a way that simultaneously increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (on political terms of obedience)” (Anderson, 2011, pg.4).

In terms of biopolitics (as a facet of biopower), Foucault (1990a, pg.141) argues that not only does capitalism have as a prerequisite the “controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production”, but also the “adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes”. It can therefore be said that with the rise of capitalism came a systematic relation between life and capital. The body collective that makes up the population becomes an essential resource to be governed, an “investment of life” (Negri, 2006, pg.76). Capitalism juxtaposes the need for the construction of a labour force against the profitability requirements of production, and biopolitical strategies of regulation and control facilitate the amalgamation of the two. Power, having become biopower, therefore laid the foundations upon which neoliberalism sprung up. According to Negri (2006, pg.77),

you will seek in vain in the analyses devoted to the development of capitalism for the determination of the passage from the Welfare State to its crisis, from the Fordist to the post-Fordist organisation of work, from Keynesian principles to the those of the neoliberal theory of macro-economics. But it is also true that in this simple definition of the passage from the regime of discipline to that of control at the beginning of the nineteenth century, we can already understand how the postmodern does not represent a withdrawal of the State from the domination over social labour, but rather an improvement of its control over life.

The individual, the subject that is produced, or constituted within this system that is characterised by biopower and finds himself in the post-Fordist, managerialist regime of work, is referred to as homo economicus, and homo economicus is expected to conform, to be competent, and to strive to fulfil his human potential.

3.3. Homo Economicus as the Neoliberal Subject

According to Read (2009, pg.2) neoliberalism is commonly understood as an ideology that has both transformed and is transformation in and of itself as an ideology. He asserts that neoliberalism is “not just a new ideology, but a transformation of ideology in terms of its conditions and effects.” Neoliberalism can therefore be understood as an ideology which is not generated by the state or by a privileged or dominant class, but rather from marketplace activity – the experience of buying and selling commodities, which then crosses over into other social environments to become representative of society. In other words, neoliberalism refers not only to a political ideology or an ideal for the state, but also to the whole of human existence. “It claims to present not an ideal, but a reality; human nature” (Read, 2009, p.2). This view of neoliberalism has important philosophical implications, since seen as extending beyond just the realm of politics, neoliberalism has to be analysed in terms of the problematic of ideology itself, of human modes of existence, and of power and subjectivity. In other words in terms of Foucault’s technologies. Foucault, as we saw in the preceding discussion on governmentality, views political ideology as a conglomeration of intertwined relations, and as having developed, in modern history, into the complex triad of sovereignty, discipline, and government (in turn representing a triad of technologies of power, namely sovereign, disciplinary, and governmental rationalities), that we face today - in other words, neoliberalism as a political ideology. However, neoliberalism, in contrast with other ideologies, is not only seen as a manner of governing states, economies or populations, but is closely linked to the government of the individual, and to a particular lifestyle, which means that the individual, together with his/her behaviours and actions (technologies of the self) and his/her formation as a subject, is an inextricable element in any analysis of neoliberalism. Thomas Lemke (1997, pg.11) expresses this point in the following way:

Foucault’s concept of governmentality has two advantages in theoretical terms for an analysis of neoliberalism. Given that political leadership is only one form of government among others...the distinction between the domain of the state and that of society itself becomes an object of study. In other words, with reference to the issues of government these differentiations are no longer treated as the basis and the limit of governmental practice, but as its instrument and effect. Secondly, the liberal polarity of subjectivity and power ceases to be plausible. From the perspective of governmentality, government refers to a continuum, which extends from political government right through to forms of self-regulation, namely “technologies of the self”...

With Foucault’s conception of governmentality, we are able to conceive of neoliberal forms of government as not only comprising overt state apparatuses that are institutionalized and specialized, but as also employing indirect biopolitical techniques for exercising control over individuals without being directly responsible for them (as a sovereign would be for example). Instead, individual subjects are expected to

take responsibility for themselves, particularly in terms of what Lemke (1997,pg.12) refers to as “social risks”, things such as illness, unemployment, poverty and so on. These problems therefore become issues of self-care. Closely linked to the notion of self-care, is the economic freedom that has to necessarily underlie it, precisely because neoliberalism is a political rationality that attempts to make the social realm an economically driven one which reduces state welfare and increases the burden of welfare on the individual. This increase in the burden of welfare on the individual by making him a more liberated economically active subject lies at the heart of the technologies of power (disciplinary and biopolitical), and the relations of domination and self-regulation exercised by the state, institutions and individuals.⁴³

This paradoxically liberated yet dominated neoliberal individual can, according to Foucault, be defined as “homo economicus” – man as an economic subject at the root of politics. What characterises homo economicus, is that he is a competitive being, whose tendency to be competitive should be nurtured and encouraged. Foucault argues that everything human beings hold onto as objectives to be reached or ends for which the means to reach them should be found, including marriage, raising children, and crime, can be understood “economically” – in terms of a calculation of cost for benefit.

What has also taken place then, is a redefinition of what was understood as a worker before contemporary neoliberalism. The worker has evolved into “human capital”, and the wages earned by the worker is an investment into their skills and competencies. This means that the more a person works towards increasing their means to earn a better income (through obtaining a higher education for example), the more of an asset they become to the overall system, and the more worthy they become as something to be invested in, as human capital. Individuals are also of course investing in themselves as human capital through whatever they do in order to increase their income, achieve satisfaction and so forth. For Foucault, homo economicus is essentially an entrepreneur of himself (Read, 2009, pg. 5).

According to Read (2009, pg.5), Foucault essentially

takes the neoliberal ideal to be a new regime of truth, and a new way in which people are made subjects: *homo economicus* is a fundamentally different subject, structured by different motivations and governed by different principles...” In other words, neoliberalism in and of itself “constitutes a new mode of ‘governmentality’, a manner, or a mentality, in which people are governed and govern themselves.

This notion of self-care or of self government has its roots in liberalism, which Foucault (2008, pg.63) argues is a form of government that has the seemingly paradoxical nature of both engendering and consuming freedom. In other words, it produces and organizes subjects who have freedom, so as to seemingly “manage freedom”. In doing so however, this governmental rationality also puts certain controls and limitations in place. Freedom under liberalism is therefore an artificial construct, a systemic device or mechanism that hinges upon the interests of the individual as well as those around him – an

⁴³ In chapter 5 I will discuss how neoliberalism does not just impose a burden of welfare on the individual, but that this also feeds directly into another burden he is forced to take on - what I term a ‘burden of systemic ethical responsibility’.

“interplay of freedom and security”. By security Foucault means a principle of calculation whereby the protection of collective interests against individual interests is prioritised and vice versa. Foucault (2008, pg.64) illustrates this point with the following commentary: “the freedom of economic processes must not be a danger, either for enterprises or for workers. The freedom of the workers must not become a danger for the enterprise and production. Individual accidents and events in an individual’s life, such as illness or inevitable old age, must not be a danger either for individuals or for society.”

Read (2009, pg.6) asserts that these freedoms that Foucault refers to are an integral part of the strategy of governmentality in the liberal as well as neoliberal regimes. He says that as a mode of governmentality, neoliberalism doesn’t operate on the basis of rights and obligations, but rather on the basis of desires, interests and aspirations. “[I]t does not directly mark the body, as sovereign power, or even curtail actions, as disciplinary power; rather, it acts on the conditions of actions.” The implication of this is that governmentality in the neoliberal context seems to operate in a paradoxical manner whereby as power becomes more restrictive, it also becomes more intense, thereby permeating the entire field of action as well as that of possible action.

It is in this way that subjectification manifests itself within the neoliberal context. The neoliberal subject, homo economicus, is a worker who has a vested interest in investing in his own human capital so to speak, an entrepreneur who specifically takes every action (whether it be to educate himself further, move across borders, go to the dentist etc) in a calculated way with the objective of investing in himself as human capital. In doing so, homo economics is therefore both governing himself and being governed, exerting power, and bending under the exertion of power over him. He is, in other words, constituted as a result of the process of subjectification (*assujettissement*). Judith Butler (in Milchman and Rosenberg, 2009, p.64)

sums up this idea as follows: “Power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts* the subject into being. As a condition, power precedes the subject. Power loses its appearance of priority, however, when it is wielded by the subject, a situation which gives rise to the reverse perspective that power is the effect of the subject, and that power is what the subject effects.” Moreover, the individual is categorised or identified by his own individuality in everyday contemporary life, he is attached to his own identity. This imposes a truth on him that he must recognise, and which must be recognised by others as well. This is a form of power that creates individual subjects.

Foucault distinguishes between two senses for the use of the word “subject”. The first relates to being subjected by someone else, to be controlled by and dependent on another. The second relates to having a conscience and knowledge of oneself, as being subject to one’s own identity. Both meanings take into account that there is a form of power that both subjugates the individual and makes him subject to others and himself (Foucault, 1994, p.331). So the neoliberal subject, homo economicus, is not only part and parcel of the process of subjectification, of the manifestation of technologies of power, he is also a subject who effects and is affected by technologies of the self. Milchman and Rosenberg (2009, p.66-68) refer to this as *subjectivation*, which they say is not to be confused with subjectification. They argue that for

Foucault (and as indeed we saw in the preceding), subjectification entails the objectification of a subject through the exercise of power/knowledge, including the ways in which resistance can modify and shape relations of power. But subjectification is also part of a dialectic that features subjectivation, whereby the individual relates to himself and to the multiplicity of ways in which he can be formed and fashioned on the basis of what he takes to be the truth about himself. Where he objectifies himself as it were. Subjectivation has another very important sense for Foucault, and that is the aspect of resistance. It is through resistance that the subject seeks to form his identity, his sense of self. In the words of Milchman and Rosenberg (2009, p.71) “ Foucault himself forged a direct link between resistance to political power and an ‘ethic of the self’, despite his fears concerning the prospects for the latter: ‘there is no first or final point of resistance to political power other than in the relationship one has to oneself.’”

From all of the above, it can be inferred that within governmentality, individual strategies are employed which organize, define and constitute freedom, and that this is in fact the objective of governmentality. Or put differently, subjectivation and subjectification can be viewed as being in a kind of dialectic relationship whereby the practice of freedom in fact effects “an indeterminable free subjectivity, situated between a political system of liberal governmentality (public life) on the one hand, and the government of the self (private life) on the other” (Bonnaufus-Boucher, 2009, p. 73). This condition of freedom is what defines homo economicus, and what sets him apart from the docile body, the subject of a disciplinary political rationality. This, together with the notion of homo economicus as entrepreneur in and for himself, as objectifying himself in the form of human capital and of using the knowledge needed to exercise resistance in order to forge for himself an identity, a true self as it were.

I would like to once more raise the point made by Alexander Carnera, namely that homo economicus as a labouring body is expected to have certain competencies that extend to work skills, but also beyond, into his life. Carnera (2012, pg. 73) argues that “competence is the place where governmentality and power over life meets. Whether one is employed or unemployed the same attempt to govern man by demanding a set of competences is made.” In other words, there is a certain *mentality* that underlies neoliberal governmentality and which drives the technologies of power, a mentality that transcends the legal framework and creates certain expectations and perceptions of the boundaries of the normal, and which inscribes itself onto human life itself. Competence, he says, is the political tool that is used to perpetuate and enforce this mentality. Central to this idea of valorising competence, is the notion that modern politics should invest in programmes and policies that develop and encapsulate individual competences, thereby creating a discourse based on a new kind of political language focused on concepts such as ‘learning’, ‘continuous education’, ‘professional development’, ‘re-skilling’, and so forth, and “combining the demand of individualisation with a compulsion of development” (Carnera, 2012, pg. 74). Thus homo economicus is valorised based on his competences, but this demand for competence is a biopolitical strategy that cultivates a compulsion for self-development, making competence a central concept to be

considered in an analysis of how homo economicus constitutes himself as a subject - in his subjectivation and his subjectification.

It is well known that Foucault outlined four “technologies” that play a part in the constitution of the subject. The first are the technologies of production, which allow individuals to produce, change or manipulate things. The second set of technologies relate to sign systems, language and discourse. The third are the technologies of power, which determine how individuals will behave, and which allows them to wield or submit to power, to dominate or to be dominated. The fourth set of technologies are the technologies of the self, which allow individuals to work on and transform themselves (Foucault, 1994, pg. 225). This expectation of competence underlies all four of the technologies that operate to constitute homo economicus as a subject. Competence is closely associated with valorisation, and as such, if a subject produces something that is not deemed valuable, it draws their competence into question. In the workplace, this is evidenced through practices of performance evaluations, whereby the product of a worker’s labour is scrutinised and evaluated by a superior. Should the work fall short of what is seen as falling within the bounds of the normal, or the minimum standard set by the company, the worker will be judged to be incompetent and will have to improve or be fired. This idea of producing things that fall within the standards of the norm, within the boundaries of what is competent, is applied throughout numerous institutional settings - schools, universities, even in the family (eg. competent / incompetent parents). As far as power is concerned, the idea of competence is a critical function of biopower. If one looks at the discourses, the language used in many institutional settings and within the legal framework itself, competence⁴⁴ features greatly as a normative yardstick in accordance with which individuals are judged and action is taken upon them. Social Security may file a report labelling a mother as incompetent, calling for state intervention in the raising of her children; an accused criminal is judged to be competent or incompetent to stand trial, thereby affecting the type of punishment they receive; a student is labeled qualified or unqualified to advance to the next level, calling for intervention from the school, the parents, and perhaps also the student himself in order to try to become qualified to progress. The valorisation of competence is therefore a disciplinary as well as a biopolitical tool, but it also underlies the technologies of the self, since the demand for competence, not just in the sense of being satisfactory, but in the sense of being capable or skilled drives the individual’s compulsion for development. It is the basis of the desire to be an entrepreneur of the self. In the previous section, I mentioned that I consider competence to also be ineluctably joined with the idea of potential. This is an idea that also underlies the four technologies, and as I will lay out in the sections that follow from this, takes on an increasingly significant role as we forge further into the new paradigm that is the twenty-first century.

⁴⁴ Words used to denote competence include able, fit, proficient, adept, adequate, skilled, qualified, proficient, appropriate, satisfactory, suitable, up to snuff, and many more. Note that there are three usages for the word “competent” in English: meaning capable and efficient, meaning acceptable and satisfactory (but not exceptional), and meaning having the legal authority to deal with a particular issue.

So far I have undertaken (in Chapter 2) a discussion into how disciplinary power manifested itself in the workplace in the form of Taylorism and Fordism. Based on the foregoing analysis of governmentality, biopower and neoliberalism, I now want to turn my attention to their manifestation in the workplace, and the transition from Taylorism and Fordism to managerialism.

3.3.1. Managerialism as the manifestation of neoliberal governmentality in the workplace

In the previous chapter I discussed how sovereign power manifested itself in the factories of the early industrial era in the form of early Fordism and the so-called “robber barons of late nineteenth century capitalism” (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017, pg.1), and how this was eventually displaced by disciplinary power as ensconced in Taylorism and later Fordism - where the “‘visible hand’ of the corporation was superior to the hidden hand of the market in terms of efficiency, quality and profitability” (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017, pg.1).

I also briefly mentioned how these corporate management practices eventually gave way to managerialism and corporate governance, particularly in the latter part of the twentieth century. It is this shift from Taylorism and scientific management towards managerialism that I would like to take a closer look at now, since there is a clear confluence with Foucault’s analysis of power through governmentality and biopolitics. In fact, managerialism is widely regarded as the organisational form of neoliberalism.

The story behind this shift is as follows:

When humankind changed the nature of its labour and the means of sustaining its livelihood from the agrarian feudal system under the direction and control of the sovereign, and, with the rise of mercantilism, began to move into the disciplinary workshops of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we also saw the purpose of the state change somewhat. In the agrarian society, the sole purpose of the state was to uphold the sovereign’s power, and any action taken on the population, whether it be to allow trade, collect taxes, assure the wellbeing of subjects or deprive subjects of certain freedoms, was ultimately an indirect measure of sovereign authority over their territory - which was as yet uninhibited by the changes that commerce and mercantilism would bring. With the advent of commerce and mercantilism and the first vestiges of global trade, we saw a movement towards employing “the arts of government”, and this caused a fundamental shift in the functioning of sovereign authority. The sovereign became more of a custodian in a certain sense, a governor who had a population in his charge, and who had to take responsibility for its material wellbeing. And so government began to take on a number of new purposes, some of which included intervening in the lives of the subjects under sovereign government. There was, as it were, a shift from the ruler to the rules (Jackson and Carter in McKinlay and Starkey,

1998, Kindle Ed, Governmentality, 2nd para), and this marked the beginnings of the shift to governmentality.

If the governmentality of the state is interested, for the first time, in the fine materiality of human existence and coexistence, of exchange and circulation, if this being and well-being is taken into account for the first time by the governmentality of the state, through the town and through problems like health, roads, markets, grains, and highways, it is because at that time commerce is thought of as the main instrument of the state's power... (Foucault, 2009, pg. 440).

These changes under this political governmentality took a firm hold, and by the eighteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution was underway, this hold on a territory's subjects by a government was fully entrenched and had a firm grip on the bodies of the individuals who made up the population. We were in the world of regulation and discipline, the world of Taylor and Ford junior, and of Keynesian economics.

One characteristic of business at this time, was that it generally accepted a high level of government intervention in the economy, especially once the Great Depression had just about obliterated the global economy. In the United States, Roosevelt's New Deal set out to stabilise the banks, the state became a massive employer as new infrastructure and public works programmes were launched, in addition to actioning a number of other public welfare and financial reforms and regulations. This level of government intervention into commerce and the welfare of citizens was not unique to the USA either. In the UK and Germany for example, the state also intervened very actively in the banking sector in particular, and imposed a number of new regulations. In the UK the government set about building thousands of council homes for the impoverished, and imposed numerous more welfare and labour regulations on businesses.

If it holds true that every action has an equal and opposite reaction, then one can probably safely say that the political governmentality of institutionalised state intervention into the economy, the population, into life, family and work, in addition to the disciplinary regimes enacted by governments and institutions in the form of biopower as discussed in the preceding section, necessarily caused its opposite reaction, in the form of the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970's. At this time the state came to be reviled as a kind of 'big brother', interfering in the lives of individuals who are competent and capable of taking care of themselves, as well as interfering in business and in the market forces, thereby restricting the creation of wealth and competition in the economy.

Unlike classical liberalism, neoliberalism regards the market as defined by competition rather than exchange. Foucault invokes the construction of *homo oeconomicus* as the libertarian vision of neoliberalism: the individual is remade - or remakes himself - as a *permanent* entrepreneur, irrespective of the social context...Neoliberalism involves the marketisation of social relations far beyond even the broadest definition of 'the economic'...the audacity of neoliberalism was that it wants not just to remake social relations, but that individuals should view themselves as entrepreneurs and their actions as enterprising. (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017b, pg. 4-5).

This is not to say that with the advent of neoliberalism the state relinquished control and let homo economics loose to do as he pleased. Quite the contrary. The state retained many of its disciplinary and biopolitical technologies, while others evolved, and some new ones came into being. Even though businesses began to eschew government intervention into their activities or into the economy for that matter, corporations and citizens were still taxpaying entities, required to pay into a system that they in turn become consumers of. Working citizens contributed to the economy through their production, but they were also consumers of goods and services. Parents economised so as to create the best possible family life and environment, and in this way each individual became entrenched in a system suffused with governmental oversight, but yet required to operate as enterprising, entrepreneurial individuals who took care of themselves and valued their liberties and rights within the system. Live on the periphery of the system, and risk perishing.

Foucault was never of the opinion that the state withdrew from the social realm as a consequence of the rise of neoliberalism, but rather argued that the state's role had been reimagined. The state began to marketise its activities and services for example, extending the markets, or creating a parallel with the markets. The state effectively became a broker, a guarantor, as well as a client (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017b, pg. 5). In this way, the state did not afford homo economicus, this entrepreneur for himself, unbridled liberty to act as he pleased in his own interest alone, but through increasing its own scope and effectively creating new markets, it was able to direct and steer homo economicus. Liberty itself became a *dispositif* for constructing and maintaining social order as it were. "To govern liberally is to maximise the individual's freedom to choose, a freedom that also expects the individual to understand and accept the risks - and perhaps to meet the costs - of poor choices" (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017b, pg. 6). This is the idea behind conduct of conduct and the biopolitical use of what can be considered the norm. A neoliberal society is marked by a kind of tension between the *laissez-faire* approach of state in the lives of individuals and the expectation of individuals to nonetheless conform to its rules, regulations and requirements. The ensuing empowerment of homo economicus thus becomes a double edged sword, for the price he pays for this freedom, this empowerment, is that he has to shoulder all the risk, while productively adding value to his own existence and that of others, thereby economising every sphere of his life. Non-conformity easily becomes self-destructive, because even though human capital is in charge of and responsible for itself, it is still an instrument of the system it finds itself in, and as such it is always potentially dispensable.

Nowhere in society's institutions were neoliberal ideals embraced with so much enthusiasm as in the modern corporation. When subjects became human capital, entrepreneurs of and for themselves, ensnared by biopolitical techniques of power, in a certain sense life itself was put to work. To see just how neoliberal precepts seeped into modern corporate life, one only has to turn to history and to the policies of Reagan and Thatcher in the late 1970's and early 1980's, whereby the governments in the USA and the UK respectively started to implement policies of rescinding certain welfare provisions, privatising enterprises,

suppressing labour unions, and deregulating the financial markets (Doran, 2016, pg. 84).

Then there were the discourses of the 1980's and the explosion of literature penned by the so-called management gurus. From Tom Peters to Peter Drucker to Alvin Toffler, they all propagated and furthered the neoliberal agenda. They all emphasised the idea of the empowered worker who becomes more productive the more freedom he is given to perform. They glorified the drive for excellence, for competing intensely and fervently to reach the pinnacle as an active economic subject who is not only working to produce capital for himself and his family, but also for the company. Work, capital and life became inseparable. One only has to search the internet for famous quotes by these authors to see these discourses at work:

'In search of Excellence' - even the title - is a reminder that business isn't dry, dreary, boring, or by the numbers. Life at work can be cool - and work that's cool isn't confined to Tiger Woods, Yo-Yo Ma, or Tom Hanks. It's available to all of us and any of us. - Tom Peters

Most of what we call management consists of making it difficult for people to get their work done. - Peter Drucker

To survive, to avert what we have termed future shock, the individual must become infinitely more adaptable and capable than before. - Alvin Toffler

Each quote clearly illustrates how neoliberal governmentality permeated the workplace. Tom Peters wanted people to feel that work is cool, it's a part of life to be enjoyed, savoured, and that striving for and obtaining success is the driving factor behind this enjoyment. Work is to be seen as something that gives you inherent pleasure, that fulfils you, and actively participating is an investment in yourself and your own self-fulfilment. Peter Drucker's quote emphasises that individuals should be given the freedom to work independently, and that excessive control quashes productivity. Man as human capital should be left alone to manage himself because this will mean that he produces more in the name of the firm. The last quote, by Alvin Toffler, conveys the idea of the expectation of competence from homo economicus. He is expected to fit in with the system and its changes, to adapt, and to do so with competence, to show himself as being capable of self-government. McKinlay and Pezet (2017, pg. 9) write that during this period dominated by the management gurus, and especially Tom Peters, it became imperative for managers in companies to create a kind of kinship, an almost spiritual fellowship within the company, and to then shrewdly manage employees through and by means of this culture. Of course in such a culture belonging to the club and indeed staying in the club required continuous self-examination and self-improvement. "Where Taylorism imagined docile bodies whose smallest movements were orchestrated from above, the new management stressed freedom over control, and energy over passivity...Stripping out complex, centralising control systems was not an abdication of managerial control, however" (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017, pg. 10). Quite the contrary, control systems became more diffuse and more pervasive, but also all the more subtle in that they hid in the shadows of the new freedoms afforded workers in the workplace. It became all about utilising the idea of market competition and applying it to human capital so that the

working body constantly makes and remakes himself into an entrepreneur that competes with others aggressively, commodifying himself, marketing himself, and striving to be more enterprising than the competition. At the same time however, the fear of failing to be competent, of falling short of the norms and expectations placed on homo economicus also serves to enhance the surveillance of himself and of others. This demand of being held accountable for oneself while competing with others means that the entrepreneur of himself now has to exercise even greater discipline over himself whilst also actively policing what others are doing. He is in a relationship of constant agonism with others because he is always measuring, calculating, comparing in order to make sure that he stacks up, does not fall short - that he is on the path to what Peters terms “excellence”.

According to McKinlay and Pezet (2017b, Kindle Ed., Ch. 1, Politics without the State?, para. 3),

Neoliberalism reversed the conventions of mid-century social democracy. Where the state had intervened to correct market failures, neoliberalism proposed the reverse: that markets should be used to correct not only institutional but also social failures...There is no social relationship that cannot be understood through economic rationality. Such an understanding is the precondition to increasing the importance of self-management.

This had two major implications for individuals as well as for enterprises. The first implication relates to freedom and empowerment. Since the state became more hands off and left more direct regulation to the markets, corporations found themselves in the thick of things, centre stage as a fundamental social unit between the state and the individual. Moreover, corporations found themselves more or less freely in charge of their own management and planning at the behest only of the market forces, and so Taylorist and Fordist management practices gave way to managerialism. According to Doran (2016, pg. 89),

For managerialism, the individual and the state are merely empty abstractions. Managerialism denies that the fundamental nature of society is an aggregation of individuals. Social decision making arises from the transactions that take place between managements of organisations...a managerialist society does not respond to the needs, desires and wishes of a majority of its citizens...

The neoliberal tendency to elevate market forces over all else therefore resulted in a shift in emphasis on what should be given importance by managers, which was nicely encapsulated in a quote by Alfred P. Sloan of General Motors, who famously proclaimed that GM was in the business of making money, not cars (Locke, 2011, pg. 99). This of course became a central tenet in managerialism as the application of neoliberalism to the corporation as well. Companies began to focus on the bottom line, on maximising profits for their stockholders, with the belief that generating wealth and building a strong economy in the process is, at the end of the day, also what is best for society, family and so on. Managers within the neoliberal managerialist corporation of the late twentieth century saw their primary duty as being to that of the company’s stockholders, but they also saw themselves as having a moral duty to look after the well-being of other stakeholders in the firm, and particularly the employees, since the well-being of employees

is directly correlated with productivity and the bottom line. This then was also one of the things that all of the so-called management gurus addressed at length. The organisation of this period therefore gained in influence and power, but this also gave rise to the empowerment of the employee. According to McKinlay and Taylor (2014, pg. 9), “Infusing market disciplines *inside* the corporation paralleled the rise of employee empowerment. Critically, the legitimacy claims of employee empowerment were derived from the new freedoms gained as bureaucracy and hierarchy receded. The rejection of corporate planning was mirrored by the immediacy and moral purpose associated with teamworking.” And so we are faced with an employee that has no need for a union, whose body is no longer a cog in the industrial machine to be carefully placed, monitored and kept in line. Rather, he is a self-governing body who has a lot more autonomy, who receives better wages and working conditions and all sorts of extra benefits in the form of company retirement plans, medical insurance and so on, but who is also always held accountable to his team and the company through constant comparison, surveillance, and performance assessment, whilst policing the other members of his team, and indeed the company itself, in the same way. Homo economicus, man as entrepreneur of himself, thus finds himself in the paradoxical position where he has a greater range of freedoms and where he feels more empowered than ever before, yet he is bound by these freedoms, bound to chase excellence, to take care of himself with little state interference, and also bound into both severe competition and teamwork simultaneously. All of this makes the sense of freedom and empowerment experienced by homo economicus in his workplace somewhat illusory. “By invoking empowerment, managers issue a promissory note of freedom that is impossible to redeem in full” (McKinlay and Taylor, 2014, pg. 11).

The second implication relates to the fact that under neoliberalism all of life, and all conduct become transactional. Since homo economics entrepreneurialises his endeavours, these endeavours are given a transactional value, and he becomes part of a system of competitive positioning, of ratings and rankings. In the words of Cooper (2015, pg. 16) “Neoliberalism transmogrifies humanity according to a specific image of the economic. All conduct is economic conduct; all spheres of existence are framed by economic terms and metrics.” She then goes on to argue that such metrics, within a managerialist framework, have the ability to motivate, monitor and rank the activities of employees, making the targets of these metrics not the waged employees themselves, but rather the employee as an entrepreneurial unit of human capital that holds a transactional value. That is not to say that man as capital will always act in ways that are beneficial to the company, because homo economicus is a creature who always weighs up his environment and his actions, and takes the course of action that holds the most value for himself. Paradoxically then managerialism has to respond by implementing tighter control systems (Cooper, 2015, pg. 16). This leads us to the biopolitical strategy of normalising entrepreneurial subjects. This strategy often relies on the disciplinary technique of examination and assessment, but in such a way as to ascribe a value to a subject, to rank them. In other words, whereas the disciplinary mechanism had the goal of classification, homogenisation and hierarchisation, this biopolitical strategy adds another dimension - rating, ranking, ascribing a value, and placing a subject within a hierarchy of excellence, competence, value and so forth. This is done through a complex set of practices such as aptitude testing, personality testing, benchmarking, league tables and performance reviews, amongst others. These have the effect of placing

individuals within statistical distributions and then ranking them in accordance with the norm or the standard. According to Cooper (2015, pg. 18), “numerical (and other) rankings are ubiquitous under neoliberalism...in the neoliberal era market institutions increasingly use actuarial techniques to split and sort individuals into classification situations that shape life-chances.⁴⁵” One consequence of this use of statistics and numbers to impose norms and standards on the individual in the neoliberal managerialist working environment, is that the numbers by design seem to represent a standard that represents irrefutable fact or truth. They do not generate the same feelings of being psychologically manipulated or disciplined, or the same level of ambiguity as disciplinary assessments or practices that are imposed from the top down in a sovereign way. The result is that workers accept these types of metrics readily and self-subject to them, always striving to be placed higher up in the rankings, or to find ways to add value to themselves as entrepreneurs of the self. This has the effect of individualising subjects, and giving them a sense of being in control of themselves and of having self-worth, of self-valorisation, whilst simultaneously getting them to toe the company line, since the company controls which metrics are to be valued and how they are to be used.

Neoliberal managerialism has had some very negative unintended consequences, and has come under heavy fire for these in the last few years. Employees buckling under this system are increasingly being driven to be more entrepreneurial, but yet they’re subjected to more and more standardised and detailed control systems. Consider for example in academia, where especially adjunct professors have to perform in class and are assessed by students, they are required to raise funding, to peddle their knowledge, to deliver papers at conferences, and to improve their rankings not only within the university, but also on websites like ratemyprofessors.com. In the meantime they also have to live up to the “publish or perish” maxim. More research means more grants, which means the professor adds more value to the institution and also to himself as a competitor in the race towards the ever more elusive tenured position.

Through the commodification of the worker, and indeed human beings in general, certain characteristics, such as the ability to be compassionate, to empathise and so on, have become transactional as well. Homo economicus will weigh up the costs and benefits of actions in terms of trade-offs and whether it is “worth it”. This rationality of course has dire implications for ethics, which has not gone unnoticed by proponents of managerialism who use the rhetoric of business ethics “while their workforce suffer from increased workloads, intense work measurement, unprecedented discipline, stress, and the fear of ‘managed exit’” (Cooper, 2015, pg. 22). Walking this tightrope of constant fear and fulfilling expectations is becoming unsustainable, especially since new competition has entered the workplace in the form of machines, Artificial Intelligence, and other software applications - and so homo economicus is beginning to metamorphose.

⁴⁵ For example when an individual wants to take out a mortgage to buy a house, the risk assessment that is run by the bank does exactly this. Insurance companies also employ similar metrics, as do recruitment agencies, and many more.

3.4. Homo Informaticus and the Rise of Managementality

Since Foucault's death we have been experiencing a technological revolution, a kind of 'cybershift', a major paradigm shift arising from the development and widespread proliferation of the Internet and globalization, to a networked society. This cybershift is changing the economy in many new ways, and is in the process of reshaping society, and indeed the human subject, as we know it. According to Manuel Castells, a leading author on the subject of the new changes we face (in his 2001 interview with Harry Kreisler), "our societies are being totally redefined by electronically based information technologies, and this is creating a new world – not the technology itself, but the uses of this technology on the basis of social and economic and political interests." This is an important point to note when we speak of a cybershift, in that we need to take cognisance of the fact that it is not the technology itself that forms the basis of the shift to a networked and globalized society, but rather the uses we put the technology to, coupled with the possibilities and constraints that have arisen, and indeed continue to arise because of the very existence of the technology.

In the discussion above that pertains to neoliberalism I noted that one of the preconditions of neoliberalism is the decentralisation of power and control, and the diffusion of power from the realm of the state and institutions to incorporate, by virtue of his increased freedom to govern himself, the individual subject. I also noted that the neoliberal subject, homo economicus, became an entrepreneur of himself so to speak, with the freedom to develop his skills and to innovate - to invest in himself as human capital, without too much overt interference or regulation from the state, but also to be invested in by others. This lies at the root of the cybershift, for without the competitive, market-driven neoliberal spirit of Foucault's era, the competitive environment in which homo economicus was allowed to innovate and develop today's technologies, and the rapid proliferation of the networked society, could probably not have taken place. Or it would have been heavily regulated and controlled by the state from the get-go, with the pace of innovation being quite slow. This brings me to the first point I want to make here, namely that it was in the spirit of freedom of innovation -to be a creative entrepreneur of the self, but also to be human capital that companies invest in to work on and develop new innovations without much interference from the state- that the networked society was brought to life. However, the neoliberal society has also somewhat paradoxically proliferated into a society of intense control, to use a Deleuzian turn of phrase, especially as the networks are being harnessed to extend surveillance practices, to practice dataveillance, to institute new forms of statistical analysis, examination, ranking, and so forth. Homo economicus was given the relative freedom to work, to have ideas, and to innovate, but always in service of the markets and in service of valorising himself. This gave rise to some subtle yet ubiquitous technologies of power and control, such as the ones discussed in previous sections, that act as severe constraints. Today we are beginning to see a backlash against this, and a society forming within the network that seeks to redefine control.

Castells (2010, p.1) argues that the cybershift, or this technological revolution which centres on information technologies, has also transformed “the material basis of society” on the whole, and we are now faced with a reality where economies are globally interdependent, where we have a whole new interrelated dynamic between economy, state, society, and the contemporary subject, the ‘dividual’. It is this new dynamic that I want to lay bare here, and for this purpose I want to explore the notion of governmentality in terms of where we stand today.

In the preceding section on governmentality, I raised Thomas Lemke’s argument that governmentality gives us a plurality of governmental technologies which allow us to examine subjectivity, gender regimes and so forth in practical terms. Moreover, Foucault leaves us with a framework within which the distinctions between the state and society, politics and economy, society and individuals are not borders between one another, but are both brought about by and form part and parcel of governmental technologies.

Before I take a look at what Foucault’s technologies may mean for the networked society of the twenty- first century and ultimately for the dividual, it is necessary first and foremost to look at the characteristics of this networked society and how it differs from the neoliberal society of the late twentieth century.

The last two decades or so have seen great and tumultuous changes and events unfold almost year upon year. The world watched in horror as two planes crashed into the Twin Towers in New York city on 9/11; we saw the subsequent rise and retreat of ISIS; and very recently we saw the unthinkable just a few years ago - an insurrection in the United States that led to an armed mob invading the Capitol building in Washington DC and calling for the assassination of the Vice President of the country. Natural disasters have abounded in the form of hurricane Katrina, the tsunami in South Asia, and the earthquakes in Haiti and Japan, and when the Great Recession hit in full force in 2008, it sent the whole globe into a socio- economic tailspin. We saw the birth of the whistleblower website Wikileaks, which made previously classified information public and left whole nation states reeling with the effect of one of the loci of their power - concealed information and knowledge - being revealed for anyone with an internet connection to see. We have seen the development of blockchain technology and the accompanying rise of Bitcoin and a number of other cryptocurrencies, which today is threatening to change the global financial, monetary, and governance systems as we know them completely, together with several other long-standing industries and professions.⁴⁶ Automation is also threatening countless manufacturing jobs, while driverless vehicles and blockchain technology threaten the status quo of the transport and logistics industry, and artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used to handle all sorts of tasks previously

⁴⁶ The blockchain-based “smart contract” for example, is threatening certain positions in the legal profession and also in insurance, and promises to transform global logistics management practices.

thought to be “human only” tasks, well beyond the reach of computers.⁴⁷ And of course most recently we have been living through the Covid-19 pandemic which has shut down virtually every economy on the planet (the full fallout of which we are still due to experience), and which has changed the human experience of working, networking and learning (amongst many other things) in fundamental ways.

The upside of this is that being part of a networked and globalised society means that we are able to be aware of major developments and events immediately, as they are happening, no matter where on earth we find ourselves. Moreover, the world is able to get involved, react and help on a scale and at a speed like never before, and very often not at the behest of a government, or an NGO asking for support, but rather through crowdfunding on the initiative of private citizens. Developments in robotics, engineering, computing, and artificial intelligence, despite threatening some industries and jobs, are also contributing to the overall quality of service and material well-being and quality of life across the globe at a rate that would not have been possible otherwise⁴⁸. These fields are churning out innovations that are contributing to the rise of new industries and job opportunities, in addition to finding solutions to the myriad of problems posed by climate change. Blockchain technology is also developing at breakneck speed, and with it comes a number of important applications, not the least of which is enabling the previously unbanked to access financial services.

All of this was unprecedented before the technological era we now find ourselves in. We find ourselves connected to one another and to the events and happenings of the day on a global scale, and we have virtually any kind of information we could possibly want or need at our fingertips at all times. We are conjoined through vast computing, satellite and mobile phone networks that keep us plugged into a sprawling matrix of information and connections 24/7, no matter where we are, and with the current rise of ‘blockchain’⁴⁹ technology, this network is being extended beyond imagination, to also enable the sharing of value and trust, over and above just information.

⁴⁷ Examples that spring to mind are chat bots that are used to interact with customers for sales, marketing and customer service purposes. Even in journalism bots are already churning out news articles, and human translators are quickly losing ground to intelligent translation software.

⁴⁸ For example, we are able to transport medications and other life-saving goods like water purification tablets to areas in need at an unprecedented speed. Educational resources are more accessible to previously disadvantaged communities, infant mortality rates are down in most places, there are increasingly better and cheaper solutions for fulfilling basic needs like electricity in remote areas, and global information and communications systems have led to steady declines in crime, to mention but a few.

⁴⁹ “Blockchain is a comprehensive, up-to-date (real-time) ledger of anything that can be recorded, from financial transactions to ownership of physical assets, stored in a distributed, peer-to-peer fashion. Every record is encrypted and time stamped. Only users can edit the part of the blockchain they ‘own’ and they gain access to the file only because they have the private key that allows them to” (Marr, 2017, pg. 1).

“Blockchains enable us to send money directly and safely from me to you, without going through a bank, a credit card company, or PayPal. Rather than the Internet of Information, it’s the Internet of Value or of Money. It’s also a platform for everyone to know what is true - at least with regard to structured recorded information. At its most basic, it is an open source code: anyone can download it for free, run it, and use it to develop new tools for managing transactions online. As such, it holds the potential for unleashing countless new applications and as yet unrealised capabilities that have the potential to transform many things” (Tapscott and Tapscott, 2016, pg. 6).

But the key to the networked society we live in, and an important consequence of the cybershift we are experiencing, lies in its interactivity, in the fact that it opens up a whole new field of actions upon actions, and with it a new range of technologies (in Foucault's sense of the word).

Millions of people are now able to actively participate in (and far fewer are excluded from) innovation and business, social development, and government in ways that we would have considered to be science fiction a mere 25 years or so ago. These profound changes in science and technology have therefore given rise to equally profound changes in demographics and the global economy.

Society on the whole is now seen to be embedded in community, collaboration, transparency and self-organisation – a direct result of the whole globe being plugged into one nexus of incessantly whizzing communications, information and instantaneous transacting; and state and government is also undergoing transformation.

States are beginning to look more like companies or businesses in a certain sense. Almost across the board developed nations have become competitive, and are approaching their management in a way that could be likened to a business in a market. They are, for example, increasingly focusing on providing and marketing better and increased services to citizens, and actively marketing themselves to other nations and nationals. In Portugal for instance, the government has consolidated certain government services (tax office, social security, DMV) together with essential private services (electricity, gas, telecommunications) under one roof in the form of a one-stop-shop where people can go and conduct all their essential business in a single location. They have even given it a name with a very commercial connotation - Loja do Cidadão (directly translated, citizen's shop). They have also put up residency, and eventually citizenship, for sale in return for a relatively substantial investment into the economy in the form of the "Golden Visa" scheme, which is being marketed aggressively in countries like China and Brazil. The government of Estonia, on the other hand, is offering up virtual citizenship of Estonia to non-residents. As an e-resident of Estonia, any approved applicant can register a business, open a bank account, and even pay the very competitive corporate taxes in Estonia, without having to physically live there, or indeed having the right to physical citizenship. Wired magazine (Hammersley, 2017) gives the following example of how this works:

A UK-based entrepreneur...will decide to open her business in Estonia, use an Estonian bank and pay for some Estonian services, even if the company was only going to be trading in the UK, because she would find Estonia's national infrastructure far easier to deal with than the UK's. In other words, a nation is now competing with its neighbours on the basis of the quality of its user interface. Just as you might switch your bank to one with a better mobile app, the Estonians hope you'll switch your business to a country with an infrastructure that is easier to use.

Like homo economicus, the twenty-first century state is increasingly having to become entrepreneurial, and, as illustrated by the Estonian example, the dissolution of geographical barriers to business,

communication, and life in general, coupled with the fact that every connected person can transcend geographical frontiers with the greatest of ease, makes that government is now becoming a marketplace of its own in a certain sense, where states may soon be vying for the business of citizens from other countries, and where they have to consider, perhaps for the first time, how they can add value to themselves and make themselves more attractive to the citizen-client. We are no longer dealing with the state in the strictly governmental sense, but with the state as an enterprise of sorts. That we are headed in this direction is also becoming clearer as our technologies advance, and blockchain technology in particular, is leading the charge. Blockchain, to define it in a simplistic, concise way, is like a large interconnected database. It consists of a permanent, distributed digital ledger which is decentralised since there are multiple nodes in the system that carries out “transactions”. It is permanent and is essentially immutable.

The formidable innovation introduced by this technology is that the network is open and participants do not need to know or trust each other in order to interact: the electronic transactions can be automatically verified and recorded by the nodes of the network through cryptographic algorithms, without human intervention, central authority, point of control or third party (e.g. governments, banks, financial institutions or other organisations). Even if some nodes are unreliable, dishonest or malicious, the network is able to correctly verify the transactions and protect the ledger from tampering through a mathematical mechanism called proof-of-work, which makes human intervention or controlling authority unnecessary (Atzori, 2015, pg.2).

This technology was first conceived of and developed by an anonymous person operating under the pseudonym of Satoshi Nakamoto in late 2008, in a comprehensive white paper where he or she outlined how banks could be circumvented by using the network underlying Bitcoin. The underlying motivation behind the development of the Bitcoin network stemmed from an acute sense of disillusionment with and intensifying distrust in government and its institutions after the economic collapse of 2008. This then is also the catalyst for an increasing sense of trust in and reliance on algorithms rather than politicians and civil servants to take over certain governmental functions, especially amongst younger citizens.

Blockchain is at the forefront of this shift towards more reliance on math and less reliance on politicians, and as the technology matures, it is becoming abundantly clear that it is not only here to stay, but that it will indefinitely disrupt the ways in which governments operate from the ground up.

Blockchain is presenting governments with the opportunity to take the commercialisation that they’ve already tentatively embarked on a step further, and to offer seamless and efficient public and social services to citizens. Some nations have already started the ball rolling. Estonia for example, is in the process of consolidating official documents like passports, birth certificates, marriage licenses, death certificates, drivers’ licenses, tax records, amongst numerous others into a digital ledger, which means that integrated services can be delivered seamlessly to citizens without central processing. Voting records, health records and educational attainment information are already on a ledger, and citizens have full control over which aspects of this information they want to share and with whom (e-estonia website, n.d.). Blockchain thus becomes the very necessary antidote to much maligned bureaucracy, since blockchain- enabled networks would support a highly personalised, and above all secure, self-service system.

Moreover, there is yet another new set of administrative and governmental apparatuses that are starting to emerge as states undergo transformation. These apparatuses stem from the increased importance and use of data, and particularly big data, on individual, governmental, and societal level.

The question arises as to how the new apparatuses and technologies arising from the cybershift break from what Foucault saw as arising from the neoliberal regime.

One notable break relates to technologies of power in the networked society. First of all, there is the interesting kind of transformation of disciplinary power that occurs within the networked society that I discussed in the last chapter, whereby instead of being unidirectional (from institution to subject, and subject upon himself) as it was in the disciplinary society Foucault conceived of, it is now multi-directional (from institution to subject, subject upon himself and from subject to institution, institution upon itself) and has an extra dimension, in the sense that the networked 'dividual', is also subjected to the power relations his 'datavidual' is bound up with and binds him to. Networking gives individuals and groups the opportunity to critique reality, truth and objectivity from the periphery (Atton, 2004, p.9), and "the power of flows prevails over flows of any specific power" (Castells, 1998, p.474), blurring the traditional divides between individual and state, state and information, and individual and information. Consequently, there is an interesting shift in the power-knowledge dynamic that Foucault referred to.

Foucault argued that with the historical ruptures that have occurred at certain points in history, knowledge became intertwined with new forms of power and domination, as could be perceived in the rupture that gave rise to the disciplinary society and biopower.

(P)ower produces knowledge...power and knowledge directly imply one another...there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These 'power-knowledge relations' are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known, and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations. In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge.(D&P, pg. 27-28)

No knowledge is formed without a system of communication, registration, accumulation, and displacement that is in itself a form of power, linked in its existence and its functioning to other forms of power. No power, on the other hand, is exercised without the extraction, appropriation, distribution, or restraint of a knowledge. At this level there is not knowledge...on one side and society on the other, or science and the state, but the basic forms of "power- knowledge" (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 17).

Following Foucault's line of argument and applying it to the states and societies of the twenty-first century, as well as the constitution of its subject, the *dividual*, it could be argued that while the power/ knowledge dynamic retains the characteristics described by Foucault, it has become necessary also to expand on what Foucault described.⁵⁰

The first expansion I want to draw attention to is that the subject who knows, as I discussed in the previous chapter, is no longer the subject that Foucault knew. It is rather the *dividual* I have been referring to, this subject that is divided into the subject of the lived-in environment and its *datavidual* - the subject who is now also constituted as data and simultaneously has a multitude of data at his fingertips. Going from the assumption that data is by definition a constitution of knowledge, this means that the subject who knows in the twenty-first century now knows, or has the ability and potential to know, far more than at any other time in human history. Access to knowledge and most forms of information is no longer reserved for the privileged to be used as a means of differentiation, classification, or indeed suppression, in quite the same way as it was in the disciplinary society. Knowledge is no longer something relegated to the realm of the privileged, but has become widely accessible and relatively ubiquitous. If access to information and knowledge (or a lack thereof) was a key factor in the power/ knowledge dynamic of the disciplinary society, it has shifted today. Today simply being in possession of knowledge or having privileged access no longer has the same power effects that it had in the past, since the field of knowledge that is considered privileged has shrunk significantly as the dissemination of previously privileged information (science, medicine, psychology, to name a few) has become widespread. What matters today therefore, is not so much who has access and who doesn't, but rather the ways in which knowledge is managed, arranged, presented and interpreted, in other words when it is used, to what end, and how⁵¹. The knowing *dividual* of today is no longer the unquestioning, docile individual he was before. Today he goes to the doctor having researched his symptoms, having run through a series of diagnostic probabilities, before hearing the doctor's diagnosis. And he has a position of greater strength from which to question the doctor's diagnosis. While these power relations have not disappeared, the dynamic has changed. Today's doctor hands down a diagnosis, but cannot expect docile, unquestioning acceptance from a patient. Thus the *dividual*, like the individual of the past, cannot be seen as a subject who is free in relation to the power system, but he can be seen as a subject who knows more than ever before, and as such is a more active participant within the power system.

The second expansion relates to the objects to be known, and one point of note here is that the subject

⁵⁰ The connection between power and knowledge that Foucault sees is not confined to institutional uses of knowledge to exert dominance, but it is knowledge which is intrinsic to all relations of power. The same goes for truth. Looking at the power/knowledge relationship in this way also "encompasses the possibility of a critical knowledge that would speak the truth to power, exposing domination for what it is, and thereby enabling or encouraging effective resistance to it" (Rouse, 2005, pg. 6).

⁵¹ Of course the factual basis or truth of the information and knowledge that is widely disseminated in this manner is also a key factor, but this is a point I will address at length in the next chapter.

itself is not only a knowing subject of course, but also an object to be known. In Foucault's estimation, this happened when man became a subject of study, classification and examination. Curiously, today's individuals are indeed objects to be known in the Foucauldian sense, but the individual, in as much as he is also a manifestation of data, a producer of copious amounts of metadata, a data-individual if you will, is today an object to be known not only in the Foucauldian sense, but also as an amalgamation of information and metadata, an electronic self. Man as an object to be known is today a far greater source of openly or publicly shared and disseminated information than ever before, with aspects known today that were hitherto kept out of the realm of public knowledge.

This has given rise to a new kind of power dynamic that can be evidenced through, for example, the events of the US Presidential Elections of 2016, which saw Donald Trump elected (despite not being the frontrunner in the race for the presidency), as well as the unexpected Brexit vote in the UK. It is purported that voting in both cases was greatly affected by the actions of a company called Cambridge Analytica,⁵² which used a personality quiz app within the Facebook ecosystem to harvest data on Facebook users, as well as their "friends". The company supposedly mined roughly 50 million Facebook profiles for personal data in this way. The data that was harvested was analysed for political affiliation, educational level, and various seemingly innocuous questions used to build personality profiles, as well as combing through the types of things they "liked" while on Facebook. This data was then used to target individuals who would be receptive to the ideas espoused by certain political candidates and to deliver pro-Trump material (or pro-Brexit, whichever the case was) directly to these targeted individuals online with the express intent to influence their vote, and without them ever knowing that their behaviour was being influenced or directed (Meredith, 2018; Rutledge, 2018).

As noted above, the individual of today is in the unprecedented position of being an object to be known in the traditional sense, but now also has the added dimension of its data-individual - and the Cambridge Analytica scandal highlights just how much information every individual gives away through its data-individual. Man today is an object to be known to an extent that far supersedes any other epoch that went before. This ability for almost anyone to mine data from individuals without their knowledge, or to use the myriad of metadata they leave in their wake for analysis and subsequent targeted profiling, has given rise to a curious new dimension to the power/knowledge dynamic. Man, as an object to be known, provides the information or knowledge through which his own knowledge as a knowing subject can be altered and purposely directed so as to elicit a certain action or behaviour - an action or a behaviour which he will see as an autonomous choice which is based on his frame of reference, his knowledge base. If disciplinary power targeted the body of the individual in order to render him docile or compliant, this new power targets the individual's psyche directly through his ability to be a subject who knows in order to elicit a desired action or behaviour. This is not a power that only acts upon an individual either. As the Cambridge Analytica example illustrates, this is a power that can be enacted on groups or populations as well. It can direct public opinion without the awareness of the public.

⁵² Note that Cambridge Analytica has denied wrongdoing. However, even if they are free of wrongdoing, the manner in which they are accused of using the data for manipulation and political gain, is very possible, and a valid concern, so it does not affect the validity of the argument I am making here.

Another notable divergence from the neoliberalism of the 1970's and 80's lies in a technology of the self. The neoliberal subject recognises himself as being subject to his own identity and as being categorised or identified by his own individuality and competencies, thereby imposing a truth upon himself which he must recognise. The networked dividual on the other hand, has the ability to achieve a certain amount of identity fluidity in the sense that this divided entity who has a datavidual presence in the web can build up any number of carefully constructed personae with which to participate in any number of online activities, groups and social causes, whilst keeping these separate from one another, and also from the actions of the real world self. Today's dividual usually constructs a cyber-self that conforms exactly with what they perceive to be acceptable or 'normal' to society, through social media, active participation in online groups representing ideologies, religions, charitable causes and so on, and usually this datavidual that he constructs of himself, at least the part that is not made up of metadata and which he has no control over, usually represents a kind of 'clean' or 'ideal' version of the real world self. The reason for this is that the datavidual self-represents, or transmits itself to many different types of people simultaneously. This of course does not stop some dividuals from also having another completely different or subversive online persona, in order to belong to a group that is subversive, or considered outside of the 'normal', or to have a 'truer' persona on display for friends but which is hidden from family or work colleagues, and so forth. The networked individual therefore recognises himself as being subject to his own identity as a self in the real world as well as his cyber self, as a datavidual, and as a datavidual, is able to participate in and identify with social movements, ideologies, ideas, and influences which may not be present or permitted in the physical world of the dividual.

However, the networked dividual also still retains some of that neoliberal tendency to want to imbue himself with worth, with value, to be an entrepreneur of the self as it were. According to Rouvroy (Rouvroy and Stiegler, 2016, pg. 9), there is "a parallel between some modes of neoliberal government and the way individuals see their life as having a value only after being indexed according to their popularity on social networks...or on all sorts of quantification of the self...They have value only according to the outside and to the performances of others." People place great value in Facebook and Instagram likes for example, and feel profoundly disappointed when they do not get the validation they expected for their posts from others. Conversely, the number of likes for a post has become a measure for self-worth. We therefore live in a hyper-competitive society, even at the level of individuation and subjectivation (Rouvroy and Stiegler, 2016, pg. 9).

All of this has profound implications for how we think about identity in the networked world of today.

According to Castells (2010, p.3) "[I]dentity is becoming the main, and sometimes only, source of meaning in an historical period characterized by the widespread destructuring of organizations [and] delegitimisation of institutions." He argues that while our social organisation has become networked and globalised, giving rise to a highly integrated and cosmopolitan culture, the most important sources of

political autonomy and social mobilisation have arisen around movements rooted in identity, such as religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and so forth, with these being the most important source of meaning for the individual subject (Castells, 1998, p.477). It is this need to identify with a social movement, a cause, or an ideological point of view that has led to the proliferation of what has been termed “new social movements” (NSMs) in the networked society. Catherine Wilson (2009, p. 39) argues that this emphasis on identity and the resultant rise of NSMs is quintessentially self-relational in the sense that Foucault circumscribed since it requires explicit “self objectification as the intimate details of daily life are politicized and the distinction between the individual and the collective is blurred.”

What characterises the NSMs that are forming in the networked society, lies, firstly, in their duality of being global and local at the same time. NSMs essentially, through the Internet, have a global reach in terms of their objectives and praxis, but are also decidedly localised (Atton, 2004, p.13). They are localised in the sense that the individual subject, the individual of the networked society, is rooted within his community, in his particular group and in his specific identity, but then gets to act globally. The reason for this is that the system itself is global, so not acting globally would mean making no difference to the very system you want to change. It would simply be disempowering (Castells in his 2008 interview with Harry Kreisler). This tenet of global action on the part of NSMs has important politico-philosophical consequences however, for during the beginnings of the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970’s and 80’s, action was still relatively localised. Thus, when social movements and the identities that go with them formed and acted, the state and various institutions could still exercise various familiar governmental and disciplinary techniques of power over them for the purposes of control. There was direct control over the body of the individual. The individual of the networked world is in the curious position of having a presence, being actualised, in a realm that is apart from his physical body, and which is not bound by geographical borders. How do you gag the individual? How do you contain or restrain it if it is outside of your geographical or physical jurisdiction?⁵³

The global dispersal of action on the part of these social movements (including the criminal or subversive ones) through cyberspace, has diffused the usual technologies of power and control which have traditionally been adopted by institutions and states. Consider for example the revolutions in Egypt, Yemen and Libya in the form of the so-called Arab Spring – all of which were very rapidly orchestrated through mass internet communications via social networking sites and so on, or the recent allegations that hackers, at the behest of the Russian government, managed to change the outcome of the 2016 American Presidential election by hacking into voter data and spreading misinformation or ‘fake news’ through social media. These are actions upon which it becomes very difficult indeed to enforce another action outside of the network, in the physical world, and indeed across borders.

The question now arises that if disciplinary power and biopower underscored neoliberal governmentality, what are we dealing with today in the face of the cybershift? In other words, what are the implications for

⁵³ Certain more repressive governments try of course, but this has largely been unsuccessful, with citizens using VPN services and the like to circumvent the walls erected by the state on the networks.

power and governmentality of this dispersion of action by citizens and social groups?

Antoinette Rouvroy is one author who addresses this issue, and she has coined the phrase “algorithmic governmentality”. She argues that there are certain changes occurring in government and in governance as a result of the data deluge produced by the networked society. Governments are increasingly making use of big data as a basis for making decisions and taking action. In this networked world, algorithms are deployed to analyse massive data sets that are gathered from computers, mobile phones, satellites, the Internet of Things, and much more. All this data is mined to look for behavioural patterns and anomalies, and is then used to make inferences about how people act, what they feel, and what they are likely to do in the future. One notable point to make here, is that the data that is gathered and the means of gathering through computers and algorithms are seen as being inherently neutral, true and very often irrefutable. It is also often privileged over information given by people because it is assumed that if the data can reveal how people think, act and feel, then there is no longer a need to ask them (Morison, 2016, pg.2).

On the face of it, this also seems to be a very transparent and democratic process, in the sense that algorithms don't discriminate or pass anyone over, and data is (for the most part) there for all to see. This of course goes one step further from Foucault's assertions regarding the use of statistics as a biopolitical tool in the control and governance of populations. Statistics have given way to big data and algorithmic sortation, ridding itself of perceived human bias and lending itself a veneer of transparency, democracy, and total legitimacy. In the words of Morison (2016, pg. 2), “It seems to promise transparent, accountable and improved democracy. It suggests there is a technical answer to lots of the problems of unruly politics...” Of course it helps too that the process of data sortation and the algorithms themselves are beyond the vast majority of a population's comprehension, including the government representatives that rely on the condensed data that is produced and upon which they base their decisions and actions. There is a neutralising schism if you will, between the user and the data, which further legitimises it as unbiased and irrefutable, and makes it the perfect wellspring for the identification of norms and the justification of normalisation.

In essence algorithmic governmentality (AG) draws upon and seeks to involve governable subjects who function not as real individuals but rather as temporary aggregates of infra-personal data gathered at, and exploitable on, an industrial scale. Information is collected in a ubiquitous manner, even before the use that it will be put to is fully determined. A “human-algorithm relationship” is created where trust is given to relevant algorithms to seek correlations routinely. The knowledge that AG draws upon is not created by individuals or given meaning by political or other frameworks of reference. Instead it appears ineluctably from the data...It creates a new and constantly updated reality, and with it a new normality that is reinforced by being - seemingly - the expression of everyone (Morison, 2016, pg. 3-4).

This idea that the data produces norms and knowledge that is an expression of the majority of citizens not only serves to legitimise certain governmental actions and decisions, but it also gives us the illusion of emancipation, because it seems completely democratic, all-inclusive, transparent and above all

incontestably the will of the majority. All of our actions are reflected in the data, and there is no need for interpretation by government agencies, politicians and so on. The algorithms are able to pinpoint exactly what we want, when we want it, and how we want it. It is however an illusion because, through making the data and the knowledge it produces transcendent, we lose the ability to contest the norm, and we lose the ability to fully exert our will (Morison, 2016, pg. 4; Rouvroy in Rouvroy and Stiegler, 2016, pg. 15).

Rouvroy also argues that the target of government, of power, has evolved. To return to a question I asked towards the beginning of this discussion pertaining to how a government can control a dataidividual that is not within its jurisdiction in order to modify the behaviour of its corresponding dividual, that is within its jurisdiction: the answer lies in this evolution of the target of power and control. Rouvroy asserts that algorithmic governmentality involves the collection and collation of big data in order to predict and preempt what people might do in the future. She says it is “a regime of action on the future” and “consists in acting not on the causes but on the informational and physical environment so that certain things can or cannot be actualised, so that they cannot be possible” (Rouvroy and Stiegler, 2016, pg. 15). This governmentality therefore predicts the actions of the citizenry, and then takes preemptive action on the probable future action it predicted. It is a kind of mode of profiling, and within this profiling it is possible to assess potential, to predict success, and to judge in advance. Examples of this abound. Just consider how companies construct profiles of customers for targeted marketing, how intelligence agencies use data to try to predict who is being groomed to become a suicide bomber or terrorist, or how the justice and welfare systems in many countries use datasets to try to predict and prevent future crimes.⁵⁴ I have already discussed another example with very far-reaching consequences, and an example of how this is done on a massive scale - the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

According to Rouvroy (Rouvroy and Stiegler, 2016, pg. 12), “we will categorise you according to raw data, that have for you no meaning, according to algorithms, that you don’t know how they work, and this will have consequences on your life.”

In the networked society then, the target of power is not the body of the individual, or the population, but both the body of the individual and the population through the dataidividual and any and all other relevant forms of data and metadata that make up big data. Through the management of the information that is algorithmically extrapolated from the data, dividuals, and indeed groups, may be preemptively manipulated and managed. And indeed they allow themselves to be managed because the data is neutral, algorithms are democratic, and most of the time we are unaware of what the data is being used for. Google, Facebook, Amazon, and many other online firms have been doing this for years in the form of targeted advertising - subtly driving customers to certain sites and products through suggestive marketing based on algorithmic customer profiling. In China deep-learning algorithms are being employed by the

⁵⁴ In the USA there is the Data-Driven Justice (DDJ) initiative, which aggregates data from hospitals, jails, and the criminal justice system in order to identify individuals with the highest number of contacts with police, ambulances, emergency services and so on, and to then connect these individuals with welfare services. The idea is to reduce their chances of arrest and incarceration through preemptive action (Morison, 2016, pg. 1).

state to issue a “citizen score” for each citizen. The activities of dataviduals are used to compile a profile that tells the state how loyal and compliant its associated dividual is, and this will affect whether the dividual will qualify for a job, a bank loan, or eligibility to travel (Monbiot, 2017, pg. 1).

In the words of Rouvroy (Rouvroy and Stiegler, 2016, pg. 12), “It is no longer a matter of threatening you or inciting you, but simply by sending you signals that provoke stimuli and therefore reflexes.” This is not discipline, although there is a disciplinary element, but a far subtler power. It is the preemptive management of future behaviours through predictive data analytics and the emission of the correct stimuli to induce certain behaviours. This is no longer disciplinary power or biopower, but rather ‘pregenerative power’, or a power that operates in the space between the will to act and action itself, between the netizen and the citizen, and between the datavidual and the dividual. Moreover it is a power that doesn’t concern itself with individual subjects, but is rather interested in categorising groups of people in large numbers in accordance with the data’s representation of the aggregate expressions of everyone in the group. This curiously constitutes a subject which, as both subject and object of government, is simultaneously present because every measurable action is captured, stored, and sorted, and absent because big data groups and sorts, and leaves individual agency by the wayside (Morison, 2016, pg. 5).

By the same token, governmentality as the “art of government” that Foucault conceived of is giving way to a “science of government” whereby the target of government is no longer the population directly, but also the mass of data that is produced by a networked population in order to then manage the population body. It is indeed an algorithmic governmentality that has as its objective the management of the population through preemptive data analysis and stimulating desired behaviours through the careful scientific management of the data.

Data management is also then a central concern for every dividual, every citizen, and it is in part because of the eroded sense of trust in governments under neoliberalism, and how much control being in possession of that data gives a government, that blockchain technology was developed and that there is growing support for other innovations and technologies aimed pertinently at decentralisation of control and regulation.

The argument in favour of this is that because distributed ledgers support radical transparency, governments have an opportunity to restore that eroded trust, and since states are already evolving into competitors in a global market, vying for citizens’ business so to speak, there is a clear incentive for them to maintain transparency and trust. Why run your business and pay your taxes within a murky state where you don’t have at least a modicum of control and ownership of your personal data when you can do it virtually through a country with fully transparent practices and processes like Estonia? A country where you decide who does what with your information, and that right cannot be violated? Not only that, but with all kinds of information being made available on the blockchain, censorship will become increasingly

difficult and governments could be held accountable for their actions like never before.

For most democratic nations blockchain technology holds a lot of promise. It can be used to uphold human and citizens' rights, since it would be difficult for states to arbitrarily seize property, for police or security forces to wrongfully detain and arrest someone or to withhold evidence in a judicial matter. Refugees wouldn't lose their identification and other records, and providing them with essential aid would become easier and more efficient. Having citizens' identity information on a blockchain would also help in the fight against human trafficking and slavery.

Greater inclusion could be guaranteed for marginalised citizens who do not have ease of access to current government and financial services. Not only this, but governments would be held accountable for every tax dollar they spend, curbing corruption and ensuring that the money is spent where it is supposed to be spent. The knock-on effect of this alone would lead to steady improvements in infrastructure and public services, and in turn impact citizens' quality of life. The flip-side of this argument of course is that, as with any technological advancement, it remains to be seen if this is some kind of panacea for many of the perceived ills of current forms of government, or if it can and will become a political tool that entrenches centralised institutional and power structures even further⁵⁵.

It seems however, that blockchain technology and other algorithmic tools are likely on the way to transforming how we think about government and governance in ways that we have not seen in centuries. These technologies seem, at this point in time, poised to decouple many of the current technical-administrative functions from the centralised apparatus of the state, so it seems quite conceivable that countries, particularly democracies⁵⁶, could come to adopt a two-tiered structure, much like that which is already gaining traction in Estonia. The e-government tier would offer essential public and social services to a new class of e-citizen, who would have the ability to pick and choose the e-government most suited to

⁵⁵ There is a real concern that because the underlying code behind blockchains and other algorithmic tools is not something the general public or government officials will understand very well, we are effectively looking at a mere transference of power and elitism from the current political power players, to new ones, ones who understand code.

Blockchain evangelists will argue that the code underlying distributed ledger technology is open source and that anyone can propose changes to it, but it is prudent to keep in mind that aside from the problem of only a small elite having the knowledge and skills to do so, the authority to accept changes to the code lies squarely in the hands of a small group of coders who actively manage the blockchain in question. Another retort is that these coders will not accept or implement change as long as there isn't broad consensus from the community, but this in itself is a problematic notion in that obtaining broad consensus is not always easily done, and even when broad consensus is reached, it may not be just, fair or ethical. History is saturated with examples of practices that were put into place through broad consensus regardless of them being detrimentally unfair or unjust towards certain stakeholders or community members.

That said, the idea behind this kind of algorithm-based governance is that it can eliminate the need for centralised institutions and give rise to a new social contract based on consensus, which would consequently give us a more transparent, autonomous and innovative global society. It would decentralise communication and collaboration, arbitration in situations of conflict, and would be a self-sustainable system within which citizens would be liberated economically, and politicians would fade into obscurity. For the reasons outlined above, this seems to be an unrealistic, even utopian, ideal. But that is not to say that algorithmic governance, and the use of distributed ledgers in particular, will not cause a significant rupture in current practices in government, or in society and citizenship.

⁵⁶ It is unlikely that a country such as China would move in this direction. In fact, it seems that China is increasingly tightening its grip on these technologies and using them for increased centralised control over its population.

their needs in a kind of governmental marketplace. This corporatisation of traditional government functions, services and processes will redefine what it means to be a citizen. Citizenship within this kind of system will no longer hinge only upon where you were born or raised, but also where you choose to conduct your business. It will have the duality of being both a birth right and a commodity to be bought in the market.

The second tier of government then, would be the juridico-political tier, which would encompass the remaining institutional apparatuses and norms that relate specifically to what it means to be a citizen within the physical, geographical borders of a nation. These would include, broadly speaking, the enforcement of the constitution and policy-making in areas such as foreign policy, international trade agreements, environmental policy, educational policy, the safety and security of citizens, and much more. It would be under this second tier of government that citizenship of a country, in the sense of having the right to physically live there, would be a birth right. But perhaps most importantly, this is where citizens would be able to hold someone accountable and raise concerns over ethical, moral and human rights issues, to combat the aforementioned problem of the neutralising schism that occurs between the algorithmic process and the user.

Therefore, as far as the cybershift's impact on the individual subject is concerned, individual responsibility as conceived of in neoliberal regimes is undergoing radical change. Individuals have started to monitor and manage themselves through data collection and collation. They wear trackers that record and monitor their heart rates, footsteps, location throughout the day, the places they have frequented, who they were there with, and this data is on the network, is part of the big data that data analytics uses to predict behavioural trends and actions not only across populations and groups, but also on an individual level. All this allows for the networked 'dividual' to be carefully managed, for his future actions to be orchestrated to a certain degree, but at the same time, with the development of blockchain technology and its increasing implementation across bureaucratic or technical-administrative areas and functions, the dividual also curiously gains better control and ownership of his data. Today's subject is indeed a divided entity which lives as a body of flesh and blood but also as a body of data, who is curiously being managed while managing himself both in his physical form and his datavidual form. We are no longer living in the era of governmentality, but rather the era of managementality.

3.5. Conclusion: The Managed Subject

This then is also the thread that holds it all together - the question of the constitution of the modern-day subject. What it boils down to, is that Foucault's homo economicus is giving way to a new subject in the sense that he is no longer defined only by his freedom to give value to himself and take responsibility for himself, to be an entrepreneur of himself, but also by his freedom to be wired to and to participate in an

ever expanding and interconnected series of networks that capture all kinds of data and metadata in order to measure and manage him, even pre-emptively. This individual who has the freedom to traverse the networks, but who is also increasingly constrained by the network and increasingly embroiled in new social movements in order to establish and validate his identity (sometimes on multiple fronts), who is both present and absent as an object of government, I would like to call “homo informaticus”. Unlike homo economicus, homo informaticus no longer only acts upon the basis of desires, interests and aspirations - he also acts explicitly on the knowledge that he is part of a global network. Homo informaticus is constituted in part as data, which means that subjectification and subjectivation as Foucault defined them, have to be reconsidered insofar as they constitute a subject.

Homo economicus is an individual who invests in his human capital, who calculates every action in a cost-for-benefit, transactional manner, and in doing so, governs himself while being governed, exerts power while bowing to power. Homo informaticus is of course still all of these things too, but what has changed significantly is that this new subject is a divided one, made up in part of data, and able to transcend physical boundaries and distances.

Subjectification, whereby power acts on a subject as well as enacting him into being, whereby a subject is subjected or controlled, while at the same time being subject to his own identity through self-knowledge and consciousness, is evolving into something far more complex than that which Foucault described. Homo informaticus, because he is both present and absent as an object over which power is exercised, because he is carefully managed through stimuli, through a power that is exercised in the space between himself as individual and himself as data, because he is a divided one, is a subject that is grappling with a new kind of technology of the self, one that engenders a kind of identity fluidity that stems from his ability to self-construct a part of his data-self.

One problem that faces homo informaticus is that if all or most of his actions are contained in big data to be algorithmically ordered and managed, and if that data is then used to direct his future actions, then freedom or liberation becomes a double-edged sword: homo informaticus provides the means, the data, whereby his present and future actions can be managed and controlled, whereby he can be subjected, but the data is obtainable for collection, collation and the exercise of constraint and control precisely because he has greater freedom than at any point in history - the freedom to transcend distance and geographical barriers, the freedom to participate in new social movements, the freedom to bring himself to life as a data-individual, to be the architect of his own identity in ways that were impossible in any other period in history, and to leave a myriad of metadata in his wake.

This metadata that he scatters all over every network he traverses through with every action he takes raises another issue which is highlighted by Morison (2016, pg. 4). He says that we are now faced with a new truth regime,

one which is centred around what is visible from the data...The task here is to construct meaning out of

meaningless information, and this involves the disappearance of the individual subject whose only point of interest is how he/she exists in a relational context with other individuals as they themselves appear massed up into huge data sets...It also involves...the departure of individual agency...

The twenty-first century divided subject finds himself in a world where his physical self has the ability to act, to exercise his will, to be free insofar as he can resist. However, in doing so, he releases parts of his data self to algorithmic governance or management, and from here he disconnects from that part of himself and gives it over to an anonymous network to be collated, sorted and analysed, in the process relinquishing his ability to act, to react, and to ultimately resist. The dataidual does not have individual agency, and without agency cannot exert any power or take up resistance, and hence there can be no freedom from this dispositif of power. In a certain sense homo informaticus is the smith who forges the steel from which his own shackles are fashioned.

It seems to me that we must distinguish between power relations understood as strategic games between liberties -in which some try to control the conduct of others, who in turn try to avoid allowing their conduct to be controlled or try to control the conduct of others- and the states of domination that people ordinarily call 'power'. And between the two, between games of power and states of domination, you have technologies of government - understood, of course, in a very broad sense that includes not only the way institutions are governed but also the way one governs one's wife and children. The analysis of these techniques is necessary because it is very often through such techniques that states of domination are established and maintained. There are three levels to my analysis of power: strategic relations, techniques of government, and states of domination. (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 299)

If power relations are defined, as implied in the above, as a mode of conduct or action upon the actions of others, or upon subjects that are acting subjects who are free because they have agency, then the pregenerative power that is exercised over homo informaticus must, according to Foucault's understanding, be a state of domination, or, to be more specific, a technique of government that establishes and maintains a state of domination. The question arises here however, if indeed a subject can be subjected to domination if they are unaware that they are being dominated, or if the domination is not exercised directly over the body of the individual or its actions, but preemptively in the space between the will to to act and action itself. How can you resist what you do not know about? Homo informaticus can be governed and subjected to a state of domination through this technique of power precisely because he is an object to be known, more intimately than at any other juncture in history, and he has no knowledge of what data is being collected, how it will sorted, analysed and used, and to what ends, or even if he is being steered into certain courses of action.

Whereas homo economicus is a subject that can be governed, in the sense that being governed implies a certain distance between the authority doing the governing and the subject being governed⁵⁷, homo

⁵⁷ The word *govern* comes from the Anglo-French *governer* and from the Latin *gubernare*, which means to steer. The dictionary's definitions all allude to governance as being related to administration and control from a higher authority.

informaticus is a subject that is carefully managed, which implies a far more direct, hands-on form of control requiring a certain amount of technical expertise. This narrows the distance between the manager and the subject being managed,⁵⁸ and so narrows the space within which agency is possible and resistance can be exercised. We have indeed entered the era of managementality.

In the next chapter I want to address the next important phase in Foucault's work - his ethics, and from there have a thoroughgoing discussion of how a Foucauldian perspective can help us to further make sense of how the individual is constituted within this age of managementality, as brought about by the cybershift.

⁵⁸ The word *manage* is derived from the Latin word *manus*, which translates to *hand*. In the 16th Century *manage* meant to put a horse through its paces. The origins of the word allude to a form of strict and direct control that requires a certain amount of skill or expertise to carry out.

Chapter 4: Ethics - A Foucauldian Perspective in the Networked, Digital World

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I wrote that Foucault's concept of governmentality is the axis that connects his preceding work on power and his subsequent work on ethics.⁵⁹ It is this transition to ethics that I want to explore here, in particular as it relates to the technologies of the self. Once I have done that, I want to turn my attention once again to the twenty-first century subject, and ask in what ways this individual constitutes himself as an ethical subject, with particular regard to his position as a subject within a regime of managementality.

Lazzarato (2006, pg. 17) says that

for Foucault, governmental technologies play a central role in power relations, because it is through these technologies that the opening and closing of strategic games is possible - through their exercise strategic relations become either crystallised and fixed in asymmetric institutionalized relations (states of domination), or they open up the creation of subjectivities that escape biopolitical power in fluid and reversible relations. The ethical-political struggle takes on its full meaning at the frontier between 'strategic relations' and 'states of domination' on the terrain of 'governmental technologies'.

What he concludes from this is that ethical action is situated at the junction between strategic relations and governmental technologies, and that there are two main goals upon which ethical action is predicated. The first is to allow an interplay of strategic relations with the minimum possible amount of domination through the provision of rules and techniques for managing the relationship between the self and others. The second is to exercise power to augment freedom, reversibility, and mobility, since these are the prerequisites for both resistance and creation. Resistance and creation are central to the link between governmentality or governmental technologies and ethics, since power, insofar as it tries to render itself into relations of domination or manifests as a desire to control the conduct of others, always meets with resistance. "Consequently, life and living become a 'matter' of ethics through the dynamic that simultaneously resists power and creates new forms of life (Lazzarato, 2006, pg. 17). In a previous chapter

⁵⁹ In Foucault's (1994c, pg. 300) own words: "...governmentality implies the relationship of the self to itself, and I intend this concept of governmentality to cover the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organise, and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other. Those who try to control, determine, and limit the freedom of others are themselves free individuals who have at their disposal certain instruments they can use to govern others. Thus, the basis for all this is freedom, the relationship of the self to itself and the relationship to the other...I believe that the concept of governmentality makes it possible to bring out the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others -which constitutes the very stuff of ethics."

I wrote that it was Foucault's view that power is productive, that it produces subjects, that it is through the subject's ability to resist, through the dynamic interplay between relations of power and resistance that subjects constitute themselves, but this is only half of the story. Ethics, or rather how the subject constitutes itself as someone capable of ethical action, is the other half.

Before I launch into an analysis of Foucault's ethics and elaborate on this dynamic, I would like to set the scene by quoting Foucault's own explanation of the train of thought running through his body of work.

We must understand that there are four major types of... "technologies", each a matrix of practical reason: (1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, immortality.

These four types of technologies hardly ever function separately, although each one of them is associated with a certain type of domination. Each implies certain modes of training and modification of individuals..." (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 225)

This then forms the basis for Foucault's ethics. Each person is a person in the world, and as such is formed by the predominant socio-historical discourses, the ability to act upon others and to be acted upon, to be dominated, but also to be able to resist domination, to be governed, but also to govern, and ultimately to be free to do all this. This freedom for Foucault is therefore the ontological condition of ethics, in that this is what allows a subject to make him or herself, through his or her ability to construct discourse, to resist domination, to govern himself and others, and to forge a "relationship of the self to itself", but always within the framework of the moral code imposed upon him. Davidson (1986, p.228) articulates this as follows:

In addition to ethics, morals consist of people's actual behaviour, that is, their morally relevant actions, and of the moral code which is imposed on them. By the moral code Foucault understood, for example, the rules that determine which actions are forbidden, permitted, or required, as well as that aspect of the code that assigns different positive and negative values to different possible behaviours. The study of people's actual moral behaviour is the usual domain of a sociology of morals, while moral philosophers standardly concern themselves with elaborating a justifiable moral code and defending its structure. Foucault wanted to shift the emphasis to 'how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions', without, however, denying the importance of either the moral code or the actual behaviour of people.

Foucault's ethics, this relationship with the self or *rappor*t à soi, which is effectively what ethics comes down to for Foucault, encompasses four main tenets and determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions.

The first of these tenets is what we may refer to as ethical substance, and it includes that part of ourselves or our behaviour (our feelings) which forms the domain that is important in making ethical judgements.

The second is the mode of subjectivation - that which concerns the way in which people are urged to recognise their moral obligations (through divine law, as imposed by the demands of reason, as being rooted in convention or, as derived from the Ancient Greeks, in striving for the most beautiful form of existence possible). The main point concerning the mode of subjectivation however is that it provides the connection between the self and the moral code.

The third tenet of Foucault's ethics concerns the ways in which we transform ourselves in order to become ethical subjects - the self-forming activity we employ in order to become moral subjects, or put differently, how we work on the ethical substance to make ourselves into ethical subjects.

The last tenet is referred to as the 'telos', and this represents the kind of being which we aspire to when we act in moral ways (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 263-266; Davidson, 1986 p. 228-229; Oksala, 2005 p. 159).

Foucault, in *The Care of the Self*, argues that becoming an ethical subject entails engaging in practices of the self that can't simply be seen as investments that hold some form of a future return. Rather, they encompass practices that are bound by the rules and codes of conduct set out for the subject, but at the same time they are self-conscious, reflective practices engaged in by subjects who are, in Foucault's understanding, free.

In other words, Foucault's moral agent, his subject, is always being governed, disciplined, but at the same time he is governing others as well as self-governing, self-disciplining - but always consciously so. The moral subject is therefore not constituted in a vacuum by itself, but through a complex set of interrelationships with others, his social environment, and the self. Neither does this constitution only occur by way of the enforcement of moral codes, disciplines, normative practices and so forth upon him or her, but it also simultaneously occurs through a process of self-examination and self-reflection.⁶⁰

Foucault says in *The Care of the Self* (1986, p.51):

here we touch on one of the most important aspects of this activity devoted to oneself: it constituted, not an exercise in solitude, but a true social practice. And it did so in several ways. It often took form within more or less institutionalized structures.

[T]he care of the self appears therefore as intrinsically linked to a 'soul service', which includes the possibility of a round of exchanges with the other and a system of reciprocal obligation (p.54).

[So,] the task of testing oneself, examining oneself, monitoring oneself in a series of clearly defined exercises, makes the question of truth - the truth concerning what one is, what one does, and what one is capable of doing - central to the formation of the ethical subject (p.68).

⁶⁰ I think that Foucault was trying to find a more palatable ethical theory, one that acknowledges some of the tenets of previous theories, but also circumvents their obvious shortcomings. For this reason he doesn't ignore the ideas stemming from for example Kantian ethics, social contract theories, contemporary deontology, or even utilitarianism. He undoubtedly gives a hat tip to some of the ideas encompassed in these movements, but ultimately they all fall short of a comprehensive ethical theory for Foucault. For this reason he turns his attention to the Ancient Greeks, and he is of course not the first to do so either. In fact, in a later discussion, I will go through some of the contact points between Foucault's ethics and contemporary Aristotelean virtue ethics.

In order to bring to light how such practices of the self to the self might work, Foucault turns his gaze to the ancient Greeks, notably Socrates, Aristotle, and the Stoics, but also to the Romans to some extent. The question arises however as to why exactly Foucault would look to the Ancients and to this idea of ethics being central to the moral character of the agent or the subject, to elucidate his position on ethics?

According to Timothy O'Leary (2002 p.2;7), it is because

we can no longer allow religious systems, moral codes or scientific truths to shape our lives. We are in much the same position as those ancients for whom the question 'how is one to live?' could only be answered by the cultivation of a relation of self to self in which the self is neither given nor produced, but is continuously worked on in a labour of care and skill.

In Foucault's estimation the subject is not given to us as an unalterable substance. It is given to us as a form which is malleable, and we are, in certain ways, free to choose whether and how to change or transform that form. It was this idea of ethics being rooted in personal choice rather than legal or social imperatives that Foucault found to be most capable of responding to our contemporary needs.

Such an ethics would satisfy what Foucault calls our 'desire for rules [and] desire for form' while avoiding the 'catastrophe' of a universally imposed moral code. Such an ethics would be 'a very strong structure of existence, without any relation with the juridical per se, with an authoritarian system, with a disciplinary structure'. It could provide a mode of ethical being which would satisfy what Foucault calls 'our impatience for liberty' (O'Leary, 2002 p. 7-8).

Rajchman (1986 p.166) echoes this to some extent when he says that Foucault's ethics stems from a sensibility which doesn't find it credible to try to find oneself within a moral order that was given, or to "construct" oneself in terms of some universal or transcendental prescription.

Foucault's thought...assumes that our identity is not fixed by our nature, divine or human, empirical or transcendental. It held instead that being the subject of one's own experience should never be taken as given – either by religion or by science, or by law or government. It...called for a practice which is a matter neither of finding a true nature nor of obeying an incontrovertible principle (Rajchman, 1986 p.166).

He argues that Foucault's is a philosophy that is based on an analysis of the human subject as it has been constituted, and stemming from that, to ask what it may become. It is not in other words a philosophy that tries to figure out what to do on the basis of what the subject is essentially perceived to be. It is a philosophy that questions the variety of means by which we come to be constituted as subjects of our own experience.

"It is the philosophy for a practice in which what one is capable of being is not rooted in a prior knowledge of what one is. Its principle is freedom, but a freedom which does not follow from any postulation of our nature or essence" (Rajchman, 1986 p.166-167). Thus ethics in Foucault's understanding becomes a

practice containing a powerful interconnection between the individual subject's freedom to choose, and the organisational context within which that ability to choose is framed and governed.

In this chapter, I will investigate the question of mankind's transition into the digital world and its consequences for ethics, knowledge, and truth. This investigation will, in large part, lean on Foucault's readings of the ancient Greeks, Romans and Christians, as well as the Stoics. I believe that Foucault, through his interpretation of Greek ethics, has given us a foundation from which to understand this transition into the new digital world. Foucault, in the early 1980's (1994c, pg. 255-256) already saw that people for the most part

no longer believe that ethics is founded in religion, nor do we want a legal system to intervene in our moral, personal, private life. Recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics. They need an ethics, but they cannot find any other ethics than an ethics founded on so-called scientific knowledge of what the self is, what desire is, what the unconscious is, and so on. I am struck by this similarity of problems.

I too am struck by this similarity of problems, and I think they have become even more acute, as we undergo the current cybershift, or digital transformation. This chapter will therefore explore these issues that Foucault explored through his readings of the ancients and attempt to reinterpret them for the twenty-first century context.

4.2. Ethics, Care of the Self, and Technologies of the Self

I think, in general, we have to distinguish... [between] acts and moral code. The acts (*conduites*) are the real behaviour of the people in relation to the moral code (*prescriptions*) imposed on them. I think we have to distinguish between the code that determines which acts are permitted and forbidden and the code that determines the positive or negative value of the different behaviours...And there is another side to the moral prescriptions, which most of the time is not isolated as such but is, I think, very important: the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself, *rappport à soi*, which I call ethics, and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions" (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 263).

As evidenced by the quote above, Foucault saw ethics as being situated in a relationship of the self with the self which leads to the subject constituting itself as ethical. Ethics is a kind of critical ontology of the self which should not be perceived as a theory or a prescriptive set of codes or rules of conduct (although these of course play their part in Foucault's ethics), or even a permanent body of knowledge. Ethics, rather, is a practice, it involves the constitution of the self as an ethical being through practices of self-discipline, self-analysis, and self-critiquing, all within the historical limits that are imposed on us and our ability to resist and transcend these. Foucault further distinguishes between ethics and moral behaviour or actions. Ethical behaviour is the outcome of a process through which the individual acts upon himself through monitoring, testing and transforming himself, thereby delimiting that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice or action and deciding on which mode of being will best serve his

moral goal (Crane et al., 2008, pg. 299; Foucault, 1990b, pg. 28).

Foucault therefore draws a clear distinction between what it means to constitute oneself as an ethical being, and what it means to act or behave in ways that can be construed as being moral or ethical.

In *The Use of Pleasure* Foucault gives us a concise overview of what he means by morality, ethics, and the care of the self. He explains that when he refers to morality, he is thinking of two senses. He is referring to the sets of values and rules for action that people tend to adhere to because these are given by some sort of authority such as the church, school, government, family and so on. Usually these moral codes are explicitly laid out and actively taught. But he is also referring to the real behaviour or actions of individuals in the face of these moral codes. In other words, the word 'morality' "designates the manner in

which they comply more or less fully with a standard of conduct, [or] the manner in which they respect or disregard a set of values" (Foucault, 1990b, pg. 25). Studying this characteristic of morality thus entails determining how individuals and groups conduct themselves in the face of the systems and codes that prescribe moral action and which are either explicitly or implicitly present in the culture under study, and also to what extent transgression occurs. Foucault clearly distinguishes therefore between the actions or behaviours of people in relation to the codes of conduct that are imposed on them, and the actions and behaviours of people in relation to the codes or prescriptions that attribute a positive or a negative value to the actions themselves. In other words we are not only subject to the respective moral rules, regulations and codes imposed upon us through various cultural structures and institutions, but our actions are also subject to a process of valuation or valorisation as they relate to what is deemed good and right or bad and wrong. These however make up just a part of the overall picture. What completes the picture of what ethics is and means to Foucault, is the relationship of the self to the self.

Foucault is not incognisant of the fact that in Western societies, through our inheritance of Christian moral traditions, we are inclined to view self-care as incompatible with morality - caring for yourself is a selfish act that is associated with breaking the rules. This then leaves us with a deontological basis for morality in the form of external rules, regulations, norms and laws enforcing moral action. Furthermore, knowing oneself becomes a catalyst for self-renunciation, which in turn is a condition for salvation in the Christian mind-set, so that "know thyself" now takes precedence over "take care of yourself". This is compounded in philosophy in general, from Descartes to Husserl, where "knowledge of the self (the thinking subject) takes on an ever-increasing importance as the first step in the theory of knowledge...In Greco-Roman culture, knowledge of oneself appeared as the consequence of the care of the self. In the modern world, knowledge of oneself constitutes the fundamental principle" (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 228).

4.2.1. A Foucauldian Thread: Knowledge and Knowing Your Divided Self

This connection between care of the self, knowledge of the self, and ethics in Foucault's work leads us down one of the most important rabbit-holes in Foucault's work, and for this reason I think it is necessary to explore his particular theory of knowledge a bit more comprehensively here. I also want to connect the dots and see what implications a Foucauldian theory of knowledge holds for the twenty-first century individual.

In the preceding chapters I looked at how Foucault saw man transition, during the epistemic shift from the Enlightenment to the Classical era, to becoming not only the subject who knows, but also an object to be known. Foucault in fact saw knowledge as an absolutely pivotal domain in genealogy - a domain which is essentially "a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge" (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 262). Hence man is constituted as an object to be known as well as a knowing subject, but an unequivocal part of being a knowing subject as well as an object to be known, is being able to turn the knowing gaze back upon oneself as it were, and to know oneself. Foucault argues that this gazing inwards into oneself goes beyond mere introspection. It is not just a form of self-fascination or self-interest either. He equates this process of knowing oneself with what the Greeks referred to as *epimeleia heautou*, which encompasses knowing oneself, and taking care of oneself through a sort of work on the self. Foucault (1994c, pg. 269) says that it is a "very powerful word; it describes a sort of work, an activity; it implies attention, knowledge, technique." Foucault goes on to explain that the classical understanding of the role of knowledge in the care of the self was quite different from later understandings, and notably the Christian interpretation. The Greeks tended to subordinate scientific knowledge to that encompassed by *epimeleia heautou*, and by implication theoretical or scientific knowledge and understanding was secondary to and in fact guided by ethical concerns. He explains that for the Epicureans "there was a kind of adequation between all possible knowledge and the care of the self" (1994c, pg. 270), which essentially means that the very reason that one pursues scientific knowledge is to take care of the self, in the sense that mastery over a subject is one of the ways in which we define our true selves. Of course the reason for wanting to achieve mastery over a subject, for expanding one's knowledge, is to give value to one's life. "It was a question of making one's life into an object for a sort of knowledge, for a *tekhne* - for an art" (1994c, pg. 71).

In drawing Foucault's works on discourse, discipline, and ethics together, and tracing his development of the concept of knowledge through it all - his particular brand of historical epistemology if you will - it can be said that knowledge for Foucault embodies three elements: knowing the world, knowing others, and knowing oneself, but always within the discursive and non-discursive frameworks of the particular epoch in question. It is for this reason, as I have mentioned on several occasions in the preceding chapters, that

Foucault was able to identify the epistemic shift that occurred as humankind entered the Enlightenment. I also posited the thesis in an earlier chapter that we are indeed again on the cusp of such an epistemic shift. I want to address that thesis here specifically by revisiting some of the central tenets of Foucault's development of the concept of knowledge through his archaeology and genealogy, and through knowledge of the self in his ethics, and thread that through to the experience of the individual as a knowing subject in a networked world.

According to Rouse (2005, pg. 1) Foucault was not very interested in an analysis of the specific bodies of knowledge that arose from detailed scientific investigation of the world in different periods. He was interested, rather, in the epistemic context within which such bodies of knowledge become intelligible and accepted as factual, true and authoritative.

These historically situated fields of knowledge (which Foucault...called "discursive formations")...included the objects under discussion. Foucault was thus committed to a strong nominalism in the human sciences: the types of objects and their domains are not already demarcated, but came into existence only contemporaneous with the discursive formations that made it possible to talk about them (Rouse, 2005, pg. 2).

This too, as I have already iterated in previous chapters, is how it came to be that man as we think of him today "came into existence". It is only during the epistemic shift of the Classical era that the discursive formations arose through which we were able to talk about man as an object of scientific study. However, it was not just the discursive formations that reconfigured scientific knowledge and consequently our perception of human subjectivity at that time, but the transformation that occurred during the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century was also explicitly set in a context of non-discursive formations through practices of discipline, surveillance and constraint which "made possible new kinds of knowledge of human beings even as they created new forms of social control" (Rouse, 2005, pg. 2). In approaching knowledge in this way, Foucault advocated for a form of history that can account for the constitution not only of human subjects, but also for bodies of knowledge and discourses, without ever having to refer to a transcendental subject that stands outside of the field of events that make up his world. It is an attempt to solve the conundrum of the "empirico-transcendental doublet" that man became as he transitioned to the person who knows while being simultaneously an object of knowledge. Of course Foucault later also posits that more than an object of scientific knowledge, we have to also consider man as capable of reflexive self-knowledge. In other words man, as a knowing subject, has the capacity not only to know himself in the world as an object of scientific knowledge, but also as an object of reflexive knowledge, of knowledge of his inner self and recognition of his unique place as a subject in the world.

In terms of discourse, or the discursive formations that Foucault refers to that are especially indicative of historical ruptures, we have seen that these give rise to new forms of speech in which "new kinds of

objects are discussed and endowed with new kinds of attributes; in which speech is related to new forms of power; which employ new forms of knowledge and standards of rationality and reveal a new kind of relation-to-self” (Detel,1996, pg. 301). Foucault himself gives an example of this in the introduction to *The Use of Pleasure* (1990b, pg. 4) when he explains that there are three axes that constitute sexuality as a historical experience. The first axis relates to the formation of the scientific knowledge (*savoirs*) that refer to it; the second axis is made up of the systems of power that regulate its practice, and the third relates to the forms in which individuals are able to recognise themselves as subjects of sexuality. According to Detel (2010, pg. 9), this points to a central question in Foucault’s thinking, namely “what are the processes of subjectivisation and objectification which can lead to the subject, in its role as subject, becoming the object of knowledge?” The answer that Foucault gives us lies in the reciprocity between subjectivisation and objectification, and their interplay with relations of power. In fact, individuals become subjects “through the double process of the submission to relations of power and the reflexivity of the epistemic relation to the self. Subjectivization in this sense implies at the same time an objectivisation of the subject and an adaptation to historically specific games of truth” (Detel, 1996, pg. 303). I will unpack this relationship between ethics, knowledge and games of truth a bit more at a later stage, but suffice it to say for now that for Foucault, taking care of oneself requires knowing oneself (*connaître*), therefore care of the self is not only knowledge of the self, but also encompasses a knowledge of the rules of conduct and the prescriptions that guide one’s life (*connaissance*).⁶¹ These prescriptions can be seen as historically situated truths, so to take care of oneself means becoming equipped with these truths, thereby forming a link between ethics and games of truth (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 285).

So where does this leave the twenty-first century individual?

If discursive formations or historically situated fields of knowledge cause historical ruptures whereby new forms of speech arise, new forms of power spring up, and new forms of knowledge emerge, then we are certainly in the midst of such a rupture right now. In the previous chapters, I discussed at length how the discursive formations around institutions like asylums, prisons, and the workplace and labour practices highlighted such a shift from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, whereby a complete transformation of the human sciences occurred which “made possible new kinds of knowledge of human beings even as they created new forms of social control” (Rouse, 2005, pg. 2). I also started going through

⁶¹ It is worth noting here that Foucault was very cognisant of the exact meanings or definitions of these words, whereby *savoir*, the verb, is used to refer to (in, for example the *Dictionnaires le Robert*) that which we identify and take for reality, or that which we can affirm the existence of (avoir présent à l’esprit; pouvoir affirmer l’existence de). It refers to a kind of knowing of concrete facts or drawing from a body of knowledge. The verb *connaître*, which in everyday conversation is often used synonymously with *savoir*, is used by Foucault in the strict sense of the dictionary definition to denote knowing something through experience, making ideas known, or being aware of the existence of something (connaître qqch. en avoir l’expérience; se faire une idée claire de; être conscient de l’existence de). *Connaissance*, a noun, refers to a fact or a manner of knowing, having knowledge of something, or having knowledge of the act of knowing (le fait ou la manière de connaître; La connaissance de qqch; avoir connaissance de connaître). This last sense of the word is of course particularly prevalent in Foucault’s idea of the care of the self.

some of the shifts that are occurring now, as we forge ahead into the twenty-first century. In the workplace for example, Taylorist disciplinary practices have given way to a system of datafication, dataveillance, and the pre-emptive management of human behaviour through data analytics. Whilst I looked at how we can trace a clear shift from disciplinary power and biopower to managerial and pregenerative power, and from governmentality to managementality, I have not as yet gone into explicit detail on how changes in the discursive formations that typically accompany such a shift have contributed to the cybershift in particular.

There were important shifts in the eighteenth century in the ways in which we talked about madness, wealth, life, language, disease, education, the workplace and much more, towards the discourses of the modern sciences of man. There was, as Foucault demonstrated, a kind of reconfiguration of discursive fields as new institutions and organisations sprang up and new scientific disciplines came into being, and with that came a transformation of the human sciences explicitly set in the context of practices of discipline, surveillance, and constraint, which made new kinds of knowledge of human beings possible while simultaneously creating new forms of social control. Today, with what I have come to call the cybershift, we are seeing such discursive shifts happening again. With the advent of our new technologies and the Internet in particular, our discourses have changed significantly, reflecting the impacts of these technological advancements on almost all facets of our societies. As I discussed in the previous chapters, this is easily evidenced in the world of work and in human resources practices, in the world of healthcare where the discourse between doctor and patient has undergone significant changes, in the world of education, and so on. It is of course also evidenced in the ways in which we constitute ourselves as subjects, as individuals, who are also part data. I want to turn my focus in a slightly different direction here however, and look specifically at the relationship between discourse and knowledge as it pertains to the algorithms that drive the technological changes that set the cybershift in motion to begin with.

We are now firmly entrenched in the era of big data and most aspects of our everyday lives (work, communication, travels, security and much more) are mediated, augmented, produced, and regulated by networked systems and digital devices that are powered by software. Software, in its turn is, at its basis, made up of algorithms. The digital devices and machines that we have become so reliant on have also become sophisticated to the extent that they can perform extensive and complex jobs that certainly cannot be performed by the analogue machines of old, and in many cases these days supersede the capabilities of most humans too when it comes to performing certain tasks like complex mathematical calculations, extrapolating and sorting through large data sets, amongst many others. They can also perform these operations at speeds that are beyond human capacity, minimise human error and bias, and reduce costs. Algorithms are, by and large, shaping innumerable everyday tasks, from performing searches, to securing encrypted communications, making recommendations, recognising patterns and anomalies in data, routing, predicting, profiling, and performing simulations (Kitchin, 2017, pg. 14-15). While all of these

things have fundamentally changed the ways in which humans study, extrapolate knowledge, conduct scientific research and generally understand the world around us, there is another curious aspect to algorithms which is a first for human history, and that is its ability to contribute to discursive formations independently, and even more significantly, to produce new discursive formations. With relation to the independent contribution to discursive formations, it is notable that these days algorithms are almost as widely used to produce written content that is disseminated throughout the web as human contributors. Examples abound. Wikipedia for instance relies a great deal on algorithms (or bots as they are often referred to) to create new articles, edit existing ones, to enforce rules and standards, to keep lookout for vandalism and spam, and to fact check articles submitted by human contributors. Newspapers, magazines and journals are no different, in that algorithms are increasingly producing news content and mediating the relationships between journalists, audiences, newsrooms, and media products (Kitchin, 2017, pg.15). This means that a great deal of the information that we consider to be fact, or truths, encyclopaedic information, or the reporting of events, is compiled and disseminated by algorithms. As for algorithms' ability to produce entirely new discursive formations, we have to consider that they, and the software that they underlie, the Internet and so on, constitute discourses in and of themselves. In other words, we can distinguish between the discourses in human spoken language created by algorithms on the Internet, and the languages of ones and zeros, like html, java, python and so on that make up the language of software and the Internet. These two aspects of algorithmic discourse are intertwined in the sense that

as we work with software and use the operations embedded in it, these operations become part of how we understand ourselves, others, and the world. Strategies of working with computer data become our general cognitive strategies. At the same time, the design of software and the human-computer interface reflects a larger social logic, ideology, and imaginary of the contemporary society. So if we find particular operations dominating software programs, we may also expect to find them at work in the culture at large (Manovich, 2001, pg. 118).

It follows from this that algorithms not only produce and shape discourses, or are the subject of discourses, but they are in fact also inherently discourses themselves.

The writing of code can be likened to the production of language, and in fact, this is an issue that has arisen numerous times in courtrooms across the globe in recent years - the notion that computer code should be attributed the same status as free speech.⁶² More than that, code, just like discourses produced in our spoken languages, contains within it the cultural, historical and socio-economic framework of its producers or the people responsible for writing the code, as well as its users. Research has revealed that computer code, far from engendering the neutrality with which we would like to view it, is in fact imbued with the biases of its users, just like spoken language. Machine learning algorithms have been shown to exhibit deeply ingrained race and gender prejudices in particular. In other words, artificial intelligence

⁶² It has been argued that computer code should not be classified in the same way as regular language because it can be used as blueprints for all sorts of nefarious uses that lead to physical action, like printing of 3D weapons, circumventing encryption, amongst many others. Counterarguments have been that regular language can be put to use in similar ways, such as publishing recipes for chemical nerve agents or instructions for building explosive devices, or inciting violence through hate speech. In the United States, computer code has been given the same status as language and therefore protection under the First Amendment in several landmark legal settlements (Eck, 2018).

(AI) is learning historicity and cultural context from its human creators. Recent research by Caliskan et al (2017, pg. 10) points to the fact that AI and machine learning may perpetuate cultural stereotypes:

Our findings suggest that if we build an intelligent system that learns enough about the properties of language to be able to understand and produce it, in the process it will also acquire historic cultural associations, some of which can be objectionable. Already, popular online translation systems incorporate some of the biases we study...Further concerns may arise as AI is given agency in our society. If machine learning technologies used for, say, résumé screening were to imbibe cultural stereotypes, it may result in prejudiced outcomes.⁶³

One extremely important consideration in the analysis of algorithmic discourse is also mentioned in the quote above, and that is the issue of agency. AI and machine learning are increasingly leading to the execution of certain actions (such as the decision of who to recommend for a particular job) becoming automated. This ability to execute action and make decisions and choices, is also increasingly becoming autonomous as machine learning matures. Gone are the days when it was exclusively a human behind his keyboard instructing the machine what to do. AI's express purpose is to be able to learn, apply logic or "reason", to make decisions based on what it has learnt; and we are fast approaching a time when AI will be deployed in such a capacity almost as ubiquitously as humans. It is quite conceivable to foresee AI being increasingly deployed in financial institutions to decide which loan applications to approve, or in social security offices to decide who qualifies for benefits - a myriad of applications spring to mind, including uses in situations that may seriously infringe upon human freedoms and rights, such as we are already seeing with the Chinese citizen score system. If there was any doubt whatsoever that we are in the midst of another epistemic shift with the advent of these technologies, this capability of AI and algorithms to not only contribute to, but actively participate in the construction and perpetuation of discursive formations, should give you pause. It is unprecedented in any historical epoch before this, that there is an intelligence that can possibly match the human capacity to learn, analyse complex data sets, produce discourses, communicate with other algorithmic applications and with humans, and make reasoned or logical decisions and inferences. All of these things always fell within an exclusively human domain, but that domain is increasingly being shared by machines, bots and other algorithmic constructs. During the previous epistemic shift humanity made itself the object of scientific study, thereby creating new domains of knowledge. We are once again faced with the creation of new domains of knowledge with the cybershift, in that knowledge is not produced exclusively by humans about the world and humanity anymore, but it is, to a great extent, appearing ineluctably from the data we inexorably leave in our wake. Further data is of course also produced by the algorithms themselves through the discourses they contribute and the consequences of the actions taken by AI-driven applications.

⁶³ This has in fact already occurred. It turns out that the recruiting engine built and used by Amazon until very recently had a strong gender bias. "In effect, Amazon's system taught itself that male candidates were preferable. It penalised résumés that included the word 'women's' as in 'women's chess club captain'. And it downgraded graduates of two all-women's colleges..." (Dastin, 2018). More than that, it favoured candidates who described themselves with more male-centric verbs that are more commonly found on male applicants' cv's, leading to the recommendation of lesser qualified people for all manner of job vacancies.

At the risk of sounding alarmist, I want to argue that we are furthermore in the process of entering an epistemic crisis of sorts, whereby a domain of knowledge has come into being that the vast majority of humanity does not have the capacity to be privy to. This is the algorithmic knowledge domain encapsulated in discourse formations forged in the languages of ones and zeros that only a very small percentage of the population can understand. One could argue that this is nothing new and that throughout history there have been periods where knowledge was the purview of an educated elite and was not within reach for the masses. However, this time is vastly different in that the knowledge in question can be taken up, used, manipulated and changed by something other than a human entity and, in so doing, can change the course of human lives. This brings us once again to the idea of the neutralising schism that arises with algorithmic governmentality - the schism between the data and the user that I mentioned in the previous chapter. This schism extends beyond just algorithmically managed data and the individual. There is a distinct schism opening up between the domains of human knowledge and algorithmic knowledge too, in that the sheer volume, ubiquity, complexity and opaqueness of algorithmic communication, analysis and decision-making, together with the speed at which they are executed and evolve, makes it impossible for any human subject to be completely privy to the algorithmic knowledge domain. In a certain sense then, there is a domain of knowledge which is largely transcendent to human domains of knowledge - that stands outside of human comprehension.

According to Hannabuss (1996, pg. 90-91), with knowledge, there is a kind of dialectic at play, at least within the bounds of cultural and scientific activity, between known knowledge and knowable knowledge, in which “known knowledge needs to be created and presupposed to enable effective knowledge about exploring and creating new knowledge”. He then goes on to argue that there is a second dialectic at work between knowledge which is explicit and embodied in established discourses and documents that are given authority by so-called experts like institutions, policy makers, academics, researchers, legislators, professional bodies and so on, and implicit knowledge. This implicit knowledge is “not only often tacit, but often at work in helping to shape the very interpretations or constructions, linguistic/semantic/ pragmatic as well as hermeneutic/phenomenological, by means of which the explicit knowledge gives rise to meaningful representations”.

When it comes to algorithmic knowledge, the first dialectic that Hannabuss talks about becomes problematic in that when this dialectic is taken up by algorithmic devices, knowable knowledge does not always fall within the scope of human comprehension, especially as regards machine deep learning. This can be illustrated by looking at how Google’s AlphaGo was able to defeat the third-highest ranked human Go player in the world. Google trained AlphaGo on thirty million board positions that occurred in 160,000 real-life games as well as in the basic fundamentals of the game (what constitutes an illegal move for example).

Using deep learning techniques that refine the patterns recognised by the layer of the neural network above

it, the system trained itself on which moves were likely to succeed. Although AlphaGo has proven itself to be a world class player, it can't spit out practical maxims from which a human player can learn. The program works not by developing generalised rules of play...but by analysing which play has the best chance of succeeding given a precise board configuration...It creates a model that enables it to make decisions, but that model is ineffably complex and conditional (Weinberger, 2017).

It follows from this that if we were to try to grasp why AlphaGo opts for one particular move over another, we would have to take countless variables, probabilities, weighted connections and complex calculations into consideration, and follow a decision path that is decidedly alien to the way in which we are hard-wired to make our own decision on which moves to play - decisions based on following a simple set of game rules. The fact of the matter is that our computers have surpassed us in their ability to find patterns, analyse large data sets, sort discriminately, and draw conclusions. What this essentially boils down to, is that we are faced, for the first time since the Greeks started to think about the origins and nature of knowledge, with a situation whereby new scientific knowledge can be produced through the dialectic between known knowledge and knowable knowledge, with the caveat that what constitutes knowable knowledge to an algorithmic device, is often unknowable to humans. Weinberger (2017) puts it simply by saying that it "seems to mean that what we know depends upon the output of machines the functioning of which we cannot follow, explain, or understand...never before have we relied on things that did not mirror human patterns of reasoning..." Also, while algorithms and deep learning applications draw on human known knowledge, they build additional knowledge as they learn - knowledge derived from processes that can only be known to or drawn upon by the systems themselves, but not by the humans that receive the final output the system generates and serves up as conclusive. During the epistemic shift from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century, scientific knowledge, or knowledge about the physical world, was predicated on the notion that the world is knowable. In fact man himself became knowable in the same manner that the world around him was knowable, and the discursive formations of the era reflected that fundamental principle. With the cybershift we have entered an era where the digital world where our dataviduals reside, the world of big data, algorithms and AI, has become largely unknowable, while simultaneously having a very knowable impact on our physical world⁶⁴.

In terms of the second dialectic that Hannabuss referred to, there are also some notable differences when we throw algorithmic knowledge and algorithmic knowledge production into the mix. Scientific knowledge, particularly in the Western tradition, typically has to fulfil the prerequisites of being verifiable and trusted before it is deemed factual or true. This is the explicit knowledge in the second dialectic, which we usually verify or believe because it comes from a trusted source. The caveat lies in the idea of being able to verify the knowledge put forth by a source. We can verify knowledge by following the line of

⁶⁴ With all of this being said, it is important to note here that, at least for the time being and the foreseeable future, there is also a realm of knowledge that remains the sole purview of human beings as well, a form of knowledge or rationality that is hermeneutic in nature, as opposed to instrumental.

reasoning underlying it, by drawing upon our own field of reference, and by conducting our own research. If a large swathe of algorithmic knowledge is incomprehensible to us however, and we cannot follow the “reasoning” of the machine, then verification of the knowledge output it produces becomes problematic. “We can verify that what comes out of the machine is very likely knowledge by noting that AlphaGo wins games...But we can’t necessarily follow why AlphaGo placed a piece on this square and not that one... There are too many inputs, and the decisions are based on complexes of dependencies that exceed the competencies of the finest brains natural selection has produced” (Weinberger, 2017). We have of course our human means of verifying knowledge outputs, and our implicit knowledge, but there is still a grey area here in that some data and models generated by computer algorithm are just that, data and models that are extremely difficult or impossible to verify for accuracy using the natural means we have at our disposal as humans. This ties in with my discussion of algorithmic governmentality in the previous chapter as well, where I noted that the knowledge that algorithmic governmentality draws upon appears from the data, from machine output, and often masquerades as being neutral and/or the collective will or expression of the majority, and so we tend to trust it.

This then brings us back to the epistemic crisis that we are currently facing. First of all, if we cannot independently verify all the knowledge outputs produced by a machine, or indeed verify that what it is producing is indeed an expression of the will of the majority as we are led to believe in some cases, then how can we make a claim for its authority or truth, and how can we trust it?

Moreover, on the one hand this inability of humans to grasp the complexity of algorithmic “reasoning” highlights our epistemological limitations in ways we have arguably never experienced before, and on the other hand, algorithmic knowledge is directly borne of the tools that we created for the very purpose of making epistemological progress, and this raises a number of important issues and questions, particularly as it relates to the demarcation between human knowledge and algorithmic knowledge. Furthermore, if there is knowledge that we use and that we base important decisions on that is outside of the purview of humanity, then we have a power problem too.

We, as subjects, or individuals, are categorised according to raw data, with algorithmic calculations and processes that we cannot fathom, and this has a direct impact on our lives. In a certain sense then, humanity is relinquishing a certain amount of control and power to something outside of ourselves for the first time in human history. We can argue that we can turn off the machines, or go off the grid, or that algorithms were created by humans in the first place and can be destroyed, changed or controlled by us, but this would be an illusion. We have simply become too dependent on algorithmic solutions for almost all of our working tasks and many of our social interactions, and the fact of the matter is that the Internet envelops the planet like a vast net and we are all permanently ensnared in it whether we like it or not. According to Kitchin (2017, pg. 15), algorithms are playing an ever-increasing role in the exercise of power, in that we have come to automate certain disciplinary practices and forms of biopower, and this is becoming more and more ubiquitous. However, what we generally lack, is clarity about exactly how algorithms exercise their power over us. This clarity is absent because we have given algorithms (and

continue to do so on an ever-increasing scale) the power to enact decisions that impact us directly even though the algorithmic decision-making process is “largely black boxed and beyond query or question.” We are therefore dealing with an entirely new power/knowledge dynamic that is reshaping how social and economic systems work, but this dynamic largely functions outside of the human sphere of control.

The cybershift then, if we see it as being an epistemic shift in the Foucauldian sense, brings with it some important issues that need to be addressed. The first issue is that if man was an object to be known before, in a certain sense he has now become an object to be known by another knower, although only in the sense of *savoir* (as drawing from a body of knowledge, or what we can generally consider factual or scientific knowledge). Moreover, if we consider that we are indeed divided selves, dividuals that are part data, and that much of ourselves are given over to big datasets that we lose sight of, or are compilations of bits and bytes of our metadata that we are wholly unaware of, then there is a part of ourselves, our data-vidual, which falls outside of the realm of *connaissance* or *connaître* - the ability to know ourselves⁶⁵, at least in our entirety. That part of the self remains opaque to us even though the algorithmic management of our data selves has real implications for us in our lived experience.⁶⁶

The knowledge that algorithms compile by sifting through our data as we traverse the virtual networks and go about our daily lives shedding metadata in our wake, is arguably an entirely new form of knowledge of man, precisely because the algorithmic processes involved in data sortation and analysis are alien to us, and it entails a computational process that is removed from the computational capabilities of the human brain. In other words, man is now an object to be known in ways that were nonexistent in past epochs. Not only does this mean that there is information and knowledge of ourselves that are beyond our purview as it were, but also that the scope of man’s own knowledge of man has changed and broadened to include some algorithmically produced knowledge based on data analytics. As dystopian as this might appear on the surface, it seems that a central question arises as to what it is that makes human knowledge unique to man. In other words, is there knowledge that falls solely within the purview of man, and is likely to remain so? This is where the Foucauldian demarcation of knowledge as *savoir*, *connaître* and

⁶⁵ In the later years of his career, Foucault explicitly linked these two concepts to the care of the self (1994c, pg. 285): “Taking care of oneself requires knowing [*connaître*] oneself. Care of the self is, of course, knowledge [*connaissance*] of the self – this is the Socratic-Platonic aspect – but also knowledge of a number of rules of acceptable conduct or of principles that are both truths and prescriptions. To take care of the self is to equip oneself with these truths...” This is the distinction I have assumed in this thesis as well.

⁶⁶ Consider again the Chinese citizen score as an extreme example of this, but also in more innocuous terms, targeted advertising, search engine suggestion, predictive data analytics use in social security systems, algorithmic sorting of CVs for job openings, amongst numerous other instances.

and *connaissance*⁶⁷ becomes very useful for navigating our way through this epistemic shift we face in the twenty-first century. This idea of the knowledge drawn from analysis, inference and study (*savoir*) being an entirely different kind of knowledge (worthy of its own word in French) to the knowledge we use to judge, verify, interpret, and question the knowledge of others, and indeed know ourselves through reflection (*connaissance* and *connaître*), is a somewhat alien concept to English speakers, but when it comes to distinguishing between the kind of knowledge that is uniquely human and that which is algorithmic, it is a distinction that really helps to make sense of where we find ourselves in relation to the algorithmic tools and devices that have become so pervasive over the last few decades.

It is probably safe to say that the knowledge generated and processed by algorithmic devices and applications, including deep learning applications like AlphaGo, at this stage at least, is still confined to what we may call *savoir*, or, perhaps for further clarity, knowledge obtained through an instrumental rationality.⁶⁸ This is the type of knowledge that comes from recognising patterns in data, analysing physical arrangements, and creating intelligible content from statements and so forth. This is not the type of knowledge that draws from life experience, that requires interpretation, intuition or common sense, that underlies empathy and sympathy or draws from other emotional responses in decision-making and exercising judgment, or in internal reflection, or knowledge based in a hermeneutic rationality - in other words the knowledge that is encapsulated by *connaître* and *connaissance*.

Put another way, as discussed in the previous chapters, Foucault saw with the epistemic shift of the nineteenth century,

the emergence of a systematic knowledge of individuals, through connected practices of surveillance, confession, and documentation: the constitution of the individual as a describable, analysable object...in order to maintain him in his individual features...in his own aptitudes and abilities, under the gaze of a permanent corpus of knowledge. But Foucault thought that this individuating knowledge was connected in important ways to the emergence of 'population' as an economic and political problem...What connected these two levels of epistemic analysis and political regulation was the practice of 'normalising judgment' and the construction of norms as a field of possible knowledge (Rouse, 2005, pg. 5).

⁶⁷ "The expressive role of *connaître* is to enable one to talk about which statements belonging to a field of intelligibly "serious" discourse are correctly assertable within that field. The expressive role of *savoir*, by contrast, articulates the ways statements, modes of reasoning, and various bodily activities, material arrangements, and institutional configurations can align to enable distinctive patterns of intelligibility. *Savoir*, that is, enables us to talk about the practical and inferential elements that render judgments of *connaissance* intelligible and subject to formative constraint" (Rouse, 2005, pg. 17). Foucault himself also lays out what he means in *The Hermeneutic of the Subject* (pg. 238): there are "things to be known (*à connaître*)", "ways of knowing (*savoir*)", and the "mode of knowledge (*connaissance*) necessary for the person to cultivate his own self."

⁶⁸ This is not to say that as we develop these technologies further into the future that it will stay this way. There are scientists actively at work trying to get computers to replicate the thinking processes of the human brain to truly create artificial life with artificial intelligence. While I am focused on the current technologies that shape the human experience and contribute to the constitution of the human subject, I think it is important to keep in mind that as we move forward in time, this discussion will probably have to evolve to include new capabilities in the "cognition" of computers. Signs are certainly pointing in this direction. Already there are algorithms that have the capacity to rewrite their own bits of code, meaning they are adaptable, but at the same time highly unpredictable. They are also able to operate together on a macro level, leaving human input by the wayside except in the capacity of providers of data. This leaves us with the problem of becoming increasingly more alienated from the technology that drives so many of our life decisions and experiences, meaning we run the risk of losing agency in the process. This is a serious risk to human freedoms.

These domains of knowledge that are intertwined with disciplinary power and biopower therefore fall within the realm of what we can broadly refer to as *savoir*. It is also within this realm of *savoir* that these domains of power become extended under algorithmic governmentality to what I have been referring to as managerial or pregenerative power, so as to manage the behaviours of individuals and to exercise control over populations. With big data and the use of algorithmic sortation, collation and extrapolation, normalising judgment has not only become more pervasive, but it has become mechanised to a certain extent, and, as with the pregenerative power that is employed through algorithmic governmentality, there is a schism that develops between human normalising judgment which can be traced back to responsible entities and organisations, and algorithmic judgment. The problem with the normalising judgments applied by algorithms (such as whether one qualifies for a loan or a job, or whether one could potentially pose a future threat to social security) is not only that we tend to think of them as inherently neutral and fair because they are, after all, based on math,⁶⁹ but also that there is no agent, or subject or entity that is directly accountable for the normalising judgment. We lose sight of the judge, and in losing sight of the judge, we lose sight of the process, the logic and the reasoning behind the judgment. We lose our freedom to resist, because how can you resist something you cannot rightly identify or question, or know? This then feeds into what I referred to earlier as the epistemic crisis that we face in the twenty-first century.

This is where Foucault's technologies of the self and knowledge of the self as being intertwined with ethics and freedom may shine a light on how we can deal with these issues we face in the current epoch.

When Foucault refers to *connaître*, he is referring to the uniquely human ability to reflect on and to analyse the self, to know yourself, and when he refers to *connaissance*, he is referring to the ability to know how to take care of yourself and the parameters around doing so. He (1994c, pg. 285) explains this as follows: "Taking care of oneself requires knowing oneself (*connaître*). Care of the self is, of course, knowledge (*connaissance*) of the self - this is the Socratic-Platonic aspect - but also knowledge of a number of rules of acceptable conduct or of principles that are both truths and prescriptions." I want to put forth the idea here that this idea of knowing oneself and knowing how to take care of the self takes on critical importance in the era of the *dividual*, the divided subject who is constituted also as data in its *datavidual*. Knowing oneself, and analysing and reflecting on oneself takes on a new dimension in the age of the Internet and managementality, and seeing the *datavidual*, the amalgamation of the bits and bytes of metadata we leave behind as well as the online personas and identities associated with the *dividual* as part of the subject and as originating from the subject, we can pave the way for a more tenable approach towards ethics in the age of big data.

My choice of the word *datavidual* to describe the division of the subject into part data is therefore also quite deliberate in that I want to make the point that even though our bits and bytes of data are

⁶⁹ I have already discussed bias in code, and this is a well documented phenomenon by now. One notable work on the subject is the book *Weapons of Math Destruction* by Cathy O'Neil (2016), where she demonstrates that, far from eradicating human biases, algorithms have the ability to disseminate them more prolifically and entrench them in decision-making processes, which on our part, we may find extremely difficult to pinpoint, prove, or ascribe responsibility to. This becomes an even bigger problem with algorithms that are able to write other algorithms.

disseminated across the web and then used in many myriads of ways, even anonymously, it is imperative to regard them as inextricably linked to an individual, a person, at their origin.⁷⁰ If we lose sight of the fact that personal data belongs to individuals, we run into the problem of the neutralising schism again. As individuals go about their lives online, they disseminate a vast amount of data, often without even realising that they're doing so, and certainly without foreknowledge of what algorithms will collect, sort, and collate that data, and for what uses. It is all too easy to post a status update on Facebook, or a photograph with location data on Instagram, or to order a particular book from Amazon without ever giving a second thought as to what algorithms are working behind the scenes extrapolating information from that and passing it on to other algorithms to draw inferences about you, profile you, and even influence your opinions or elicit certain behaviours from you in the future. All of these seemingly innocuous actions give away a whole lot of information about the individual behind the keyboard which is seen as having been given freely and ripe for the harvesting.

It could of course be argued that individuals should take responsibility for their own privacy, avoid giving away unnecessary information, and stay informed about how their data is being used. This is unrealistic however.

The problem is much larger than any one individual's ability to control their personal information because there are so many new ways every week or every month in which we can be tracked or things can be inferred about us. It's absolutely unreasonable to expect consumers and citizens, who are all engaged in so many other activities, to also have the ability to continuously update their knowledge about what new tracking method the industry has discovered... (Acquisti in Ted Guest Author, 2014).

We of course also have no knowledge as to what exactly is being analysed and how, and most people do not have the technological know-how to understand it, even if one could pinpoint a person who could take responsibility for it and explain how all of that data is being harvested and used. Golbeck, during the same conversation in Ted (2014), gives the following example:

Take language analysis, a really powerful tool where we look at the kinds of words that you use — not even necessarily obvious things like curse words, but things like function words: how often you use “I” versus “we,” how often you use “the” versus “a,” these little words that are natural in the way that you develop language and inherent to your personality. It turns out that those reveal all sorts of personal traits. There's a whole field of psycholinguistics in which people are doing deeper research into comparing the kinds of words you use and how often you use them with personal attributes, and that's not something you can understand or control.

Of course it makes sense to posit then that there needs to be policy in place to protect individuals from giving up control of their valuable data when they go online, but I want to argue that we need to go one step further than this. Through an approach of unequivocally equating data with its originator, seeing the

⁷⁰ Even if the data is anonymised, it is still important that we see it as something coming from an individual. In other words, it is not important who the individual is, but rather that there is a human subject attached to all personal data and data originating from the movements of people as they traverse the web and as they execute actions and decisions online.

data as part of the individual, as a datavidual ensconced with a dividual even after it is disseminated, we pave the way for an approach whereby we can argue that the dividual's right to their data should be afforded at least as much importance as their inalienable right to their intellectual and physical property. The datavidual needs to be seen as sacrosanct in order to take a meaningful step towards protecting the rights and freedoms of the dividual.

The conundrum of how doing so matters if we are dealing with algorithms we cannot exercise checks and balances over, if we do not have true control over how our disseminated data is used online, or if the ways in which the data is used are indeed seen as an expression of the will of the majority or inherently neutral. This is therefore another instance where the Foucauldian concepts of *connaître* and *connaissance* can be helpful.

In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (Chapter 14), Foucault discusses Seneca's exploration of the world in his old age, in particular as regards freedom and the need for human beings to step back from servitude to themselves and the world in order to attain freedom. Foucault draws some conclusions about the nature of knowledge from this reading of Seneca:

So, we can now draw some conclusions on the role of the knowledge of nature in the care of the self and the knowledge of the self. First consequence. What is involved in this knowledge of the self is not something like an alternative: either we know nature or we know ourselves. In fact, we can only know ourselves properly if we have a point of view on nature, a knowledge (*connaissance*), a broad and detailed knowledge (*savoir*) that allows us to know not only its overall organisation, but also its details...Knowledge of the self and knowledge of nature are not alternatives...they are absolutely linked to each other (pg. 278).

In other words, it is because we are able to recognise ourselves as entities in the world, connected to the world, as part of nature, because we are able to know the world and nature from the unique perspective of being a subject in and of the world, that we are able to know ourselves and ultimately take care of ourselves and others. It is this ability to know oneself as a subject who is able to know nature and the world, but also know himself as an integral part of the world and nature, that sets humans apart from any kind of existing artificial intelligence. The ability to know yourself in relation to the world you find yourself in and to recognise that you are both integrated into that world and have agency within it, is, at least up until now, something unique to human beings. It is also this ability that human subjects have that could point us in the direction of understanding how to deal with a world that now presents us with a dimension that did not exist before the advent of the Internet and all the other related and associated technologies that have sprung up in recent years. It could be argued that in recognising the datavidual as an integrated part of the self, as a division of the individual, we have to recognise too that that integrated part of the self, the datavidual, is a part of the self that is present in and integrated into the networked world of data in much the same way that the body of the individual is situated and present within the natural, physical world. In recognising that the datavidual is situated in the networked digital world where

big data and algorithms reside much like a body in the physical world, it becomes possible to recognise that this is a locus for the exercise of power over the individual. This is a recognition that comes with *connaissance*, with knowing the self as a individual with a dataindividual presence, with knowing what we release into the digital world as data and metadata, with an acute understanding of and giving equal importance to the potential consequences of our online actions just as much as those we perform with our physical bodies. As it stands, the digital world is uncoupled from our natural experience. The way in which we tend to see big data, as inherently based on math and statistics, has had two major consequences. Firstly, it creates the aforementioned neutralising schism whereby we regard the outputs from the digital world that affect our lived lives in the natural world as inherently fair, neutral, scientific, and even democratic. Secondly, when we construct meaning from the data in the digital world, we effectively parse the individual subject in the digital world, stripping him of agency while still examining him, categorising him according to what is normal, and profiling him to steer his future actions as he goes about his daily life. Through the concept of the knowledge of the self, Foucault offers us a way to look at the subject anew and to reconsider its constitution in this digital age.

In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault talks, in several places, about “turning your gaze on yourself” or “knowing yourself” as a recurrent theme running through Platonic, Stoic, Hellenistic, and Roman thought as juxtaposed against that which emerged later through Christianity. He hones in (pg. 217-218), in particular, on the Stoic interpretation of what it means to turn your eyes back on yourself and asks: “When Plutarch, Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius say that you must examine yourself and look at yourself, what type of knowing (*savoir*) is involved in fact? Is it a call to constitute oneself as an object of knowledge (*connaissance*)? Later on, he (pg. 279) argues that knowledge of nature “is liberating inasmuch as it allows us, not to turn away from ourselves, not to turn our gaze away from what we are, but rather to focus it better and continuously take a certain view of ourselves, to ensure a *contemplatio sui* in which the object of contemplation is ourselves in the world, ourselves inasmuch as our existence is linked to a set of determinations and necessities whose rationality we understand.”

I want to argue that by turning our gaze inwards to the self, and thereby seeing the dataindividual as an inherent part of our divided self, allows us to truly start contemplating our place in the digital world. We need to ensure that we turn our gaze upon ourselves not only in the natural or physical world, but also in the digital world on a consistent basis, and in doing so we need to be aware of the technologies of the self that we employ as we traverse the digital landscape. The effect of doing so would go some way towards narrowing the neutralising schism that has inserted itself between the individual and the digital world because through a consciousness, an inward gaze onto our existence and place as dataindividuals within the digital world, we allow for increased contemplation of the rationality of the algorithmic realm, its effects on us, our contributions to it, its potential biases, and most importantly, the limitations of our agency and our ability to resist the domination effects that spring forth from the digital world.

4.2.2. Technologies of the self in the digital world

When Foucault talks about knowing the self as being related to caring for the self, he makes sure to be clear that what he means by caring for oneself is more in line with the Greco-Roman tradition than the later cultures that emerged through the age of Christianity. He says that (1994c, pg. 228)

in theoretical philosophy from Descartes to Husserl, knowledge of the self (the thinking subject) takes on an ever-increasing importance as the first step in the theory of knowledge...There has been an inversion in the hierarchy of the two principles of antiquity...In Greco-Roman culture, knowledge of oneself appeared as the consequence of the care of the self. In the modern world, knowledge of oneself constitutes the fundamental principle.⁷²

This, he goes on to argue, has had the effect of skewing the concept of caring for oneself, because in modern times knowing oneself takes on the form of a kind of renunciation of the self. We are more inclined to view the act of taking care of oneself as something selfish, an immorality, and a way to escape the confines of rules, regulations and norms. Foucault therefore rejected putting forth a theory of subjectivity first, and then after that asking how subjects get to know the world around them. Rather, the constitution of the subject is inexorably tied up with knowledge and care of the self. The subject constitutes itself in response to its historicity or its entire background of historically conditioned interpretations and understandings of the world, as well as through institutional and political practices of power, truth games, and technologies of the self.

Care of the self, in the Greco-Roman understanding, was a transformative practice of knowledge of self, which was, in itself, intrinsically ethical. Knowledge of the self, insofar as it is ontological in nature however, is not something that is acquired and then put into practice. It is something that is acquired, developed and honed by means of practices of technologies of the self. Knowledge of the self is therefore not something that can be reduced to a theoretical knowledge that underlies the practice of the care of the self, and by extension, ethics. Rather, ethical existence is a task, it is ongoing work, and as such is not grounded in a categorical imperative.

In *The Use of Pleasure* Foucault (1990b, pg. 10) defines the care of the self as comprising “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.”

⁷² Foucault (1994c, pg. 224) explains how asking questions about knowledge of the self in fact first led him to what he called the hermeneutics of the technologies of the self: “Max Weber posed the question: If one wants to behave rationally and regulate one’s action according to true principles, what part of one’s self should one renounce? What is the ascetic price of reason? To what kind of asceticism should one submit? I posed the opposite question: How have certain kinds of interdictions required the price of certain kinds of knowledge about oneself? What must one know about the self in order to be willing to renounce anything? Thus, I arrived at the hermeneutics of the technologies of the self in pagan and early Christian practice.”

Foucault argues that there is something to be gained from the ancient practice of *askēsis*, which is at its core a spiritual discipline of the self which is aimed at “self-cultivation and the achievement of a beautiful life” (White, 2014, pg. 492).

In terms of putting this kind of self-discipline into practice, Foucault actually offers us some very practical guidelines, and these come from his analysis of the Stoics’ technologies of the self:

I have spoken of three technologies of the self: letters to friends and disclosure of self; examination of self and conscience, including a review of what was done, what should have been done, and comparison of the two. Now I want to consider the third Stoic technique, *askēsis*...[which] means...the progressive consideration of self, or mastery over oneself, obtained not through the renunciation of reality but through the acquisition and assimilation of truth (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 238).

Foucault is careful to point out that these technologies of the self are quite different to the ones that manifested themselves in Christianity in the form of the more narrowly structured moral codes that focused on self-abnegation for the sake of personal salvation. Historically therefore, Foucault recognises that ethics can be understood as encompassing moral laws that govern behaviour, and it can focus on virtue as the guiding principle for ethical behaviour. He is calling our attention back to ethics as care of the self because Western cultures have become so accustomed to thinking about morality in terms of rules and prohibitions that we have lost sight of the care of the self as an ethical possibility (White, 2014, pg. 492).

At the beginning of this chapter I pointed out that Foucault wanted to distinguish between morality and ethics, and it is my interpretation that Foucault was attempting to broaden the way in which we approach ethics precisely because deontological types of ethical models are too narrow and reductive.⁷³ He argues (1990b, pg. 28) that the conditions for an action to be considered as moral is that:

it must not be reducible to an act or a series of acts conforming to a rule, a law, or a value. Of course all moral action involves a relationship with the reality in which it is carried out, and a relationship with the self. The latter is not simply “self-awareness”, but self-formation as an “ethical subject”, a process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his

⁷³ When one takes Foucault’s views on discipline and normalisation into account, and then considers his move to ethics, it becomes fairly clear that far from denying morality as based in rules, norms, regulations, and laws, his purpose is to find an ethics that supplements this, that fills the gaps left by ethical theories based in deontology or rule utilitarianism, and by religion. The existence of God is increasingly questioned in the modern world, moral law as it stands under various religious belief systems is often a highly contested subject, and there is a sense that morality has become a sense of duty that is imposed on the modern subject from the outside, rather than being of an inner necessity. As Foucault explained to Paul Veyne, “Moving from Antiquity to Christianity, one passes from a morality that was essentially a quest for a personal ethic to a morality that was obedience to a system of rules. If I have taken such an interest in Antiquity, that is because, for a whole series of reasons, the idea of morality as obedience to a code of rules is now in the process of disappearing or has already disappeared. And this absence of morality calls for - must call for an aesthetic of existence” (White, 2014, pg. 495). Given Foucault’s previous foray into normalisation, discipline and so forth, I do not believe that he is saying that the *adherence* to the rules that form the basis of these moral traditions is disappearing or has disappeared. I believe that what he means is that they are not truly the basis of an ethics because they have become largely externalised, imposed through processes of subjection, rather than being internalised by the individual through a process of subjectivation or self-formation. It is a matter of adhering to them because they are imposed on one through one’s culture, tradition, and various technologies of power and domination, and not interiorised as part of the individual’s inner being as it were.

position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal. And this requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself. There is no specific moral action that does not refer to a unified moral conduct; no moral conduct that does not call for the forming of oneself as an ethical subject; and no forming of the ethical subject without “modes of subjectivation” and an “ascetics” or “practices of the self” that support them.

These practices of the self, as they relate to the specific technologies of self he refers to in his discussion of the Stoics, I think have once again become relevant to today’s networked working individual, albeit in its modern manifestation.

Foucault (1994c, pg. 238) identifies four Stoic technologies of the self, namely “letters to friends and disclosure of self” the “examination of self and conscience, including a review of what was done, of what should have been done, and comparison of the two”, and, finally, *askesis* or “remembering”.

As far as writing as a form of disclosure of the self is concerned, Foucault (1994c, pg. 232-233) says that Seneca’s letters are an example of the importance of writing to the practice of caring for the self:

One of the tasks that defines the care of the self is that of taking notes on oneself to be reread, writing treatises and letters to friends to help them, and keeping notebooks in order to reactivate for oneself the truths one needed...Taking care of oneself became linked to constant writing activity. The self is something to write about, a theme or object (subject) of writing activity... A relation developed between writing and vigilance. Attention was paid to nuances of life, mood, and reading, and the experience of self was intensified and widened by virtue of this act of writing. A whole field of experience opened which earlier was absent.

Today we live in a world driven by social media, which also constitutes a whole field of experience that we have never before encountered. It is also a field of experience where disclosure of the self has become the norm. It is expected and individuals who fail to share through writing and other forms of self-expression in social media, are increasingly viewed with suspicion. Foucault (1994c, pg. 232-233) says that there is a relation between writing and vigilance, and through the act of writing we open up this new field of experience. Through writing we pay attention to nuances of life, to mood, to thinking patterns, and we become more self-aware. Writing as a technology of the self does not just encompass writing about yourself, your feelings, your moods, and the things you have or haven’t accomplished or done. It is also a writing for the self, in the sense that it allows you to turn your gaze inwards, to reflect on yourself and to examine and analyse yourself, and it constitutes a material memory of the things you have seen, heard, experienced, read and thought, thus giving you a permanent record of yourself so to speak, on which you can reflect again and again (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 216-217; 273). In this sense the self then becomes an object to be known not only to others, but also to the self. The self becomes both the source and the object of knowledge of the self. Thus writing becomes a presentation of the self, but “this presentation of self is part of the ethic of care in that it must match interiority and exteriority in a language of truth” (Deslandes, 2012, pg. 330). What this

means is that in a business environment for example, managers would need to ensure that every particular form of self writing (such as in the case of self-assessments of performance) contains a true presentation of the self. This act of writing then becomes an ongoing critical conversation that managers carry on publicly with themselves. “The evaluation of self is posited on knowing how to evaluate one’s areas of competence” (Deslandes, 2012, pg. 331). In practical terms, this means, for example, giving a true representation of the self when creating that all-important LinkedIn profile. In our networked world, in which almost everything we write becomes immortalised online, this ability to reflect on oneself through writing, and to give a true representation of the self, is critical, and it has in fact evolved to include not only writing, but also offering a visual representation of what you want to say through video and photographs. We write status updates, tweets and Instagram posts and we supplement these with other media to express our opinions, create memories, to diarise our movements and activities and to convey a particular image of ourselves. These, if we invoke Foucault (1994c, pg. 272), are the twenty-first century instruments that we use for the construction of a permanent relationship of the self to the self and, in doing so, we must manage ourselves

as a governor manages the governed, as a head of an enterprise manages his enterprise... [since] ...virtue consists essentially in perfectly governing oneself, that is, in exercising upon oneself as exact a mastery as that of a sovereign against whom there would no longer be revolts... [T] he culture of the self takes as its goal the perfect government of the self - a sort of permanent political relationship between self and self.

This construction of a political or governmental relationship of the self to the self arguably takes on even greater significance at this point in time, as we navigate the cybershift that is occurring. There is today a distinctive culture of ‘I’⁷⁴ - an iCulture if you will, where we use our iPhones and iPads to access a myriad of apps through which we carefully curate and manage ourselves both as subjects in the lived world and as our dataviduals, not only through writing, videos and pictures, but also through activity logging like exercise diaries, location check-ins, food diaries amongst many others, and through the searches that we do. The instruments of this iCulture, these apps that we use, become tools that we use to change and produce our own subjectivity in a number of ways each day, every time we interact with one of our electronic devices, making the act of writing or producing and managing our personal discourse all the more complex than it has ever been at any point in human history.

If one is supposed to turn one’s life into a work of art, then the twenty-first century dividual is tasked with not only being the artist, but also the curator of himself.

To be sure there is also a narcissistic element at play in our modern social media culture, which is not evident in the Stoic aestheticism that Foucault writes about. And indeed, Foucault’s elaboration of his ethics as an aesthetics of existence that hinges on the technologies of the self, has been criticised for favouring an attitude of narcissistic self-absorption or of self-aggrandisement which leaves us with an ethics that fails to lay out any criteria for good or bad kinds of practices or exercises of the self (Campbell,

⁷⁴ In the sense of the pronoun, as referring to “me”.

2010, pg. 27). It is worth noting here that this kind of critique is an exceedingly narrow one that tends to ignore Foucault's emphasis on subjectivation. Social media, and our interactions within social media, whether they are seen as narcissistic in nature or not, are integral to a process of self-formation and the cultivation of an ethical disposition which is, at least in part, socially, politically and culturally encoded and regulated through norms and power relations. In the *Use of Pleasure* (1990b, pg. 28), Foucault explicitly says, "there is...no forming of the ethical subject without 'modes of subjectivation' and an 'ascetics' or 'practices of the self' that support them." In other words, making oneself into a work of art is a complex procedure that requires not only a reflection of one's relationship with oneself, but also one's relationship with others, one's own place within the world and nature, all from within a framework that is influenced and guided by one's experiences in the world, and the rules with which it operates.

In the world of the internet and social media this process of managing the self's relationship to the self, others and the world no longer requires just managing the self as a being in a lived, physical world, but also managing your online self, and being extremely aware of the data and metadata you produce and release online. Care of the self through the careful curation of your data-identity has become the great quandary of this century for two reasons. The first is that what we leave online, all those status updates we make, all the tweets we send out, all of the blogs we post, every YouTube video we create and share, and every Google search we do, becomes permanently enshrined within the network, and are impossible, in most cases, to erase. The individual can never hide or escape from the subjectivity he constructs in that online space. As unforgiving as this is, it also requires a type of government of the self that is new, giving rise to new practices in order to attain a mode of being as part data-identity that was never a consideration in eras before this one. The second reason is that the self is also no longer alone in the management and curation of himself through these online practices. The data generated through these practices are invariably picked up by hundreds of algorithms, most often recommender algorithms employed by search engines and so on to deliver targeted news and advertising to the subject. These types of algorithms in a sense accompany subjects in their self-care practices, making them both facilitators of algorithmic governance and control, *and* creative⁷⁵ self-transformation. It follows from this that care of the self in this era of the cybershift necessitates an acute awareness of the self as being partially constituted as data, and requires keeping strict vigil over this constitution of the self as data in order to retain autonomy and to try to resist the domination effects of the employment of algorithms in almost every sphere of human life.

Self-examination is the next important technology of the self in Foucault's estimation. This concept of self-examination can be understood to be "an effort at self-acknowledgement and the objectification of oneself in relation to oneself" (Ibarra-Colado et al. 2006, pg. 49). In essence this means taking stock of

⁷⁵ Not only in the sense of making one's life into a work of art, but also in the sense of making or constructing one's own subjectivity.

yourself, your own thoughts, feelings, and actions, not only in terms of what action you did or didn't take, but also what action you should have taken. It doesn't mean judging yourself, but looking back at successes and failures and how they could have been corrected or improved upon. This means being "a permanent administrator of the self, not a judge of [your] past" (Foucault, 1994, pg. 237). In practical terms, there are many ways in which subjects can take stock of themselves. In the work environment there are performance reviews, skills assessments and so forth. The management guru Peter Drucker for example suggested that whenever a manager makes an important decision, it could be helpful to write down what the expected outcome would be, and then after some time has passed, compare the actual outcome with the expected outcome (Deslandes, 2012, pg. 329). In the networked, online environment, many people employ algorithmic applications to do this. These include tracking apps that people use to monitor everything from their water intake, to their heart rate, exercise habits, and sleep. In the working environment there are also many self-monitoring applications that people use not only to track their own productivity and manage their time, but also to try to become more motivated and build better habits at work. Some notable mobile phone apps include things like Habitify, Coach.me and Momentum. If self-examination was a conscious practice in bygone days, and something the ancients actively pursued, in modern times it has become ingrained in our daily lives through the devices we carry in our pockets - devices that we use to monitor ourselves with, record our activity data with, and then use to analyse that data. Of this idea of the self-examination, Foucault says in *The Care of the Self* (1986, pg. 62-63):

The purpose of the examination is not therefore to discover one's own guilt, down to its most trifling forms and its most tenuous roots. If one 'conceals nothing from oneself', if one 'omits nothing', it is in order to commit to memory, so as to have them present in one's mind, legitimate ends, but also rules of conduct that enable one to achieve these ends through the choice of appropriate means...Added to the foregoing is the necessity of a labour of thought with itself as object. This work will have to be more than a test for measuring what one is capable of, and something other than the assessment of a fault in relation to rules of conduct; it should have the form of a steady screening of representations: examining them, monitoring them, sorting them out."

A question that arises from the kind of automation of practices of the care of the self that the twenty-first century subject uses (such as activity tracking and logging and social media record keeping) relates to the "labour of thought with itself as object" that Foucault refers to. Invariably, with the advent of these applications and the fact that many of them are built on the premise that people want to share their self-care practices with others, certain practices of self-care are no longer quite as private and as focused on the self as before the advent of modern technology. Even if you don't share your weight loss achievements through your MyFitnessPal app for example, logging that data, and keeping a record of it in the network goes beyond the idea of a traditional food diary. An application like this is designed to send you push notifications, to prompt you, to remind you to perform certain tasks, it will send out a message of encouragement if you fail in a certain goal you set for yourself within the application. All of this certainly prompts a person think through one's actions, goals, successes, failures and so on, and about self-transformative behaviours; but there has been a marked change in the relationship of the self to the self.

In practices like these that utilise modern technology, the relationship of the self to the self no longer strictly involves only the self, but includes an algorithmic *other* that, in a sense, becomes both a means for the self to hold itself accountable for its own conduct, and also an outer force that holds the subject accountable, making the individual not just beholden to himself, but also to these devices and applications he chooses to employ towards his self-care. Arguably this automates some of that “labour of thought” that Foucault refers to, perhaps changing the nature of the care of the self somewhat to not only include a kind of active work of the self on the self, but also a work on the self through algorithmic self-management, and to a certain extent, a relinquishment of complete self-control over the relationship of the self to the self.

The last technology of the self involves *askēsis*, which, in its original Greek form, meant training, practice or development. In this context it always had a positive and productive meaning, since it meant constantly perfecting oneself, developing one’s capacities, and becoming who one is (McGushin, 2007, pg. xiii). This means that the ethical subject is constantly involved in philosophical practice as a way of life, in a process of self-transformation. Ethical practice for Foucault therefore becomes an “aesthetics of existence”⁷⁶, and central to this ethical practice is the acquisition and assimilation of truth (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 238).

4.3. Ethics and Truth

What are the principal features of *askēsis*? They include exercises in which the subject puts himself in a situation in which he can verify whether he can confront events and use the discourses with which he is armed. It is a question of testing the preparation. Is this truth assimilated enough to become ethics so that we can behave as we must when an event presents itself? (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 239)

Askēsis for Foucault encompasses more than the accumulation of knowledge and includes active self-development through not just expanding one’s knowledge but also through an exercise of thought, analysis, and internal discourse with the objective of facing up to and speaking the truth. These practices of the self that are encompassed by *askēsis* “involve a variety of heterogenous techniques; for instance, meditation, dialogue, tests of endurance, vigilance over oneself, practices of writing...techniques of memorisation, and so on. Care is...an ensemble of practices, and the ‘self’ is defined both as the material to be worked upon - that is, a concrete ‘ethical substance’ to be cared for- and an end to be achieved, that is, a precisely defined *telos*” (McGushin, 2007, pg. xviii). In 1983 Foucault had a series of working sessions with Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, where he explained what he meant by this concept of *telos* in quite a concise manner. He explained that, in a nutshell, *telos* is simply the aspirations underlying our moral actions. It is our adherence to codes of conduct, but it is also this work of the self upon the self

⁷⁶ As I will discuss in the next chapter, viewing ethics in this way is very useful for Business Ethics since it removes the concept of ethics from its transcendental position above the realm of true practice, and concretises it as part of the worker and the manager’s everyday practices as they are enacted and embedded within the organisational context.

(asceticism) in order to shape ourselves into the kind of being we would like to become (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 265). These practices of self form part and parcel of a kind of process of philosophical conversion, if you will, and in fact not only open us to recognising truths, but also play a fundamental role in how we resist power and exercise freedom, since it involves the government of the self as well as others. Foucault, in *The Courage of the Truth* (2011, pg.8) says that there is an interplay between relations of power, the subject, and the truth. In order to understand this interplay, he turns to the concept of *parrhēsia* (2011, pg. 8-9):

It seems to me that by examining the notion of *parrhēsia* we can see how the analysis of modes of veridiction, the study of techniques of governmentality, and the identification of forms of practice interweave...What is involved...is the analysis of complex relations between three distinct elements...whose relations are constitutive of each other. These three elements are: forms of knowledge (*savoirs*), studied in terms of their specific modes of veridiction; relations of power, but in the procedures by which people's conduct is governed; and finally the modes of formation of the subject through practices of self. It seems to me that by carrying out this triple theoretical shift -from the theme of acquired knowledge to that of veridiction, from the theme of domination to that of governmentality, and from the theme of the individual to that of practices of the self- we can study the relations between truth, power, and the subject without ever reducing each of them to the others.

Foucault explains in *The Courage of the Truth* that what he means by *parrhēsia* is telling the truth in the sense of being frank and exercising free speech. It is not rhetoric, which is essentially a technology of governmentality that is often used as a technology of domination and frequently reveals itself in a relation of power with the express purpose of driving the actions of others and enforcing control. *Parrhēsia* on the other hand, is not a skill that is wielded. It is rather something inherent, a virtue, or an attitude if you will, as well as a mode of action and a modality of veridiction (McGushin, 2007, pg. 8).

Foucault thinks of a modality of veridiction as “the type of act by which the subject speaking the truth manifests itself...represents itself to itself and is recognised by others as saying the truth” (Foucault in McGushin, 2007, pg. 8). This ties the act of truth-telling directly to the constitution of the subject. *Parrhēsia* is a concrete practice and it is through this practice that the subject is defined and through which it constitutes him or herself, recognises him or herself, and is recognised by others. “A modality of veridiction, then, is the ensemble of ‘conditions and forms’ which articulate the acts through which the subjects exist as possible ‘acts of truth’” (McGushin, 2007, pg. 9). Thus our commitment to speaking the truth as opposed to using rhetoric, relaying our knowledge through teaching, or other forms of discourse, stems from the recognition that the truth makes us. We are formed by the truths we speak and recognise. A central question for Foucault is how is it that a subject can appear for itself and for others as a

parrhēsiast, as someone who speaks the truth as *ēthos*.⁷⁷ McGushin (2007, pg. 10-11) explains that since *parrhēsia* is essentially a mode of speaking and a manifestation of subjectivity, it results in a new kind of objectification of the subject in discourse too, in that the subject now appears as an object of thought. He argues that the subject is a subject in the world who acts, and in so doing appears both for itself and for others. Of course how the subject appears in this way is determined by his or her actions, and also his or her speech acts. The subject therefore appears to himself and in the world as a subject grounded in historically real modalities of veridiction. Foucault tends to frame the issue of truth not with the problem of the truth in and of itself, but rather in terms of the truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity. Truth telling as *parrhēsia*, as a speech activity, first emerged with Socrates, who considered four central questions, namely who is able to tell the truth, the truth about what, what are the ethical conditions under which the truth-teller can have the courage to tell the truth, what are the consequences of telling the truth, and what is the relation between telling the truth and power (Foucault, 2001, pg. 170)? This Socratic conception of the truth is not based on the kind of truth that is linked to knowledge, the sciences and so on. It is not demonstrative truth. It is rather a truth that is spoken by a *parrhēsiast* who has the courage to say what he knows to be true even if it is not demonstrably so. It is also the ability to know oneself, tell the truth about oneself, and to constitute oneself as an object of knowledge both for oneself and for others. In the words of McGushin (2007, pg. 11) “The subject appears for itself and for others in the act of *parrhēsia* not as an object of true discourse but as a concrete way of producing the truth, as a concrete way of experiencing the truth. It is in the dramatic scene of veridiction that subjects discover and fashion themselves.”

Foucault argues that in modern society we have suppressed this kind of truth that the Greeks underscored, the truth as a virtue precisely because it is tied to courage, and a truth which is inextricable to what we believe or know to be true deep within ourselves. In the modern era, we tend to base what we believe to be true in that which is demonstrable, and this is something that has its roots in the philosophy of Descartes. “For since Descartes, the coincidence between belief and truth is obtained in a certain (mental) evidential experience...For before Descartes obtains indubitably clear and distinct evidence, he is not certain what he believes is, in fact, true” (Foucault, 2001, pg. 14-15).

Foucault therefore basically distinguishes between distinct forms of truth and truth-telling, with *parrhēsia* being the one that is the basis of ethics and morality. This is different from the kind of truth and truth-telling that we participate in when we are dealing with demonstrable truths that are tied to the notion of knowledge, expertise, scientific fact - the type of truth-telling that we give more weight to in modern Western society. This latter Cartesian iteration of the truth and of truth-telling, Foucault laid out

⁷⁷ “The parrhesiast is not the prophet who speaks the truth when he reveals fate enigmatically in the name of someone else. The Parrhesiast is not a sage who, when he wants to and against the background of his silence, tells of being and nature in the name of wisdom. The parrhesiast is not the professor or teacher, the expert who speaks of *tekhne* in the name of a tradition...Rather...the parrhesiast brings into play the true discourse of what the Greeks called *ethos*. Fate has a modality of veridiction which is found in prophesy. Being has a modality of veridiction found in the sage. *Tekhne* has a modality of veridiction found in the technician, the professor, the teacher, the expert. And finally, *ethos* has its veridiction in the parrhesiast and the game of parrhesia. Prophesy, wisdom, teaching, and parrhesia are, I think, four modes of veridiction which involve (first) different personages, second, call for different modes of speech, and third, relate to different domains (fate, being, *tekhne*, *ethos*)” (Foucault, 2011, pg. 25).

in a fair amount of detail in his lectures on psychiatric power at the Collège de France in 1974 (Foucault, 2006). In this lecture series he distinguishes between two different “series” of the truth. There is the demonstrative truth which can be proved, demonstrated and verified, but there is also the truth as event. This is when the truth is provoked into existence as it were in a certain time and place. This is the truth that is accepted by a certain culture or society within a certain period of time. Foucault (2006, pg. 237) says:

This truth, with its geography, its calendars, and its messengers or privileged agents, is not universal. Which does not mean that it is rare, but that it is a dispersed truth, a truth that occurs as an event. So you have attested truth, the truth of demonstration, and you have the truth-event. We have then, two series in the Western history of truth. The series of constant, constituted, demonstrated, discovered truth, and then a different series of truth which does not belong to the order of what is, but to the order of what happens, a truth, therefore, which is not given in the form of discovery, but in the form of the event...

From here he goes on to argue that in particular since the Renaissance, the truth as event began to be dominated by the demonstrative kind of truth because the truth became inextricably intertwined with knowledge, and particularly scientific knowledge. He says that this kind of truth “colonised and took over the truth-event and ended up exercising a relationship of power over it, which may be irreversible...” (Foucault, 2006, pg. 239). What this means is that today truth-events are largely ignored and the truth is seen as residing in that which is demonstrative. This type of truth operates largely on the basis of what Foucault (2006, pg. 239) refers to as “the technology of a truth of certified observation”, and is the technology of truth that gave rise to the adage that seeing is believing.

So essentially what we see Foucault doing through his work is to examine the evolution of the truth if you will, to its culmination in the understanding that we have of what the truth entailed in his era. I iterate *his era* because, as I will discuss going forward, the epistemic shift I have argued we are undergoing has some explicit implications for the notion of the truth today.

Before I undertake an analysis of the present however, I want to delve a bit deeper into this development of the truth through the ages as Foucault saw it.

As I noted in the preceding section dealing with knowledge and subjectivity, Foucault thought that modernity establishes a relationship of the self with the self through knowledge. The modern subject is seen as the object of knowledge, both as a target of scientific examination, classification and so on, and as a target turned upon itself in a quest for self-knowledge. This knowledge of the self then becomes the foundation for knowledge in general and provides the basis for morality. Of course every subject is embedded in a society, an environment where he is subject to power relations through which he is disciplined yet exercises self-discipline, where he is governed as part of a population, and where he governs himself and others. This in effect brings the modern subject into being - he is a product of technologies and relations of power and knowledge, but he also has to recognise himself for what he truly

is, to know himself, and this is achieved through practices of the care of the self. It is therefore through this grappling of how the individual subject constitutes himself, and the relationship between the subject, power and knowledge that Foucault began to trace the genealogy of the truth too. Besley (2005, pg. 79) sums it up as follows:

In his earlier thinking he had conceived of the relationship between the subject and 'games of truth' in terms of either coercive practices (psychiatry or prison) or theoretical scientific discourses...In his later writings he broke with this relationship to emphasise games of truth not as a coercive practice, but rather as *an ascetic practice of self-formation*.

In order to see how the concept of the truth and the associated interpretations and practices discussed in the preceding developed through the ages, I am going to trace its trajectory in the opposite direction to Foucault here, starting with the Greeks and ending with modernity. The reason I want to do this is because I believe that each one of these developments have contributed to the notions and conceptions we have today, and the problematic of the truth that Foucault described, particularly as it relates to democracy in Ancient Greece, bears special attention in our current era, the era I have come to see as going through a 'cybershift'. This will also then shed some light on the consequences for ethics and for the twenty-first century subject, the *dividual*.

The pivot that brings together Foucault's investigation into the truth is the constitution of the subject, in particular as it relates to the care of the self, and the care of the self for the Greeks was a response to a crisis of democracy in Athens. At the center of this crisis of democracy, lies *parrhēsia*.⁷⁸ McGushin (2007, pg. 10) explains it as follows:

The problem was the inability of democracy to practice an effective political discourse. That is to say, though democratic politics is fundamentally a discursive activity, the Athenian assembly could not practice a political discourse which articulates the *truth* - in this case 'truth' refers to what is good for the city as a whole...Each individual used his freedom of speech - his *parrhēsia* - to advance his own good rather than that of the city.

This led to the inability of the Athenian assembly to recognise the *parrhēsiast* who tells the truth while exercising his freedom of speech, the one who has the courage to tell the truth, from someone who uses pure rhetoric or someone who blatantly lies. This then, as reflected in the thought of Plato, started off one of the major strands of enquiry into the truth in Western culture - the question as to why it is important to tell the truth, how to know when someone is telling the truth, and how to distinguish a truth-teller from a liar or a flatterer. Foucault (2006, pg. 22) says that Athenian democracy was very explicitly defined as a constitution where people enjoyed equality, liberty, and freedom of speech (*parrhēsia*). This Athenian notion of freedom of speech allowed citizens of Athens to say what they wanted in the way in which they

⁷⁸ Note that this is a concept that evolved through the fourth and fifth centuries, and its starting point did not have that interconnectedness with the care of the self.

wanted to say it, and this included ignorant outspokenness. This resulted in the aforementioned crisis of democracy, of *parrhēsia*, which Foucault in turn labeled also as a “problem of truth”: “The crisis of *parrhēsia*, which emerges at the crossroads of an interrogation about democracy and an interrogation about truth, gives rise to a *problematization* of some hitherto unproblematic relations between freedom, power, democracy, education, and truth in Athens at the end of the Fifth Century” (Foucault, 2006, pg. 73). Foucault argues that from Plato to Aristotle a mistrust of *parrhēsia* highlighted the shortcomings of democracy, and this Foucault (2011, pg. 35) says can be referred to as “ethical differentiation”. He argues that the very right to freedom of speech and to be given equality in front of the audience to whom one speaks undermined democracy in that this freedom of speech and expression became a danger to the city precisely because anyone had the ability to say what they wanted, when they wanted. “In democracy, *parrhēsia* gives scope for everyone to express their opinion and say what is in accord with their private will and with what will enable them to satisfy their interests or passions (Foucault, 2011, pg. 36). This meant that lip-service, lies, and oration in the service of pure self-interest, all became intermingled with true discourses. Not only that, but *parrhēsia* also posed a danger to the individuals in a democracy in the sense that saying what one knows to be true requires courage when what is true is not popular or when what is true is a critique. True discourse could expose the person who delivers it to vengeance or punishment. Foucault explains (2011, pg. 38) that this leads to a splitting of sorts of the idea of *parrhēsia*, in that either democracy makes room for it and it endangers the city, or it endangers the individual and thereby undermines some of the cornerstones of democracy - namely freedom and the right to free speech, making it untenable within a democracy. This then is a conundrum that led to a third interpretation of *parrhēsia*, which is also the interpretation I gave attention to at the beginning of this section as the one that informs Foucault’s analysis of ethics. It is what he loosely calls “Socratic *parrhēsia*”, and which is inextricably tied to the idea of the care of the self. The distinguishing characteristic of this kind of *parrhēsia* is that it marries action with speech. Foucault argues that Socrates can speak freely because he says what he thinks, but what he thinks and says accords exactly with what he does. Foucault (2006, pg. 102) sums up the different forms of *parrhēsia* as follows:

In the realm of political institutions the problematisation of *parrhēsia* involved a game between *logos*⁷⁹, truth, and *nomos* (law); and the *parrhēsiastes* was needed to disclose those truths which would ensure the salvation or welfare of the city...And now with Socrates the problematization of *parrhēsia* takes the form of a game between *logos*, truth and *bios* (life) in the realm of a personal teaching relationship between two human beings. And the truth that the parrhesiastic discourse discloses is the truth of someone’s life, i.e., the kind of relation someone has to truth: how he constitutes himself as someone who has to know the truth through *mathesis*, and how this relationship to truth is ontologically and ethically manifest in his own life.

A problem that Plato highlights is the question of how to bring the political *parrhēsia* that incorporates *logos*, truth and *nomos* into lockstep with the Socratic-ethical *parrhēsia* that incorporates *logos*, truth

⁷⁹ A few paragraphs back in the same lecture he defines *logos* as rational discourse.

and *bios*. The question that comes out of this is “How can philosophical truth and moral virtue relate to the city through the *nomos* (Foucault, 2011, pg.104)?” Plato says that even though a city could have well-constructed laws, someone still needs to tell the unblemished truth so that citizens can know what moral conduct they should observe (Foucault 2011, pg. 104). Foucault goes on to argue that there are three types of parrhesiastic activity or games that can be identified. The first is epistemic in nature and this is when we discover and teach certain truths about the world, nature, science and so on. The second is political and involves “taking a stand towards the city, the laws, political institutions and so on...(Foucault, 2011, pg. 106). And lastly, we have the parrhesiastic activity that endeavours to elaborate on the nature of the relationships between truth and ethics, and truth and the aesthetics of one’s life and one’s self. These activities imply that there is a complex set of connections between the self and the truth.

For not only are these practices supposed to endow the individual with self-knowledge, this self-knowledge in turn is supposed to grant access to truth and further knowledge. The circle implied in knowing the truth about oneself in order to know the truth is characteristic of parrhesiastic practice since the Fourth Century, and has been one of the problematic enigmas of Western Thought - e.g., as in Descartes or Kant (Foucault, 2011, pg. 107).

This brings us back to the point touched on briefly in the preceding, and that is that there was a shift in Western thought towards what Foucault calls an “analytics of truth”. Rayner (2010, pg. 73) argues that Foucault saw Descartes in particular as being guilty of a kind of “ontological forgetting”, and what Descartes forgot, was the historical ontological conditions underlying the constitution of the subject. He says that Descartes was, through his *cogito*, able to reject the care of the self as a precondition for access to the truth. It is through the likes of Descartes then that the truth came to be seen as accessible through representational knowledge only. The Cartesian moment, as Foucault refers to it in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2005b), gave prominence to self-evidence, placing it at the origin of its whole approach. Self-evidence, as it appears or is given to our consciousness cannot be doubted and “putting the subject’s own existence at the very source of access to being...knowledge of oneself...made the ‘know yourself’ into a fundamental means of access to truth” (Foucault, 2005b, pg.14). In the postscript of *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, titled *Course Context*, Frederic Gros (2005b, pg. 522) explains that Foucault saw philosophy from Descartes onwards as developing a subject who is intrinsically capable of knowing the truth, who is capable of truth a priori, and who is only an ethical subject of right action in a secondary capacity. A subject can, after all, know the truth yet be immoral. What this means is that the modern subject has lost the need for a kind of ethical work of the self on the self, for *askēsis*. While in antiquity the subject arrived at the truth through radical work or change to his being, in modernity the subject received enlightenment from a truth that is revealed to him, and this in turn spurs him on to change the ways in which he conducts himself. Gros goes on to quote (Foucault 2005b, pg. 522-523) an unpublished passage from a manuscript of Foucault’s 1982 lectures:

Three questions which, in a way, will run through Western thought:

- access to the truth;
- activation of the subject by himself in the care that he takes of himself
- knowledge of the self

With two sensitive spots:

1. Can you have access to the truth without bringing into play the very subject who gains access to it? Can you have access to the truth without paying for it with a sacrifice, an asceticism, a transformation, a purification which affects the subject's very being? Can the subject have access to the truth just as he is? To this question Descartes will answer yes; Kant's answer will also be all the more affirmative as it is restrictive: what determines that the subject, just as he is, can know, is what also determines that he cannot know himself.

2. The second sensitive spot of this questioning concerns the relation between the care of the self and knowledge of the self. In putting itself under the laws of knowledge (*connaissance*) in general, can self-knowledge take the place of care of the self - thus setting aside the question of whether the subject's being must be brought into play; or should we expect virtues and experiences from self-knowledge which would put the subject's being into play; should this knowledge of the self be given the form and force of such an experience?

I have already discussed the second point above to some extent in the preceding sections, but I want to come back to it here insofar as there is an interplay between the care of the self, knowledge, and truth in the constitution of the subject. A fundamental difference between the subject described by the ancients and the modern subject, is the relation between the care of the self and knowledge of the self. For the Ancients there is, as I noted in the paragraphs above, a strong relation between care of the self, speaking the truth (being a *parrhesiast*), and acting ethically. "One must act correctly, according to true principles, and a just action must correspond to the words of justice...if a part of knowledge enters into this care, it is inasmuch as I have to gauge my progress in this constitution of self of ethically correct action" (Gros in Foucault, 2005b, pg. 523). In the modern mode of subjectivation on the other hand, the constitution of the subject is inexorably tied up with a kind of will to self-knowledge, to loosely borrow a Nietzschean turn of phrase. In other words all of a subject's actions are predicated on how much value they have for the subject in its quest to narrow the gap between what he truly is and what he perceives himself to be, and to attain self-knowledge. Gros (in Foucault, 2005b, pg. 523) sums it up as follows: "For the subject of right action in antiquity is substituted the subject of true knowledge in the modern West."

Foucault is careful to point out through this analysis that the subject is not tied to his truth through some inevitable destiny or a transcendental necessity, and he also does not only have one recourse to ethics through obedience to laws or religious and cultural rules and norms. There are other ethical possibilities too, and this is what comes to the fore through his analysis of the ancients. Not only that, but by going back to the views of particularly the Greeks in terms of care of the self, *parrhesia*, *logos* and so on, he is lifting the veil on the precariousness of the juridical-moral subject who is constituted through obedience to the Law alone.

It was not lost on Foucault that the Western world is becoming increasingly unmoored from traditional predominantly Christian moral laws and imperatives and long-established cultural norms, and it is for

this reason that he started to look at how the modern subject would be able to constitute itself as a subject of true or right discourse (*logos*) and true or right action. How do we constitute ourselves as ethical or moral subjects when the rudders of our traditional values and norms don't steer our actions anymore?

According to Gros (in Foucault, 2005b, pg. 530) Foucault recognised that

the problem of an ethics as a form to be given to one's behaviour and life has arisen once more. The problem could then be posed in these terms: Can we introduce a new ethic outside of the established morality of the eternal values of Good and Evil?" Foucault's turn to the ancients then lay at the heart of his search for an answer to this question, and the answer he came to hinged on the idea of an "aesthetics of existence."⁸⁰

This aesthetics of existence centers on the idea of personal choice, but always in service of taking the correct action, without necessarily basing that choice on the juridical. That is not to say that Foucault denounced the juridical. On the contrary, he recognises that subjects make choices within the boundaries of laws, norms, and within a system of governance or a disciplinary structure. What this turn to the Greeks essentially does, is to open up another route towards doing the right thing in the face of a world where democratic norms may be eroding, where the appeal to religious values does not make sense anymore, or where governmental and other institutional laws, rules and regulations may have fallen out of line with cultural progress.

The ethical fashioning of the self is first of all this: to make of one's existence, of this essentially mortal material, the site for the construction of an order held together by its internal coherence...This ethics demands exercises, regularities, and work: but without the effect of anonymous constraint. Training, here, arises neither from civil law, nor from religious prescription...It is not an obligation for everyone, but a personal choice of existence (Gros in Foucault, 2005b, pg. 531).

4.3.1. Ethics in the Post-Truth Era

This brings me to where we find ourselves now, in the midst of what I have come to call the cybershift. The increasingly unmoored subject that Foucault identified has evolved into the dividual today. This divided subject that constitutes itself as part data is also constituting itself in a world that has changed markedly from Foucault's world of the 1980's. The world of the twenty-first century is a world in crisis. Like the Greeks, we find ourselves dealing with a crisis of democracy. We are also dealing with a crisis of truth and knowledge. There is also quite a lot of literature, not only in Philosophy, but also in Sociology, Political Science and so on, that propogate the idea that Western societies today are in "post-truth" era.

⁸⁰ This notion has been critiqued extensively, and while it warrants discussion, my intention is not to lay out these critiques in any depth at this point. The next chapters will tackle these issues more comprehensively. Suffice it to say here that some have accused Foucault of giving in to narcissistic temptations, while others have "said that Foucault's morality consists in a call to systematic transgression, or in the cult of a cherished marginality" (Gros in Foucault, 2001, pg. 530).

According to Sergei Prozorov (2018, pg. 1) we find ourselves in a post-truth political culture that is characterised by a relativist point of view whereby the truth claims of the mainstream media, the political establishment, and even the scientific community, are devalued through the claim that these are just opinions or that the truth claims are being made with the express purpose of feeding into an ulterior motive or some form of private interest. Examples of this abound, particularly in the United States under Donald Trump. Climate change science for example, which is largely accepted across the globe with ample evidence and studies to back up its claims, has regularly been 'debunked' by certain pundits, mostly on the more conservative side of the news media like Fox News, as well as by the former US President himself. One of the most concerning effects of such a devaluation of the seemingly objective truth is that it undermines democracy and paves the way for extremism. There are some authors who claim that none of this kind of practice is new and that lying for political and personal gain is as old as humanity itself, that propaganda has been used as a political tool throughout history, and that extremism is and always has been present somewhere in the world. So we have to ask ourselves what distinguishes this idea of living in a post-truth era from living in any other preceding historical era?

For one, we are living in the era of the cybershift, which is characterised by the interconnectedness of individuals across a vast network of online groups, gathering places, information repositories, discussion forums, and the list goes on. Not only are we connected on a vast global scale, but we communicate and connect with others and with information whenever we want to, wherever we want to, and these connections are, for the most part, almost instantaneous. This means that information and news travels fast, and it travels far, and the same goes for disinformation, untruths, and fake news. In fact, a study of the speed at which news stories travel in today's world, conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), found that bad news travels faster than good news across social media, and fake news travels six times faster than accurate or factual news (Thurbon, 2018, pg. 1).

Moreover, we have technologies that are able to manipulate the traditional media through which knowledge and information is disseminated in ways that have never existed before. Three examples come to mind. Perhaps the most established and well known is photographic manipulation with software that can change images.

In Foucault's 1980's an image in a publication could largely be believed as depicting what is happening in reality, and images that were staged or manipulated in the darkroom could very often easily be identified or eventually proven to be as such. As photography has gone digital, and software for changing images in ways that were impossible before has become more sophisticated, the lines between an image that represents the unblemished true reality, and an image that has been manipulated to depict some altered version of that reality, have become increasingly blurred. It is often not easy to spot the difference, and

although there is software that can detect whether an image has been digitally manipulated and can even revert it to its original state, technological development is not static and programmes are constantly being developed so as to make images irreversible in their altered state too. A lot of the altered or manipulated images we encounter on a daily basis are fairly innocuous. They range from people applying filters and so on to make themselves more attractive in social media posts, to changing the backgrounds of events and actions to make it seem like it happened in a different location, to hiding things from images that they don't want others to see, or simply to creating memes or jokes. However, doctored images are also used for immoral and unethical purposes, and in ways that can have serious consequences for politics, business and society on the whole. Consider for example the use of manipulated images to support conclusions in scientific papers. A recent example involves scientists affiliated with the World Health Organisation (WHO), who used Photoshop to doctor images in multiple cancer research papers they published over the course of several years (Sankaran, 2018, pg.7). Aside from the obvious ethical violation that this constitutes, image falsification in scientific papers has the ability to change important narratives in the scientific community as well as in broader society, drive false information into the public sphere, waste grants and financial resources, and in the case of medical research may even endanger human health and wellbeing in a very direct way, whether it be physical or psychological. There is a case that illustrates this quite well, which occurred in 2017. Researchers published a paper with supporting images that suggested that “vaccines could have biological responses ‘consistent with autism’” (Sankaran, 2018, pg.7). This paper was of course retracted and discredited once it came to light that the supporting photographic evidence presented in it had been falsified, but not before it was already available online. Needless to say this kind of fraudulent research feeds directly into the largely unsubstantiated and widely discredited notion that has proliferated across the globe through social media that vaccines are responsible for causing autism in children, and lends it legitimacy. As a result of the dissemination of exactly this kind of “legitimising” misinformation, thousands of parents in a number of countries, as part of what is now colloquially known as the anti-vax movement, have refused to let their children receive vaccinations against diseases such as measles. This has led to renewed outbreaks of the disease in countries where it had been all but eradicated.⁸¹

A second example of the creation and distribution of misinformation that is used to subvert facts and truths that could usually be plainly verified through seeing and hearing, is the “deepfake” phenomenon. Deepfakes are videos that have been doctored to make it seem as if the people in the video are saying or doing something entirely different to what they actually said and did. These videos are becoming increasingly sophisticated and realistic, with some serious consequences. For example, in May of 2018 a video of Donald Trump offering advice on climate change to the people of Belgium surfaced on the internet. In the video he urges Belgium to also withdraw from the Paris climate agreement, just as the

⁸¹ CNN reports (Guy, 2019, pg.1) that in Europe Albania, the Czech Republic, Greece and the United Kingdom all lost their measles-free status in 2019. The article explains that recent outbreaks of measles “in various countries have been blamed on the growth of the anti-vaccination movement, which has spread via social media and discourages parents from immunising their children...”

USA had done. Donald Trump had of course never made such a video, and it was in fact created by a Belgian political party and posted to their Twitter feed. Needless to say the video sparked a lot of angry comments from people who took the video for the real thing. In reality, the video was a deepfake created at a production studio using machine learning and face-swapping techniques (Schwartz, 2018, pg.1). These videos are generally far more realistic than those that have been manipulated in Photoshop, and as AI develops, they will become increasingly less discernible from undoctored videos. The dangers of this are obvious and incredibly concerning: they could be used in a business environment to defame a competitor, to manipulate stock prices and a host of other nefarious actions; and if candidates in a political campaign are depicted to say or do something they never said or did right before an election, that could sway the outcome and endanger democracy, especially with the speed at which these types of videos are disseminated through social media. There is of course software that is designed to ferret these videos out and to identify them as fake, and in some places legislation has been drafted to try to combat the dissemination of these types of videos,⁸² but the reality is that they are likely to cause quite a lot of damage even before they have been run through a detection programme and flagged or removed from social media platforms. In this we can also once again identify the problem of a schism of accountability that I referred to in the previous chapters, in that not only is it often difficult to trace who is behind the making of these videos, but as machine learning develops the ability to create videos like this with less and less human input, we lose the ability to hold anyone at all accountable for their proliferation. This could all have yet another unintended consequence, and that is that deepfakes could undermine our trust in all videos, including the ones that are undoctored.⁸³

The third example of how information and consequently also misinformation is disseminated and distributed today that differs from the past is the ubiquitous distribution of ghost-written text, or written text produced not only by humans, but also by bots and artificial intelligence. Bots are used with great regularity and deployed at great speed on social media to comment on posts, mainly for advertising and customer service purposes, but also to promote scams and misinformation. As for the actual production of information, language-processing algorithms are already used to produce news articles from data. These are mostly innocuous reports on sports scores, weather events and so on, but they're increasingly being

⁸² For example, at the beginning of October 2019, California passed a law banning the distribution of manipulated videos and images that give a false impression about a political candidate, including their words and actions, from 60 days before an election (Ronayne, 2019, pg. 1).

⁸³ In terms of a technological remedy for this, it is conceivable that blockchain technology, and in particular smart contracts built on top of the Ethereum platform, could be used to authenticate original videos (also photographs, research data, and much more). For example, CCTV surveillance video captured in a shop could conceivably be uploaded and timestamped in real time onto the blockchain, thereby guaranteeing that it has not been altered or tampered with by either humans or AI applications. This would serve as a kind of proof of authenticity which would go a long way towards keeping deepfakes from influencing courtroom decisions and so on. As of the time of writing this however, this technology is not in use just yet. I fear that our perception of and distrust in the truth as presented in video and other heretofore reliable media will have already had extremely far-reaching social consequences by the time such a solution does become widespread and effective enough to authenticate the innumerable videos that are recorded and disseminated on a daily basis. I fear too that we are currently within a period in history which will be murky and difficult to make sense of for future generations.

used to produce misinformation in the form of articles that are designed to look legitimate. This is a huge problem for sites like Facebook and Twitter, which have come under intense scrutiny for allowing “fake news” articles to be disseminated. The algorithms that produce fake news articles are also evolving and becoming more sophisticated, and are increasingly using machine learning to adopt content that is more nuanced and closer to what humans would typically produce. One particularly worrying algorithm is GPT-2, developed by the artificial intelligence research firm OpenAI. GPT-2 was trained on about 8 million web pages, and can write human-sounding prose when given a prompt (Robitzski, 2019, pg.1). It is “like a supercharged autocomplete - a system like Google uses to guess the next words in your search, except for whole blocks of text. Write the first sentence of a sci-fi story and the computer does the rest. Begin a news article and the computer completes it” (Waddell, 2019, pg.1). This algorithm is improving all the time, and it won’t be long before the text it produces will become completely indistinguishable from that which is written by humans. The implications of this are immense. It could conceivably produce much more than fake news and conspiracy theories or more innocuous works of fiction like novels and short stories. It could be used to produce scientific and academic articles that have no real research behind them, or financial and business reports that could adversely affect companies, the stock market, or the greater economy, particularly if these are disseminated by bots before the information they contain can be verified as true. Because of the damage this algorithm can potentially cause, Open AI has chosen to keep it in-house and not release it to the public, but that is not to say that other similar algorithms do not already exist or are in development and deployable at any moment (Robitzki, 2019, pg. 1; Waddel, 2019, pg. 1). It is not just bots and AI we need to worry about however, but also ghostwriting, where texts are written by professional writers who remain anonymous, while the name of an expert is then added to it to lend it credibility. According to Hull (2018, pg. 263) Contract Research Organisations often pay doctors to lend their names to studies written by ghostwriters. In fact, it was discovered in Australia that this practice is so widespread that “every issue of at least six *entire journals* published by Elsevier was ghostwritten. Thus, research into even the medical literature around a drug produces information the epistemic status of which cannot be judged.”

It is worth noting here that rather than just representing untruths or disinformation, these types of misrepresentations of reality that we experience with the rise of all the new technologies in our lives are having an effect on the individual’s ability to trust both what he sees and reads, and to verify truth claims made by anyone, even perceived experts. Moreover, the deluge of both information and disinformation the individual is faced with is exhausting to try to sift through and verify in order to ascertain what can be believed and what should be disregarded. This has launched us into the post-truth era in which there is a rising indifference to the truth as a result of not only this bombardment of information, but also the burden of trying to differentiate what is true from what is false. This, in turn, is arguably leading to an increased reliance on emotional motivations and ideological beliefs to fill the void left by this rising indifference. It is in this environment of indifference and distrust that serious journalism becomes fake

news,⁸⁴ that people begin to avoid the news altogether, that propaganda and conspiracy theories are allowed to flourish, and, sadly, that scientific knowledge and higher education are viewed with suspicion or even disdain. Humanity has, up until this point, felt secure in the sense that video, photographs, published scientific research, and to some extent, written news articles that are intended to be reflective of reality, can be trusted to depict that reality with a fair amount of accuracy. Such media are supposed to give us something close to a mirror image of what is real and be fairly distinguishable from what is art, opinion, narrative, propaganda, and so on.

According to Joseph (2004, pg. 144) “the object of knowledge is intransitive, the knowledge we have of it is transitive. This transitive domain is subject to the kind of power-knowledge relations discussed by Foucault. This does not, however, affect the status of the knowledge-independent intransitive realm.” In other words the intransitive objects of our knowledge remain unchanged no matter what we say about them or know about them. They are real objects, structures, mechanisms, processes, events and possibilities of the world that function independently of our interpretations of them for the most part. Joseph (2004, pg. 145) goes on to argue that the transitive realm requires epistemic caution precisely because it is shaped by relations of power and discursive context, and contains many different theories, world views and knowledge claims.

But this reaffirms the need to uphold a knowledge-independent intransitive realm, over which such battles are fought, and which must be appealed to when different theories make different claims. Firstly, for there to be a dispute between competing descriptive discourses, these discourses must have a common referent outside of themselves, or else the contestation is meaningless. Secondly...the possibility of knowledge and the forms that it takes...reflects the fact that the world has an ordered, intelligible and relatively enduring structure that is open to scientific investigation.

This distinction between transitive and intransitive realms is useful when looking at the nature and consequences of the post-truth disinformation phenomenon as outlined above. The battles that Joseph refers to are often settled with empirical evidence collected from the real world in the form of photographs, video footage, and scientific research or factual reports. We use these methods to reflect what we believe to be the intransitive reality of the world around us, and we turn to this type of evidence not only to settle opposing points of view, but also to verify or justify our theories and truth statements. In this sense, certain truths, such as scientific truths, are constructs built atop of our knowledge of reality, and our knowledge of reality is often shaped or informed by what we see and read, and by what we regard as trustworthy sources of information that do a good job of accurately depicting the intransitive objects of that knowledge. The fact of the matter is that doctored images and videos, and articles or texts that

⁸⁴ “The ‘news’, as a cultural artefact of modernity, was understood, perhaps mistakenly, to be without bias and opinion - as carefully delineated in the practice of journalism from the editorial page. Prior to the dawn of social media, the information that was distributed to consumers had some filter (the editor, producer, etc.) between the reporting of any event and its reporting to the masses. Of course, there were mistakes of both commission and omission, but the ethos surrounding what the consumer understood as the production of media presupposed an attempt at honesty” (Sawyer, 2018, pg 61).

masquerade as true scientific research or real journalism do nothing to change anything in the actual intransitive realm, but they do destroy the trust we have in what we have come to rely on to mirror or reflect that intransitive realm as accurately as possible. This might lead one to assert that we are sinking into a world where relativism is the order of the day, where we cannot appeal to anything evidentiary to settle on what reality or the truth is, and where knowledge, even scientific knowledge, is often misrepresented on a global scale and is therefore increasingly seen with suspicion and distrust. In a world like this politics, science, economics, business, any field really where we have traditionally relied on data and evidence gathered from the world at large, become battlefields where different games of truth are being fought and different regimes of truth lock horns to try to gain the most traction.

This is very much akin to the problem Foucault tried to address when he turned his focus to *parrhēsia*. As discussed in the preceding section, Foucault felt that with the advent of the Cartesian and Enlightenment prioritisation of truths derived from that which is demonstrable, we came to suppress the kind of truth as espoused by the Greeks, in particular Socrates and Plato. It is this demonstrable truth, what Foucault (2006, pg. 239) referred to as the “technology of a truth of certified observation”, that is under attack in the current post-truth era. This leaves us with a crisis of the truth, a confusion as to how to verify what is true and what is not when you cannot believe your own eyes and ears anymore, and you cannot distinguish between an expert, and an impostor or a charlatan. How can we, as individuals in a post-truth world, defend what we believe to be the objective truth when we cannot turn to the traditional forms of verification that appeal to reality as reflected by photographs, video recordings, research reports, news article as so on? Also, how do we constitute ourselves as ethical subjects who are able to practice care of the self in a post-truth world?

As discussed before, Foucault asserted that the idea of the care of the self for the Greeks was a response to a crisis of democracy in Athens. Democracy, at that time, was unable to practice and sustain an effective political discourse that articulated the truth, and at the center of this was the problem of *parrhēsia*. The free speech of individuals in Athens was most often used to advance personal good rather than that of the city. At a time when books, libraries, scientific publications and other more modern means of disseminating knowledge did not exist yet, the demonstrative truth was not the kind of truth that was relied upon for verification as widely as it has been since the Enlightenment. Athenians were faced with the problem of distinguishing the person with the courage to tell the truth from a rhetorician, a liar or simply an ignoramus in quite a different sense than the modern citizen of a Western democracy. The problem of democracy therefore became a distinct problem of truth for the Greeks. We are facing a problematic with some parallels to this today, where with the information deluge we face, in conjunction with the erosion of what is demonstrable, there is increasingly a sense of mistrust in the objective truth. This is having the effect of highlighting the shortcomings of our Western democracies. One only has to follow the 2020 presidential election debacle and the consequent insurrection in the United States for a clear example of how this crisis of democracy is playing out. On Twitter and on the news channels we see lip-service, lies and oration all intermingling with true discourses, and we see *parrhēsiastes* with the

courage to come forward and speak their truth to power being publicly vilified and punished for doing so. This is precisely the kind of problematic that Foucault pointed to. The cacophony of different views, rhetoric, lies and so on, intermingled with the truth, is difficult to sort through and this is causing serious partisanship and social division in the United States. This phenomenon is also by no means contained within American borders either - one only has to look at the unrest in places like Hong Kong and Chile, the yellow vest protests in France, and a number of social movements that have gained traction through the pandemic to see that this problematic is an undercurrent to it all. The flip-side of this is that suppressing freedom of speech undermines one of the central tenets of democracy itself. Foucault argued that the problem of democracy in Athens was addressed in the form of the Socratic-ethical *parrhēsia* discussed in the preceding section, the kind of *parrhēsia* that marries truth and action, and care of the self. This kind of *parrhēsia* not only speaks truth to power, but endeavours to teach certain truths about the world, and also to lay bare the relationship between the truth and ethics, and the aesthetics of the self. Working on the self, knowing the truth about oneself, is a precondition for being privy to the truth. Put differently, the care of the self was a precondition for access to the truth. The *parrhēsiast* in this sense then, is a subject of what Foucault terms “right action”.⁸⁵

Foucault (1989b, pg. 435) says:

I believe that among the Greeks and the Romans -especially the Greeks- concern with the self and care of the self were required for right conduct and the proper practice of freedom, in order to know oneself -the familiar aspect of the *Gnothi Seauton*- as well as to form oneself, to surpass oneself, to master the appetites that threaten to overwhelm one. Individual freedom was very important for the Greeks - contrary to the commonplace derived more or less from Hegel that sees it as being of no importance when placed against the imposing totality of the city...What we have here is an entire ethics revolving around the care of the self; this is what gives ancient ethics its particular form...in Antiquity, ethics as the conscious practice of freedom has revolved around this fundamental imperative: “Take care of yourself”.

Foucault goes on to argue from here that the imperative of the care of the self is the assimilation of truth. He explains that taking care of the self requires knowing oneself, but in addition to this we also need to know a certain number of rules of acceptable behaviour or action, or of “principles that are both truths and prescriptions. To take care of the self is to equip oneself with these truths: this is where ethics is linked to the game of truth” (Foucault 1989b, pg. 435-436). An important question that arises in the analysis of this argument, and one which did not escape Foucault, is the question as to why the care of the self must occur through a concern for the truth. In fact, he calls this *the* question for the Western world. He answers this central question by positing that there is nothing that we can point to that shows that it is possible to define a strategy that does not fall within the bounds of this concern. “It is within the field of the obligation of truth that it is possible to move about in one way or another, sometimes against the effects of domination that may be linked to structures of truth or institutions entrusted with truth” (Foucault, 1989b, pg. 444).

⁸⁵ Right action is a concept I will explore in further detail alongside my discussion on where Foucault’s ethics and Virtue Ethics coincide in the next chapter.

So, given this context, who exactly is a *parrhēsiast* then? This would be an individual who practices conscious freedom (by speaking truth to power) but who nonetheless takes part in the establishment of a certain consensus, and who finds himself within a certain network of practices and relations of power and constraining institutions. This is the individual who plays the game of truth within an environment characterised by the rule of law, rational techniques of government, and practices of the self and of freedom (Foucault, 1989b, pg. 445-447).

Foucault did not advocate for a “return to the Greeks” by any means, although it is tempting to try to simplify his arguments in this way. As an avid student of history and the historical-political-philosophical shifts that have taken place at certain junctures in time, he recognised that each shift brought new points of view, different challenges and a new set of problematics. In fact, he stated quite clearly that he did not hold the Greeks in all that much esteem:

They were stymied right away by what seems to me to be the point of contradiction of ancient morality: between on the one hand this obstinate search for a certain style of existence and, on the other, the effort to make it common to everyone, a style that they approached more or less obscurely with Seneca and Epictetus but which would find the possibility of realisation only within a religious style. All of Antiquity appears to me to have been a “profound error”...From a strictly philosophical point of view, the morality of Greek antiquity and contemporary morality have nothing in common. On the other hand, if you take them for what they prescribe, intimate and advise, they are extraordinarily close. It’s the proximity and the difference that we must bring to light and, through their interplay, we must show how the same advice given by the ancient morality can work differently in the style of contemporary morality (Foucault, 1989b, pg. 466-468).

This is where I believe Foucault was onto something as we try to navigate our way through this cybershift, this era marked by what many scholars have come to think of as the post-truth era - where the very fundamental notions we have held onto since the Enlightenment, of the truth, power, knowledge, freedom, and even what it means to be a subject, is taking on an unprecedented spectre and raising a new set of problematics. What choice are we left with but to analyse and highlight the interplay between the styles of the past and the present in order to try to make sense of where we are going as we forge into the future? Can an analysis of Greek *parrhēsia* and care of the self shed some light on our post-truth problem? To put it differently, where does all of this leave the individual of this era? How can the individual be an ethical subject who not only speaks the truth, but is able to tell when he hears, and indeed sees the truth in a post-truth world? And why should he care, if the very definition of being in a post-truth world means that certain types of rhetoric and popularised narratives are valued more than cold hard fact - a world where scientific knowledge, higher education and traditionally mainstream sources of expertise are regarded with suspicion and even disdain?

4.4. Conclusion: An Ethical Dividual?

As has been discussed extensively already, the dividual of the twenty-first century finds himself in a world where he is subjected to and managed through dataveillance in almost everything he does - where he plays a role in his own subjection through all of the data and metadata he releases in his wake as he traverses the web, often knowingly and without concern. This is a world where he is surveilled and carefully managed through his data in almost all aspects of his life, including the workplace, and sometimes even his future actions are directed through algorithmic data management without his knowledge. He is homo informaticus, who is constituted as part data and acts with the explicit knowledge that he is a part of a global network in cyberspace which simultaneously gives him freedom and ensnares him. He is a subject who is also an object to be known in a manner which is far more intrusive, and far more pervasive, than at any other point in human history. He is subject to a new technology of power which is largely exercised preemptively in the space between the will to act and action itself, and through which his actions are carefully managed by numerous algorithmic applications. He is the subject of the era of managementality, but also an era of unprecedented freedoms: freedom of speech within a larger arena than ever before; the freedom to create and represent himself in numerous ways to practically any audience of his choosing; the freedom to join new social movements instantly and across geographic boundaries; and the freedom to access vast banks of knowledge and information on just about any subject imaginable. Yet today's dividual also finds himself in a world where perhaps this deluge of knowledge and information, this increasing management of subjects through algorithmic governmentality, and the need to constantly curate and manage one's own identity and dataidival, has turned into an environment where experts are routinely dismissed, where "alternative facts" are offered up regularly, where anyone can voice their opinion on almost anything, and where anyone has the ability to rise to prominence through social media. In public discourse it is not uncommon to see celebrity status outrank rational argument or to witness clear and evident disinterest in scientific fact, evidence-based argument and so on. The fundamental norms that govern what we see is undergoing an erosion of some sorts, and while it may be tempting to turn to the Greek concept of *parrhēsia* to try to find a cookie-cutter solution to this, it is not as simple as doing this. Even Foucault (1984, pg. 342) readily admitted so when he said that "you can't find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another time by other people." That said, there are some valuable lessons to be taken from a new look at *parrhēsia* through the twenty-first century lens.

Before I do this, it is worth noting again that Foucault identified three different iterations of Greek *parrhēsia*: Platonic, Socratic, and the interpretation of the Cynics. As I pointed out in the previous sections, it was the Socratic iteration that tried to deal with the crisis in democracy, that asked the critical questions: "what is the reason given for the failure of true discourse to prevail over false discourse in the democratic game?...What makes true discourse powerless in democracy?" (Foucault, 2011, pg. 40). Foucault went on to answer his own questions by arguing that it is not true discourse in and of itself where

the problem lies, but that the problem lies with the institutional framework within which it emerges. The problem lies with the structure of democracy. Democracy does not allow for the definitive distinction between true and false discourse because it is difficult to distinguish between good and bad speakers, “between discourse which speaks the truth and is useful to the city, and discourse which utters lies, flatters, and is harmful” (Foucault, 2011, pg. 40). This is of course what leads to the shift to the need for veridical speech, care of the self, and ultimately the idea of ethics. The Cynical interpretation, which Foucault terms “Cynical scandal”, takes things a step further by arguing that the true ethical life that is spoken of also needs to be lived:

In the case of Cynical scandal...one risks one’s life, not just by telling the truth, and in order to tell it, but by the very way in which one lives. In all the meanings of the word, one ‘exposes’ one’s life. That is to say, one displays it and risks it. One risks it by displaying it; and it is because one displays it that one risks it. One exposes one’s life, not through one’s discourses, but through one’s life itself (Foucault, 2011, pg. 234).

For the Cynics the truth takes on much more than just discourse - it becomes a form of life.⁸⁶ At the center of this idea for the Cynics, was the notion of transparency or visibility. For the Cynics leading a true life equated leading an unconcealed life “which hides no part of itself, and which does so because it does not commit any shameful, dishonest, or reprehensible action which could incur the censure of others...” (Foucault, 2011, pg. 251). It is indeed very tempting to make a case for the reemergence of this type of true life under the gaze of everyone in this cyberspace that we find ourselves today, but there are several problems with doing so. As Hull (2018, pg. 259) points out, living in full view of everyone, living an unconcealed life as it were, does not solve the problem of bad actors still executing speech acts which are untrue, based on flattery, rhetoric and so on. The censure of others is not necessarily a deterrent, and even though power relations exist and subjects constrain themselves and are subjected because they are visible, this visibility has become so normalised that many actions are no longer seen as scandalous, or the feeling of embarrassment is no longer so acutely felt when there is censure from others. Hull (2018, pg. 259) argues that subjects even see permanent visibility, as we experience it through uploading our lives to social media and so, as desirable, taking away any punitive element. The more you share, the more you tend to get rewarded for it, and maintaining your privacy is often penalised. “Privacy looks bad; why

⁸⁶ This is an idea I will expand upon in the chapters that follow, but I do want to point out here that this harkens back to the previous discussion on how religion, and then the grounding of subjectivity in part in science all but eliminated certain Greek and Roman ideas, thereby changing how the subject, freedom, knowledge, and the truth were manifested and perceived not only in Philosophy, but also in broader society. This idea of the truth as being a form of life as the Cynics understood it, suffered the same fate. In *The Courage of the Truth* (2011, pg. 235) Foucault says: “The absorption and, to a certain extent, the confiscation by religion of the theme and practice of true life has certainly been one of the reasons for this disappearance. It is as if philosophy was able to disburden itself of the problem of the true life to the same extent as religion, religious institutions, asceticism, and spirituality took over this problem in an increasingly evident manner from the end of Antiquity down to the modern world. We can take it also that the institutionalisation of truth-telling practices in the form of a science (a normed, regulated, established science embodied in institutions) has no doubt been the other major reason for the disappearance of the of the theme of the true life as a philosophical question, as a problem of the conditions of the access to the truth. If scientific practice, scientific institutions, and integration within the scientific consensus are by themselves sufficient to assure access to the truth, then it is clear that the problem of the true life as the necessary basis for the practice of truth-telling disappears. So, there has been a confiscation of the problem of the true life in the religious institution, and invalidation of the problem of the true life in the scientific institution.”

demand privacy unless you are doing something you shouldn't? ... [Theorists such as] Judge Richard Posner [argue] that interest in the privacy of information is an interest in enforcing asymmetry in markets. If I apply for a job and hide a criminal record, for example, I am trying to get you to overvalue me as a potential employee by keeping you ignorant of my past.”

It should also be noted that this purposeful non-concealment of the life of the Cynic, this very public life, took on almost a sense of dramatisation, which Foucault (2011, pg. 254) argued actually gives rise to an immediate reversal of its effects:

[N]on-concealment, far from being the resumption and acceptance of those traditional rules of propriety which would mean that one would blush to commit evil before others, must be the blaze of the human being's naturalness in full view of all. This blaze of the naturalness which scandalises, which transforms into scandal the non-concealment of existence limited by traditional propriety, manifests itself in the famous Cynic behaviour...Applying the principle of non-concealment literally, Cynicism explodes the code of propriety...

There are some fundamental differences between the kind of non-concealment that the Cynics strove to live by and the non-concealment we tend to practice in our modern day lives within the worldwide web. As I pointed out in Chapter 2, the dataveillance we are under, in what I have come to call the cybertopticon we live in, has the characteristic of being ubiquitous, pervasive, and almost impossible to opt out of. We live large parts of our lives on the web, often releasing information that we wouldn't even share with the closest people in our lives through our Google searches and other online activities. Whereas the Cynics had a choice, our form of living an unconcealed life comes attached with a particular relation of power and mode of subjection that we can hardly escape or opt out of. Moreover, far from exploding any code of propriety, we tend to carefully curate the unconcealed lives we showcase in public view. This is in part because we are trying to avoid scandal to be sure, but perhaps the more poignant reason for this is the fact that this visibility is a string attached to certain conditions that we want or need in our lives. As mentioned in the chapters preceding this one, access to many government and social services is predicated on the assumption that we will be providing certain bits and bytes of data and information in return. Hull (2018, pag. 261) makes a very similar point when he says that: “Not only do employers scrutinise social media accounts of prospective employees, they sometimes treat the lack of social media content as itself a problem. Similarly, access to social services is often conditional upon data collection, which is then used as a way to condition services on compliance with behavioural desiderata.”

In Chapter 3 I argued that we live in an era of algorithmic governmentality, whereby citizens are required to submit to data-collection from all manner of services, both governmental and non-governmental, and opting out is, for most people, simply not possible. It would cut you off from essentials like having access to banking, power, water, to name just a few things. This means that a failure to submit to the data collection that comes along with these essential services would, in the words of Hull (2018, pg. 261)

“subject someone to socioeconomic disadvantage by shutting her out of market goods which are only accessible by submitting to surveillance.” At this point one could interject and argue that even when all of this is taken into consideration, the very unconcealed life of the modern dividual is, for the most part, a reflection of his own truth, it is a true life because much of what we submit online is true personal data, and we release an extraordinary amount of it, from data we consciously collect via apps⁸⁷ and the like, to what we unconsciously release just by having a phone in our pocket with an active internet connection. However, this argument falls flat when we consider that much of what we consciously do online is also carefully crafted.

Furthermore, parrhesiastic speech can be very easily faked, and as I pointed out earlier on in this chapter, it is incredibly difficult to authenticate. Hull (2018, pg. 252) argues that with the sheer scale at which contemporary society produces visibility as a condition for participation, the environment within which we endeavour to adjudicate parrhesiastic speech is one that is inundated with speech that presents itself as parrhesiastic. There is a deluge of it and sifting through it all to try to identify and authenticate what is true *parrhēsia* has become a source of confusion, an exercise in banality or monotony, or just an entirely overwhelming experience - which in turn lends itself to a temptation to leave it up to algorithms to decide for us what is true and what is not.

The modern dividual is increasingly becoming more accustomed to relinquishing all manner of tasks to algorithms and artificial intelligence applications - not just the choice of what information is presented to him after being curated and selected algorithmically, but also certain aspects of the care of the self, with some consequences for his liberty. Going back to the use of wearable tracking applications, or what is sometimes referred to as the ‘quantified self movement’, it is worth noting that we see these care of the self practices whereby we measure, log and track everything from what we eat, to how many steps we walk, to our heart rate and sleeping habits, as being grounded in science. Knowledge of the self takes on a scientific veneer and so the modern subject becomes a scientific object of self-knowledge as well. This is rather a paradoxical development in the care of the self, given that “even as the epistemic function of science is brought into question, the scientific and technological enterprise is being deployed politically as a means to ensure the continuous visibility of subjects” (Hull, 2018, pg. 263). Visibility for the dividual is therefore clearly differentiated from the visibility of the Cynics:

For the modern dividual this visibility is both mandatory to some extent and self-imposed. It is also a visibility that enables parrhesiastic speech but makes it difficult to adjudicate parrhesiastic speech. True information and true speech are difficult to identify by either humans or algorithms, and the more the dividual participates in making himself visible through the data he releases, the more that same data is used to algorithmically and invisibly curate content that the dividual in question might find persuasive. This means that there is a slightly different version of the ‘truth’ being represented to each dividual (Hull, 2018, pg. 264), and which ultimately plays a strong role in how he constitutes himself as a subject in the

⁸⁷ Fitness apps, scheduling and calendar apps, photography apps and much more spring to mind.

lived-in world. This arguably deprives the dividual from being able to live a true authentic life in the Cynical sense.

The modern dividual faces an unprecedented problem with *parrhēsia* in that there is seemingly parrhesiastic speech being produced by bots and artificial intelligence, or by fake social media profiles that are designed to look like real people and which offer up seemingly expert opinions. According to Frischmann and Selinger (in Hull, 2018, pg. 265) “Even though disinformation campaigns have been going on for a long time and attack ads have become a political staple, the bot situation is especially troubling. In a polarised world, when bots are designed to look and sound like us, our neighbours, and our friends, it can be hard to know who - or better yet, what - is engineered to follow a deviously programmed script.” This kind of trickery, of speech that is presented as human, earnest and trustworthy, as well as the doctored pictures and videos and computer-generated publications designed to masquerade as true research, journalism and the like, is precisely what undermines the authentication strategy put forward by Socratic *parrhēsia*. But, as Hull (2018, pg. 265) argues, the Cynic move to convert truth from speech to action by living the true life is also of little help to the modern dividual in that the Cynic was present physically to be seen, interrogated, judged. In today’s networked world the line between the physical and the virtual is blurred. Our carefully curated online personae, or datadividuals, are both a true and a fabricated iteration of ourselves, and these intermingle with other carefully curated datadividuals that could either be tied to a human dividual, or to a bot or an algorithm to produce speech within an electronic, virtual environment.

All of this leaves us with a very serious question: what are the conditions in which the modern dividual can constitute himself as an ethical subject in today’s networked world?

According to his close friend and confidante Paul Veyne (in Veyne et al, 1993, pg. 7), Foucault felt that the contemporary world he inhabited was a world in which it became impossible to ground an ethics, in the sense that ethics was understood in the predominantly Christian Western societies of the preceding eras. What remained a certainty for Foucault however, was that humans are mortal subjects who “have a relation of consciousness or of self-knowledge with themselves.” For this reason Foucault sought the answers to the problem of ethics in the idea of the work of the self on the self. Far from trying to resuscitate the Greeks, Foucault wanted to find a contemporary solution by turning his gaze back to the past.

We can guess what might emerge from this diagnosis: the self, taking itself as a work to be accomplished, could sustain an ethics that is no longer supported by either tradition or reason; as an artist of itself, the self would enjoy that autonomy that modernity can no longer do without...Finally, if the self frees us from the

idea that between morality and society, or what we call by those names, there is an analytic or necessary link, then it is no longer necessary to wait for the revolution to begin to realise ourselves: the self is the new strategic possibility (Veyne et al, 1993, pg.7).

While I think that Foucault was correct in his assertion that it has become necessary, in the modern world, to reconsider the way in which religion and philosophical tradition in Western societies underpins ethics, I do not think that Foucault provided us with any kind of out-of-the-box comprehensive theory of ethics for the twenty-first century world. However, looking at the world, at our notions of subjectivity, epistemology, liberty and the truth through a Foucauldian lens does help us to understand the cybershift we are in, this dawning of the fourth industrial revolution and the consequences it holds for humanity, and the role we play in this new world. This brings me back to perhaps the most pertinent question raised in this chapter, and that is the question of how the modern individual can constitute himself as an ethical subject in this era of the cybershift. In the chapters that follow I will turn my attention to this question specifically, and will do so against the backdrop of business ethics for several reasons. The first is that the business world, from an analytical perspective, can be seen as a kind of microcosm of society. An analysis of ethics in business can therefore give us some useful insights into ethical and moral practices in the broader macrocosm of our twenty-first century social world. The second, and perhaps the most important reason for doing so, is because the business world is the direct driver behind much of the change being swept in with the cybershift. Companies are responsible for the technological developments that have ushered in most of the changes I have discussed through all of the preceding chapters. Furthermore, the era of managementality has resulted in the business sector, and in particular the large technology and social media companies like Google and Facebook, attaining unprecedented levels of power and influence, while Western governments are arguably weakening and becoming more corporatised. This is in part due to the slow machinery of bureaucracy that cannot quite keep pace with and fully understand the new technologies being deployed and utilised by these corporations, making accountability very difficult and eroding the government's traditional role of oversight. It has therefore become essential to recognise that business ethics has a far more critical role to play than what is being recognised in the world of business, business schools and so on. The fact of the matter is that the broader impact that business and economics has on our societies, our lived experience, and our very subjectivity and human identity, is far more extensive than the central players in the business world would like to recognise or admit.

Chapter 5: The Business of Business Ethics – Lessons for the Twenty-First Century Organisation

5.1. Introduction

In the preceding chapters I went to some lengths to try to see what kind of a subject is emerging from the cybershift that we are currently living through. I argued that we are in the midst of this historical shift or rupture and that is fundamentally changing the relationship between economy, state, and society - bringing with it some significant implications for the constitution of the contemporary subject.

Borrowing the term from Gilles Deleuze, I asserted that the contemporary subject, who lives his life in a world characterized by datafication, is essentially a divided entity, a “dividual” who occupies two distinct but interconnected worlds: the lived-in world where his physical body resides, and cyberspace, where the “self as data” resides, his “datavidual” if you will.

In a certain sense, cyberspace is an entirely new dimension wherein identities are forged, discourses take place, and communities and hierarchies are formed. Yet it is an apparatus with real power effects that infiltrates virtually every facet of the lived-in world. It penetrates all layers of society, collecting and collating data, and shaping the lived life of the datavidual through algorithmic governmentality.

The contemporary dividual is therefore in the curious position of being shaped by his lived-in environment with its prevailing discourses and relations of power, but is also able to construct a form of the self which occupies its own place in cyberspace. This form of the self is not a different persona or a mirror image, nor is it the kind of self-depiction that you would find in the arts. Rather, it is an authentic division of the self because while it is a virtual construction, a datavidual, it is a consciously idealised representation of the self that is nonetheless still grounded in lived experience, while at the same time being constructed from all the metadata generated unconsciously as the dividual goes about his daily online activities. Thus, while we can still talk about the subjection and subjectification of the body in Foucauldian terms, we have to now consider that today’s dividual is no longer an embodied subject with the duality of a physical presence and a “soul”, as understood by Foucault and preceding philosophers. Today’s subject has plurality, and hence subjectivation is evolving into something far more complex than that which Foucault described.

The contemporary dividual is essentially a subject that is grappling with a new kind of technology of the self. He is also subjected to a new kind of power that is exercised in the space between himself as a

physical entity and himself as data, a “pregenerative power” through which his future actions can be prompted and managed algorithmically,⁸⁸ often without his knowledge. This is a new and particularly troublesome disposition of power, as it has the effect of regulating the actions and future actions of the individual in the lived-in world as well, with serious implications for human rights and human freedoms.

As discussed in the last chapter, the cybershift also brings with it some very profound consequences for what we perceive as and how we interact with the truth and with knowledge.

Much of the blame for the rise of the cybershift and the seismic change it is bringing about for humanity at every level can be laid at the feet of some of the large Western technology companies. These companies, like Amazon, Google, Facebook and the like, have been permitted to roll out the technologies that are driving this unprecedented paradigm shift with little forethought for the societal consequences they would have, and with minimal oversight. Furthermore, the era of managementality has resulted in these companies attaining unprecedented levels of power and influence, while Western governments have arguably become weakened and more corporatised. This is partly due to the slow machinery of bureaucracy that cannot quite keep pace with and fully comprehend the technologies being deployed, utilised and sold by these corporations. This makes accountability very difficult and erodes the government’s traditional role of oversight even more than it has already been eroding under neoliberal capitalist policies. It has therefore become necessary to recognise that business ethics has a far more critical role to play than what is being recognised in the world of government, business, business schools and so on. The broader impact that these technology behemoths, their products and their marketing machinery have on societies, on our very subjectivity, is far more extensive than one would like to admit at first glance. For this reason the time has come, in my opinion, to rethink the importance of ethics and ethics training in the business world and to make corporate leaders aware of the fact that their approach to ethics needs to extend far beyond the current standard smorgasbord of value statements, rule-setting, behaviour modification and so on.

It is widely acknowledged that there are certain mainstream approaches to business ethics that make up this smorgasbord and are favoured by leaders in both government and the corporate world. One such approach is deontological. In other words it is preoccupied with the elucidation of moral codes of conduct and an adherence to prescribed ethical standards. Another approach is consequentialist in nature, and therefore posits that the ethical route is the one with the best possible consequences for all parties involved. Critiques against both approaches abound, and a deep discussion of these would go well beyond the scope of this thesis. But suffice it to say: in our global, networked environment -our infosphere which is becoming increasingly synchronised and delocalised (Floridi, 2009, p.549) and which is hurtling through change at an unprecedented speed- neither of these approaches on their own seem tenable. Aside

⁸⁸ This often happens at the level of the population too, with governments employing algorithms to manage citizens in schools, through social security systems and so forth. Governmentality has given way to managementality.

from the philosophical theoretical objections to the above-mentioned approaches, take into consideration the practical implications. How does a company implement codes of conduct when the business and technological landscape is in a constant state of flux and new ethical issues arise faster than management can hammer out official policy? How can one successfully assess which actions have the best consequences for all parties involved, when decision-making processes are increasingly being given over to algorithms? How can companies develop a coherent ethical policy backed up by action when managers are faced with a deluge of data to analyse, while still considering the company's bottom line and often within severe time constraints? How do we reconcile ethics and algorithmic governmentality?

I believe that it has become essential for us to view ourselves as individuals, as a physical person but with a dataindividual that arises from our connected cyber-existence. It is only once we see ourselves as being constituted as part data, that we can begin to talk about affording ourselves certain human rights that extend to protect our dataindividual. By seeing our data as an inherent part of our subjectivity, as much as our body, mind or intellect is, we can begin to take the necessary steps to protect ourselves from the power-effects that are being enacted upon us through the algorithmic mechanisms developed and deployed by corporations and governments.

In this chapter I intend to therefore start to lay the foundations for a move beyond the ethical theories that are preoccupied with the elucidation of moral codes and the morality of behaviours, and I want to take from Foucault an ethical understanding that is focused on a greater awareness of what subjectivation and subjectification mean in neoliberal capitalist societies.

In the course of this investigation I will also argue that Foucault's concept of the care of the self, which culminates in what he refers to as an "aesthetics of existence", ultimately shares some critical characteristics with contemporary virtue ethics (Levy, 2004, pg.20), and that some of the gaps in Foucault's work on ethics may be filled by reading him through a virtue ethics lens, and especially the work of Alisdair MacIntyre.

To this end, I will begin with a discussion of Foucault's ethics and how it reconciles with business ethics, taking the standard approaches to business ethics into consideration. I will then draw a comparison between a Foucauldian approach and virtue ethics in an attempt to show how Foucault's particular brand of ethics, by virtue of its similarities and differences with virtue ethics and the fact that it does not abandon the idea of codes of conduct altogether, may be of interest to business ethicists and leaders.

5.2. Reconciling Foucault's Ethics with Business Ethics

Business ethics, as perceived by CEOs and industry leaders, is in the business of classifying what is ethical, and is therefore often too narrowly focused on elucidating, developing, and elaborating codes of conduct. What this means is that even though many organisations have woken up to the importance of ethics, they are locked in by the constraints placed on them by the conception of business ethics as being, in essence, about collective codes of conduct, company value statements and so on. As a result of this business ethics, as it is understood in industry, is perhaps not well suited to the unique working conditions we face due to the lightning-quick, ubiquitous changes being brought about by technology, the Internet and so on, as we propel ourselves further into the twenty-first century.

By giving Foucault more credence as a legitimate voice in business ethics studies, I think it becomes possible to move beyond the corporate world's laser focus on deontological and consequentialist ethical theories that are preoccupied with the elucidation of moral codes and the morality of behaviours and outcomes - but without denying codes of conduct, value statements and practices of behaviour modification entirely.

However, before I launch into a detailed discussion of the above, I think it is worth mentioning that even in the development of our views on business through history, the historical shifts that Foucault identified are quite clear.

According to Solomon (1991, pg. 355) we could argue that business has been around at least since the Sumerians nearly six thousand years ago, who were known for keeping meticulous records of their trading activity. Aristotle also made mention of business in his writings. He distinguished two different senses of what we would call economics today. The first was *oikonomikae*, or household trading, and the other was *chrematistike*, or trade for profit. This latter activity he regarded as devoid of virtue, and even labeled those who partook in it 'parasites'. Later on, the Christian moralists like Aquinas and Martin Luther also took to condemning the activity of profiting from trade, that which we largely see as business as usual today. It was not until Adam Smith wrote *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776 that the attitude that we have towards business today became the predominant point of view. This coincides with the Enlightenment shift that Foucault references throughout his work, and it was a time in which "the general acceptance of business and the recognition of economics as a central structure of society depended on a very new way of thinking about society that required not only a change in religious and philosophical sensibilities but, underlying them, a new sense of society and even of human nature" (Solomon, 1991, pg. 355). This then gave rise to the Industrial Era, to Fordism, and also to Taylorism.

After Adam Smith published his now very famous work outlining his theory of the "invisible hand" that

guides the markets, and large corporations like Ford brought irrevocable change to the ways in which we do business, we began to see, at least in Western democracies, the steady ascendance of the neoliberal ideal of a market that is as free as possible from government control, and where those who labour within the markets are regarded as entrepreneurs of the self, as homo economicus operating under managerialism. The classic defence of this free market system that has predominated Western capitalist societies is that the market supplies and satisfies existing consumer demands.

However, there are several business practices that have taken root over the last few decades that seriously challenge this perception. The first is that with the type of targeted marketing that has become not only ubiquitous but also highly individualised, it could be argued that companies are actually creating the demand for the products they offer. Moreover, with the way in which data is collected from consumers and then sold to third parties, the consumer is in the curious position of being both a customer and a commodity up for sale. Lastly, consumers have their data harvested by algorithms, are then profiled, and from there companies purposely try to steer or coerce their future actions in terms of where they shop, what they purchase and so on.⁸⁹ From this point of view it has therefore become very difficult to talk about a free market any longer, and this in turn has some serious implications for business ethics.

Business ethics as it is studied and taught today is a relatively new discipline, with just a few decades under the belt. Prior to the 1980's or so, with the rise to prominence of neoliberal managerialism and homo economicus, business ethics was largely a critique of capitalism and the so-called myth of the 'profit motive' whereby a firmly entrenched mistrust of business practices as driven purely by profit and nothing else prevailed. Although this type of thinking still persists, we have since seen a concerted effort made to move away from the idea that business is amoral, and several philosophical theories have been taken up in the field of business ethics.

Before I expand on these and then move on to a discussion of where I see Foucault fitting into all of this, I want to explore the notion of business ethics in the context of neoliberalism, since this will guide the later discussion of reconciling Foucault's ethics with business ethics.

5.2.1. Neoliberalism and Normative Theory in Business Ethics

Peter Bloom (2017, pg. 3,10) to an extent credits neoliberalism with the widespread establishment and acceptance of business ethics. He argues that neoliberalism created "ethical capitalists", and that this is a result of societal pressure in favour of corporate social responsibility, demands for a more humane workplace, better work-life balance and so on. This is characteristic of managerialism, and is of course a

⁸⁹ An example of this is the Samsung Nation gamification application I referred to in the second chapter, which contains complex behaviour analytics algorithms that are explicitly designed to drive consumer behaviour and to align this behaviour with the company's objectives.

direct backlash against the kinds of disciplinary systems that were prevalent in the Fordist and Taylorist workplaces I discussed in the second chapter. Bloom (2017, pg. 10) argues that there was a kind of “crisis of market morality” that arose at this time, and from it sprang “a reconfigured sense of ethical responsibility that simultaneously preserved the prominence of the market as well as recognised the need for some sort of ethical management of its excesses. Namely, it produced an increased call for ‘business ethics.’” He goes on to say (pg. 11) that this rise in prominence of business ethics ideals occurred not because markets and businesses were inherently immoral or unethical, but rather because corporations did not have an adequate set of ethical guidelines to help them determine how to act. From this a deontological approach to ethics in business emerged, whereby ethicists and business leaders started to establish standardised codes of ethics, value statements, and so on. Of course, in keeping with the central tenet of neoliberalism, ethics under managerialism was regarded as something that should necessarily be self-regulatory. In other words, the notion of business ethics that arose and which most corporations still espouse, is that it is up to individuals and companies to ensure that they act legally and ethically when they conduct their business, leaving the government with the responsibility of not regulating, but rather incentivising good behaviour or corporate social responsibility⁹⁰. This therefore “promoted a model of ethics that combined the dynamism and liberty of capitalism with the regulation required to mitigate its worst characteristics” (Bloom, 2017, pg. 11). To put it another way, neoliberalism (particularly under Reagan and Thatcher in the West) freed the market from the public restraints that came with the welfare state while simultaneously producing a “resurgent ethical desire for it to be moral and its leaders to be ethical” (Bloom, 2017, pg. 47). This does not mean that under neoliberalism the market system is unregulated or that governments have no role to play in the markets - quite the contrary. It is the approach to regulation that changed, with the burden of responsibility falling increasingly on companies and individuals, and the state merely providing oversight and regulatory legislation. The effect of this was that a new ethical framework for organising social relations became apparent. “The supposed amorality of the market was supplanted with a resurgent desire for moral responsibility and an ethical subject who could realize this demand. These calls were exacerbated by historical challenges facing neoliberalism as it morphed from a viable economic project into an all-encompassing ethico-political system” (Bloom, 2017, pg. 48). Of course the ethical subject who emerged from this, in Foucauldian terms, was *homo economicus*, who was charged with making himself morally responsible within this ethico-political system, while being competitive and promoting himself as an entrepreneur of the self. This left *homo economicus*, as well as the community he belonged to, in the precarious position of finding expansive ethical solutions to the problem of operating in a free market that maximises profits, within the narrow ideological limits of capitalism as it were, with little reliance on government intervention and support.⁹¹

⁹⁰ The current climate crisis may very well change this, in the sense that governments are already looking at how they can step in to regulate corporate behaviours in terms of being socially responsible and implementing sweeping changes aimed at slowing down the effects of global warming. The European parliament is currently trying to push through a €1 trillion European Green Deal, and in the USA some lawmakers representing the Democratic Party have drafted a Green New Deal, although it is very much still mired in controversy.

⁹¹ I will expand on this idea as the discussion unfolds but suffice it to note here that this is what I have come to think of as man’s *burden of systemic ethical responsibility* within neoliberal capitalism.

This, Bloom (pg. 49-50) argues, led to a “politics of empowerment” whereby homo economicus was shaped by empowerment discourses within the broader framework of capitalism. These discourses centered around the ideas of ownership, personal responsibility and a governmentality of self-regulation. Homo economicus was expected to take accountability for his actions and own the fact that he was a competitive being within a work regime that required efficiency. This same logic then is what gave birth to the notion of corporate responsibility. “The weakening power of the state created an ethico-political void filled by self-regulating firms. In the wake of scandals, there was increased public pressure for companies to practice such ‘responsible autonomy’. Yet this demand would expand and reach downward, soon becoming an overarching ethical imperative for employees and citizens alike” (Bloom, 2017, pg. 50). The consequence for homo economicus as an employee within neoliberal managerialism was that there was increasing pressure to choose the right career, to help the employer perform optimally within the market⁹², while taking responsibility for his own finances and shunning any notion of a welfare state. Failing in his career or falling on hard times financially also became a moral failing of sorts. If you did not work and could not provide for yourself, you were a burden on the system and of weak character. Under neoliberal managerialism in other words, failure was the fault of the individual, not the system or economic circumstances. But perhaps more crucially, failure became a moral shortcoming, and an affront to the successful.

Consequently, the economic and the ethical became unified and in a real sense socially interchangeable. “Personal responsibility” was attached to being fiscally astute and economically successful. Morality was associated with one’s financial practices and outcomes - did individuals have a job? If so, did they maximise their skills for getting the highest-paid job available? Were they spendthrifts, or were they literally and figuratively accountable for their lifestyle? Did they help the organisation save money, or were they a drain on its resources? (Bloom, 2017, pg. 51)

In this sense then, it is with neoliberalism that morality and ethics really became tied to economics and capitalism, and not only did this give rise to concerns about business ethics, but it effectively shifted the burden of transforming an amoral capitalist system to an ethical one onto homo economicus. It also did so while requiring him to operate within the confines of the demands of the free market - maximising profit, striving for excellence in work as much as in life, being a strong competitor. So how is it that we can talk about homo economicus as being ethical? The answer can be found in the idea of the disciplinary society, whereby “ethical behaviour is cultivated through the internalisation of constraints on individual autonomy, by and in the interests of the collective” (Bone, 2012, pg. 658). There are of course several authors who argue that ethics has eroded substantially under neoliberal capitalism and managerialism, and that homo economicus is not inherently an ethical being at all, but will only apply ethics and morals insofar as it is advantageous to him to do so, or to avoid punishment. In business in other words, deontological rules, and the laws and rules laid down by society, do not guide behaviour inasmuch as they

⁹² This meant being conscious of helping the employer meet their bottom line while serving as an ambassador for the company, and somehow finding a sense of self-actualisation. Consider the rhetoric of the 1980’s management gurus for example.

define the limits of conduct that goes unpunished (Bone, 2012, pg. 661). In fact, Bone (2012, pg. 653) argues that neoliberalism, with its emphasis on individualism and its transactional outlook in business, has permeated broader society as well - it has

exerted a corrosive influence on our societal culture as a whole. This has occurred as the narrow value system, instrumentalism and imperatives of the neoliberal economic sphere have colonised the wider culture, to the extent that has arguably devalued non-economic aspects within public discourse and, thus, the wider value system.

Whichever point of view is propagated, the same undercurrent remains present, and that is that with the rise of capitalism, neoliberalism and managerialism in Western democracies, it is abundantly clear that the problems and issues associated with neoliberal capitalism are not confined to the world of business and to corporate cultures alone, but that it permeates broader Western culture too. Business is after all the dominant social institution of our time, and the neoliberal discourse that stems from business and economics has become incorporated into the ways in which people tend to interpret, understand, and live in the world, thereby permeating the realm of human social and personal relationships (Astroulakis, 2014, pg. 99).

This then is also why it makes sense to turn to Foucault's methodologies and analytical approach to try to make sense of corporations and, by extension, undertake an analysis of business ethics practices.

But before I launch into some introductory remarks on how business ethics can be reconciled with Foucault's thought, I want to sketch out a quick overview of the predominant ethical theories in the discipline of Business Ethics today, and look at how they are informed, influenced and shaped by neoliberalism.

Business Ethics abounds with approaches. Some are normative theories, while others are theories with an interdisciplinary foundation, such as in political philosophy.⁹³ Broadly speaking, normative ethics aims to better understand the moral problems and issues that organisations face as they navigate their way through the free market. Chakrabarty and Bass (2013, pg. 10) describes normative ethics as "ethics in action" which can be used to "better understand applied problems, such as how ethics can help organisations to act and solve issues." The three main normative ethical approaches that are commonly referred to in the broader discipline of Ethics, namely consequentialism (utilitarianism), deontology and virtue ethics, thus also feature prominently in business ethics studies.

⁹³ For example, the work of John Rawls has been used to underpin stakeholder theories, and the social contract tradition also has its roots in political philosophy.

Even though these are distinctly different approaches in business ethics in general, they are almost always applied in combination with one another and with varying degrees of emphasis, depending on the business and its economic and social environment. They also share some common characteristics. Smith (2009, pg. 6) in fact highlights three main areas of overlap between these normative approaches: The first is that all normative theories understand that the free market is morally ambiguous at best, but yet the predominant norms of the market have been socially endorsed. Moreover, there are often conflicts that arise between the norms governing the market, and the norms that govern the lives of people and organisations that are stakeholders in the market. Markets rest on the principle that goods and services are commodified, and that these are interchangeable with other goods and services through pricing and monetary transactions. “Markets assume egoistic, mutually disinterested motives on the part of individual actors. They place emphasis on the ability of actors to freely exit from non-preferential transactions in order to pursue other, more preferable ones” (Smith, 2009, pg. 6). The environment created within neoliberal capitalism, or within the free market, ultimately seems to result in individuals (*homo economicus*) who chase superior preferences with the intent to accumulate as much wealth as possible, while competing with others doing the same and doing so successfully, without failing. This, as I also argued in the above, manifests in business and in corporate cultures, and spills over into broader society. According to Smith (2009, pg. 6) “businesses are the organisational manifestation of these norms; they coordinate the activities of many individuals for the sake of producing goods and services that can be exchanged so as to produce wealth and satisfy preferences. Normative theory in business thus needs to be built around the norms of the market, because the market is the institutional home of business.” What this means, ultimately, is that it becomes the job of any normative theory to try to interpret the market - its limits, meaning and significance - and to try to figure out how businesses should balance non-market expectations with the norms of the market.

The second area of convergence deals with the question of whether business ethics is “an organisational endeavour, focusing on the internal development of principles for management” or if it is “an institutional endeavour, focusing on how political and economic institutions should be arranged so as to produce more just outcomes in the operation of the market” (Smith, 2009, pg. 6-7).

The final point of confluence is the perceived gap between the theoretical and the practical - in other words how far normative theories are seen to be removed from the everyday actions and practices in business. This is often a point of critique against normative theory in business ethics, particularly from business leaders who feel that academics and ethicists in business schools are in ivory towers, far removed from the real-life issues businesses face in the marketplace.⁹⁴

An important point to mention at this juncture is that no matter which normative theory we are taking into consideration, its primary purpose is to ask questions and construct theories that focus our attention on what is desirable and ideal - in other words how business should be organised to best serve all the

⁹⁴ Smith (2009, pg. 7) points out that this type of critique is perhaps misplaced, since “abstracting ourselves from the conventional norms of business practice is exactly the sort of endeavour that helps us question whether what is done in business ought to be changed.” He goes on to argue that doing so also helps to eliminate bias and prejudice and limits conflicts of interest.

stakeholders involved while still operating within a capitalist free-market system.

As mentioned above, there are three dominant normative ethical theories that are most often brought up in the context of business ethics. I will touch on these again as I delve into the idea of a reconciliation of Foucault's ethics with contemporary business ethics. However, I feel it is necessary to sketch a quick outline here of the three theories before I proceed with a more Foucault-focused discussion:

In a nutshell, approaches based in virtue ethics consider questions related to how we should live, and emphasise the character of moral agents as the driving force behind ethical conduct - conduct that is regarded as reflective of the qualities of a good life (Smith, 2009, pg. 4-5; Chakrabarty and Bass, 2013, pg. 10). In organisational terms, "virtue ethics should provide organisations with guidance for practices based on virtue in which the internal moral character is emphasised" (Chakrabarty and Bass, 2013, pg. 10).

According to Smith (2009, pg. 5) consequentialists are also interested in defining some of the basic characteristics of human welfare, but they tend to emphasise the limits of actions and behaviours over moral character - they focus on the utilitarian outcomes of actions, tying beneficial outcomes to ethics. In business then, consequentialists would consider the costs and benefits of the outcome of a certain course of action as opposed to the costs and benefits of the action itself. In other words policies and procedures that deliver the best results for the organisation, its employees, customers and community, are considered the most desirable and ethical.

Deontological ethics on the other hand "emphasises ethical actions driven by adherence to institutional rules, regulations, laws and norms" (Chakrabarty and Bass, 2013, pg. 10). This means that in organisations, ethical actions are carried out in accordance with socially accepted norms and the focus is on the responsibility a business has towards all of its stakeholders as opposed to the moral character of the organisation or the outcomes of its actions. A deontological approach "emphasises institutional, legal, and social guidelines to guide ethical behaviour within the organisation and in its relationships with clients, the community, and the environment" (Chakrabarty and Bass, 2013, pg. 10).

5.2.1.1. Consequentialism and the Birth of Modern Business Ethics

Each of the normative approaches mentioned in the preceding have of course shaped, and have been shaped by, the capitalist societies of the West. The first of the normative approaches I would like to discuss is consequentialism or utilitarianism, since:

the social ethics and social policy of modern welfare states are based on principles and ideals introduced and developed by the utilitarian philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries...Public decision-making has in the majority of twentieth-century Western countries been founded on roughly utilitarian

ideals, that is, on the idea that the happiness of society at large outweighs the happiness of a few privileged individuals” (Häyry, 1994, pg. 1).

It is no accident then that the very same Jeremy Bentham, whose panopticon was a central analytical point of focus for Foucault when he outlined his thoughts on power and discipline, is also a central figure in consequentialism or utilitarianism,⁹⁵ since he was a contemporary of Adam Smith⁹⁶ and was therefore caught up in the same Enlightenment paradigm shift that Foucault was so interested in.⁹⁷ It is also with this historical shift in the eighteenth century and with Adam Smith’s writings on economics and the markets, that the debate about state interventionism in the economy and the free market really started to take hold, and it is a debate which still colours our views on economics, politics and, by proxy, broader society and culture too. Although utilitarianism can trace its origins to several philosophers,⁹⁸ such as David Hume and Thomas Hobbes, Jeremy Bentham is nonetheless credited with being pivotal in its conception.

According to Bertrand Russel (1945, pg. 774), Bentham became interested in politics and ethics by way of his studies into law. Bentham based his utilitarian philosophy on two principles, namely the “association principle” and “the greatest happiness principle”. The former he saw as the basic principle of psychology. “He recognises association of ideas and language, and also association of ideas and ideas. By means of this principle he aims at a deterministic account of mental occurrences” (Russel, 1945, pg. 774). Russel goes on to say that Bentham regarded determinism in psychology as important because he wanted to establish a “code of laws”, and indeed a social system that would make people act in virtuous ways automatically. The second principle, the happiness principle, necessarily stemmed from this first one, since Bentham now found himself in a position where he needed to define virtuous action. “Bentham maintained that what is good is pleasure or happiness - he used these words as synonyms - and what is bad is pain. Therefore one

⁹⁵ In fact, according to Brunon-Ernst (2012, pg. 1- 2) there is evidence that Foucault had read, and was influenced by Bentham well beyond his studies of discipline and power. She tells how two French scholars, Jean-Pierre Cléro and Christian Laval, decided to translate Bentham’s work on utilitarianism into French in the 1990’s. This set off intense new interest in Bentham’s work in France, and sparked a study into the relationship between his work and that of Foucault. This led to Laval making a speech at the *Bentham and France Symposium* in 2006, wherein he showed, through a careful study of *The Birth of Biopolitics*, that Foucault had in fact read Bentham beyond the *Panopticon* writings and that “there were similarities between Bentham’s utilitarianism and the conceptual grid Foucault used to analyse biopolitics” (Brunon-Ernst, 2012, pg. 2).

⁹⁶ This is not to say that Adam Smith was a utilitarian. In fact, “Adam Smith is singled out as the only exception to the general run of classical economists, for he had a moral philosophy of his own which in some respects appears to be in contrast with the utilitarian outlook” (Hollander, 2016, pg. 2). That said, there is considerable debate around this issue, and there are several theorists (like John Rawls) who argue that in the end, all things considered, Adam Smith leans more towards utilitarianism than anything else.

⁹⁷ What is arising out of the cybershift with its libertarian leanings towards the decentralisation of financial systems, its disillusionment with the inequalities resulting from neoliberal capitalism, and the fear of human obsolescence as AI and other technologies becomes more ubiquitous in all industries, is as yet unclear. What is exceedingly clear is that there is a major paradigm shift afoot, a shift which is also being propelled in part by the climate change crisis.

⁹⁸ There are of course also several approaches within utilitarianism - anthropological, epistemological, ethico-normative and technico-political for example (Brunon-Ernst, 2012, pg. 3).

state of affairs is better than another if it involves a greater balance of pleasure over pain, or a smaller balance of pain over pleasure. Of all possible states of affairs, that one is best which involves the greatest balance of pleasure over pain” (Russel, 1945, pg. 775). Russel goes on to argue that Bentham’s theory in and of itself was not anything groundbreaking or new as such, but that his “vigorous application” of it in various practical contexts was what gave it merit. Bentham argued that each person always pursues what he believes to be his own happiness, in addition to the fact that happiness in general is the greatest good. What this translates into is that the job of the State, or the law, is to establish a balance between the public interest and individual interests. “It is to the public interest that I should abstain from theft, but it is only to my interest where there is an effective criminal law. Thus the criminal law is a method of making the interests of the individual coincide with those of the community; that is its justification” (Russel, 1945, pg. 775). A balance of interests therefore gives rise to the moral order. There are some obvious issues with this line of argument, which have been pointed out time and again by many critics of Bentham, such as the question as to the interests of the lawmakers. If every individual always pursues his own pleasures, how can we assure that legislators will pursue the interests of all?

According to Bertrand Russel (1945, pg. 779)

Ethics has a two-fold purpose: First, to find a criterion by which to distinguish good and bad desires; second, by means of praise and blame, to promote good desires and discourage such as are bad. The ethical part of the utilitarian doctrine, which is logically independent of the psychological part, says: Those desires and those actions are good which in fact promote general happiness. This need not be the *intention* of an action, but only its *effect*.

An obvious issue with this type of argument can be illustrated by looking to the first impeachment of former US president Donald Trump in late 2019. Lawmakers representing the Democratic Party of the United States brought articles of impeachment against him on the grounds that he asked a foreign government (Ukraine) to dig up dirt on his domestic political rival, former Vice-President Joe Biden, in return for a military aid package to the tune of \$35 million. He is alleged to have purposely held up military aid (which the Congress had allocated and approved for Ukraine in their ongoing conflict with Russia), until they could produce the goods on Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden. (The younger Biden had held a controversial position on the board of a major Ukrainian energy firm in the past.) The intention was to sink Biden’s campaign and to so influence the outcome of the upcoming 2020 presidential election. Amongst the defences the Republican Party tried to counter these allegations with, was that the aid had eventually been released and Ukraine received it without even knowing that Trump had held it up. In other words no harm, no foul, and therefore nothing unethical happened. It is the outcome that matters, not the intention. The obvious counterargument to this from the Democrats was that the intention was to extort a foreign government, and the outcome, that they received the aid in the end, after it had started to become clear that the whole scheme would be public soon, does not in fact make the act itself any less unethical. Extortion remains extortion, regardless of whether it was successful in its outcome or not.

Another common objection to the utilitarian line of thinking is that freedom in this context starts to entail

the “unhindered pursuit of individual will and competence” (Kelemen and Peltonen, 2001, pg. 155). If the moral life means single-mindedly pursuing a personal desire for happiness and fulfilment, then the actions that cause us to feel guilty or unhappy are not aligned with the optimal application of our individual abilities. Moreover, the social rules and norms that define what is right and what is wrong then exist only to help us choose the course of action that will maximise our pleasure and remove the obstacles to our individual freedom (Kelemen and Peltonen, 2001, pg. 155).

This, and other responses to and issues with utilitarianism, and broadly consequentialism, would at this point entail a discussion that warrants a whole new doctoral thesis. However, I point to utilitarianism here for the purpose of establishing that it was a predominant ethical theory at the time that the Enlightenment shift occurred, in particular as regards politics, economics and business, and that helped lay the groundwork for neoliberalism, which is of course what led Foucault to develop many of his views, although Foucault himself was of course never a utilitarian himself.

According to Snoeyenbos and Humber (1999, pg. 17), utilitarianism provides a basis for social policy and economics in free market capitalist societies by assuming that the rational person in such a society will “act to maximise his or her own self-interest”, that “price is the exchange value of one good in terms of another”, and that value is measurable and based on individual preference. They state that “a long line of economists, from Adam Smith to Milton Friedman, argue that the best way to organise the exchange of goods is to let people trade freely with whatever resources they possess, because doing so maximises overall utility. These economists provide a utilitarian justification for the free market” (Snoeyenbos and Humber, 1999, pg. 23). Moreover, maximising benefits while minimising costs, in other words the “profit motive” as it is referred to quite often in business literature, squares up with utilitarianism in that it narrows down business choices to the ones that provide the maximum amount of benefit for all stakeholders, at the lowest possible cost. This forms the basis of what every person who has ever been in business is extremely familiar with, namely the cost-benefit analysis. This manner of analysis has then of course also seeped into the psyche of homo economicus. Snoeyenbos and Humber (1999, pg. 24) give an example of this when they argue that utilitarians have developed some very clever ways of attributing monetary value to seemingly unmeasurable things like aesthetic value, health, and even human life. One only needs to look to the insurance industry to see how that works. Insurance companies place a monetary value on your life based on calculations of how much risk there is to your life through factors such as your personal habits, your job and so on. While this is a decidedly utilitarian type of calculation, it also serves to highlight how, with the rise of industry and the free market, Western societies increasingly blurred the lines between economy, state and society, and commoditised many aspects of government as well as human living. This then became a central tenet of neoliberalism - human conduct became increasingly transactional, with the decision-making processes underlying that transactional conduct often being based on a utilitarian cost versus benefit type of calculation.⁹⁹ Or, as Astroulakis (2014, pg. 102) puts it:

⁹⁹ Of course this also lies at the heart of Foucault’s description of homo economicus as an entrepreneur of himself.

“The meta-ethical basis of neoliberal capitalism is economic well-being through a neoliberal market-oriented economy, in which all or almost all human preferences and actions can be expressed in market transactional relations.” This is also of course why theorists like Peter Bloom argue that it is only within neoliberal capitalism that business ethics was able to make its appearance as a specific field of applied ethics. It became a matter of necessity as the boundaries between economy, state and society began to blend together.

One of the core questions that all of the normative theories that predominate business ethics asks relates to what makes a good society and how can it be attained. In neoliberal terms, the answer to this hinges on the growth of an economy within the capitalist free market system. The idea behind this is that as consumption increases, so does the demand for goods and services, which in turn fuels economic growth. This growth then assures the financial and material prosperity of the individuals within such a society. The state should not intervene too much in this process either, and in fact, certain state services under the neoliberal regime became increasingly privatised. In the words of Astroulakis (2014, pg. 102):

By definition, a private market failure is better accepted than a government failure, even in case of non-market goods and services such as social assistance. The normative-ethical basis of neoliberal capitalism is economic growth under private market relations, or in other words, a profit economy with a free private market structure.

Astroulakis (2014, pg. 102-103) goes on to argue that the individual, *homo economicus*, is at the center of neoliberal economic analysis, and when it comes to ethics within the neoliberal capitalist system, what matters is an individual ethics based on self-interest and a business ethics founded on corporate social responsibility. “The sum of individuals comprises the society and the sum of business units comprises the economy” (Astroulakis, 2014, pg. 103). In other words, ethics in neoliberal capitalist societies can roughly be divided into two levels, that of the individual, and that of the social. The former is concerned with *homo economicus* - what makes a good or a bad action? What makes a person ethical? The latter is concerned with what it means to live a good life, how society should be structured so as to be ethical, and what does it take to live a good life within society? This entering of the individual, of *homo economicus* into the neoliberal capitalist system, and particularly as it pertains to ethics, becomes particularly evident when one reads the prevailing business literature, or when you visit the business section of a bookstore. Magazines are crammed with articles on leadership, and practically every so-called business guru has penned a treatise on leadership. From within all of this focus on leadership in business, the question of what makes a moral or ethical leader arises frequently. Moreover, business and management studies conducted throughout the last few decades and across a spectrum of companies and industries have shown that there is concern regarding the need for ethical leadership in both the private and the public sectors, and an emphasis on leaders being able to actually exhibit their moral values (Bloom, 2017, pg. 126). Bloom (2017, pg. 126) argues that the neoliberal capitalist system has in fact been responsible for giving rise to the idea of the “transformative individual”, a leader who can make up for the moral

deficiencies posed by the system itself. He (pg. 126-127) explains this as follows:

If capitalism appears over-competitive and ultimately amoral, then its leaders must simply work even harder to reflect opposite values of cooperation and care for others. They must put themselves forward as a public example that is not only necessary but utterly possible. Increasingly, this leadership mentality is not reserved for elites but universally expected - as everyone must in some capacity take responsibility for becoming a 'moral leader' for themselves...neoliberalism helps produce moral subjects who gain a sense of continual perverse enjoyment in accepting the immoral status quo with a knowing, world-weary laugh. They go to work, follow orders and accept the free market with the belief that they are morally superior to this hyper-capitalist order that they must invariably and unstintingly submit to.

In the third chapter I went to some lengths to discuss the subjectification and subjectivation of homo economicus, but I did not go into how homo economicus is made into an ethical subject, particularly in the workplace. I therefore want to explore this idea of the constitution of the ethical subject within the Western neoliberal capitalist (managerialist) system. To this end I think it is time to bring Foucault back, to try to understand how homo economicus is able to constitute himself as a moral or ethical actor.

5.2.2. Homo Economicus as an Ethical Subject

In order to explore this question in detail, it would help to remember that labouring homo economicus is a subject at the centre of four types of technologies, as expounded by Foucault.

First of all, there are the technologies of production, whereby a worker is able to produce, transform and manipulate for example situations, information, data, and his or her immediate working environment. Then there are the technologies of sign systems, whereby a worker or a manager is able to use signs, symbols and discourses to contribute to the culture and working environment he finds himself in, whilst bringing with him the discourses and narratives of his past, his religion and his societal culture, all of which have helped to shape his identity. In the third place, we have the technologies of power. These technologies act upon the worker through forms of domination as exerted by the organisation, its codes, its culture, and so on. These technologies also allow workers to exert influence over others, and over their environment. A worker has the freedom to resist and to produce relations of power and domination. In the last place, we have the technologies of the self, whereby the working individual has a relationship of the self to the self, and this then forms the basis for his ethical and moral being. Thus he is always situated within a social and organisational context which shapes him, but which he or she also helps to shape.

Ibarra-Colado et al. (2006, pg. 46) ask the all-important question that follows on from this, which is that given the above, what exactly does it mean for a manager or a worker in an organisation to be an active ethical subject?

First we need to understand what the organisation looks like within neoliberal capitalism. As I noted in the third chapter of this thesis, the neoliberal tendency for the state to take the backseat and let the free market regulate itself to a large extent resulted in corporations becoming a fundamental unit positioned between the state and the individual. This led to the falling away of the old Taylorist and Fordist management practices that preceded neoliberal capitalism, and allowed managerialism to take hold in their place. Under managerialism, companies began to focus on their bottom line, and moral decision-making was largely done in a utilitarian fashion of weighing up costs and benefits, always taking into account that profit is the reason for a company's existence to begin with. A strong belief took hold that generating wealth and building a strong economy in the process is, at the end of the day, also what is best for society, family and so on. Managers within the neoliberal managerialist corporation of the late twentieth century thus saw their primary duty as being to that of the company's stockholders, but they also saw themselves as having a moral duty to look after the wellbeing of other stakeholders in the firm, and particularly the employees, since the wellbeing of employees is directly correlated with productivity and the bottom line. The organisation of this period therefore gained in influence and power and the state increasingly became vilified if it overstepped the line to interfere with the running of the free market.

As far as the workers in the managerial organisation were concerned, certain human characteristics such as the ability to be compassionate, to empathise and so on, became transactional. Homo economicus will weigh up the costs and benefits of actions in terms of trade-offs and decide if it is "worth it". This rationality of course had a profound impact on business ethics, with many academics and business leaders alike looking for ways in which to counteract the often cut-throat environment this engendered. Peter Bloom (2017, pg. 127-128) argues that this resulted in "the manufacturing of a moralised subject". Homo economicus, in addition to constituting himself as an entrepreneur of the self, also now constitutes himself as a moral leader of and for himself. He crafts his subjectivity around a belief in his own potential moral value which, in turn, "encourages a selfhood that invests in the non market ideals of cooperation, care and social justice - even if they are only an impossible dream to strive toward." If Bloom (2017, pg. 128-129) is indeed correct in his assertion that homo economicus is essentially a kind of "social entrepreneur" who is responsible for using his or her market skills and innovative talents to make capitalism more socially just", then, just like with the valorisation of individual competence in the workplace,¹⁰⁰ this valorisation of morality also becomes a disciplinary and biopolitical tool of sorts. Bloom (2017, pg. 129) explains "It is not enough to merely follow the rules. Rather, one must be willing to 'fight the power' for the sake of social justice. This places the onus of the system's overall goodness squarely on the shoulders of individuals." He then goes on to argue that under neoliberalism there is a curious kind of "ethics of rule-breaking" at play, whereby individuals are encouraged to bend the rules so as to try to shine a light on the moral shortcomings of the neoliberal capitalist regime. This is a double-edged sword in the sense that individuals have the freedom to resist the status quo but in the process are made "ethically complicit and therefore accountable" within as well as for the whole system. "If neoliberalism is inherently

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 3 pg. 19-20 for the discussion on homo economicus and competence.

immoral, then the blame lies at least partially if not mostly with the failure of people to normatively challenge and reform it. Here, what is crucial is to personally use neoliberal techniques of accounting and optimisation in order to continually enhance one's individual positive impact on the community and world" (Bloom, 2017, pg. 129). Thus this *burden of systemic ethical responsibility* that the neoliberal individual carries becomes a force in his subjectivation. Homo economicus must not only take responsibility for himself and ensure that he is not a burden on society through failure as a labouring subject, but he must also take responsibility for identifying moral shortcomings in the system and work to change them - and he has to accomplish all of this from within the confines of the system, without too many overt appeals calling for intervention from the State.

In the third chapter of this thesis, I went to some lengths to discuss homo economicus, as described by Foucault, but I did not draw that through to Foucault's ethics. It is worth mentioning here that Foucault also recognised this burden of systemic responsibility that was thrust onto homo economicus, and I believe that this eventually became part of the driving force behind his exploration of the care of the self. In *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008, pg. 246) Foucault writes:

In short, the economic grid is not applied in this case in order to understand social processes and make them intelligible; it involves anchoring and justifying a permanent political criticism of political and governmental action. It involves scrutinizing every action of the public authorities in terms of the game of supply and demand, in terms of efficiency with regard to the particular elements of this game, and in terms of the cost of intervention by the public authorities in the field of the market. In short, it involves criticism of the governmentality actually exercised which is not just a political or juridical criticism; it is a market criticism, the cynicism of a market criticism opposed to the action of public authorities.

Later on (pg.270-271), he adds: "*Homo œconomicus* is someone who is eminently governable. From being the intangible partner of *laissez-faire*, *homo œconomicus* now becomes the correlate of a governmentality which will act on the environment and systematically modify its variables."

The fact of the matter is that this idea of bearing all of the above-mentioned responsibilities that homo economicus is saddled with under neoliberal capitalism, coupled with the decrease in reliance on Church and State to prescribe and guide morality and ethics in modern times, has resulted in a human subject that is somewhat unmoored or rudderless. Foucault's answer to dealing with this unmooring of course lies within the idea of the care of the self. In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2005b, pg. 540), in a piece at the end of the book titled *Course Context*, Frédéric Gros talks about "ethical distance" in Foucault's analysis of the Stoics, and Epictetus and Seneca in particular. This is also exactly the thing that allows homo economicus to be able to bear these burdens - even the one that requires him to be ethically responsible for the the very system that dominates him and oppresses him. This ethical distancing involves...

...not letting yourself be entirely occupied by your activities, not identifying your life with your function, not taking yourself for Caesar, but really knowing that you are the holder of a precise and temporary assignment...It involves above all...not trying to establish what you are on the basis of the system of rights and obligations which differentiate and situate you with regard to others, but rather questioning yourself

about what you are in order to infer from this what is fitting to do, either in general or in this and that circumstance, but ultimately according to the functions that you have to exercise...The relationship to self does not detach the individual from any form of activity in the realm of the city-state, the family or friendship; it opens up, rather...an intervallic between those activities he exercises and what constitutes him as the subject of these activities; this “ethical distance” is what enables him not to feel deprived of what will be taken from him by circumstances; it is what enables him to do more than what is contained in the definition of the function (Foucault, 2005b, pg. 539-540).

Of course achieving this ethical distance also very much hinges upon the relationship of the self to the self, and upon what Foucault calls an “ethics of victory over oneself”:

In laying down the principle of the conversion to oneself, the culture of the self fashions an ethic that is and always remains an ethic of domination, of the mastery and superiority of the self over the self...The objective to be reached is therefore a relationship to the self which is at the same time a relationship of sovereignty and respect, of mastery of the self and modesty towards the self, of victory asserted over the self and by the self, and of fears experienced by the self and before the self (Foucault, 2005b, pg. 540).

In the context of the modern manager, this would entail a kind of exercise of the self that allows him/her to occupy their management role at work, but to not allow that role to determine their sense of self. Living for the role and forgetting one’s own identity, values and so forth in the process, means having lost yourself in the job. Gros (in Foucault, 2005b, pg. 541) notes that:

What one takes on in a public office or employment is not a social identity. I temporarily fulfill a role, a function of command, while knowing that the only thing I must and can truly command is myself. And if I am deprived of the command of others, I will not be deprived of this command over myself. This detachment thus enables one to fulfill a function, without ever making it one’s own affair, performing only what is part of its definition, and by dispensing these social roles and their content from a constituent relationship to the self.

It is therefore the care of the self, this mastery of the self over the self that limits an individual’s ambitions and yet still enables him to survive and even thrive in a world where he has to be competitive, play by the rules and also take moral and ethical responsibility for the very system within which he is required to operate.

It is within this neoliberal capitalist system then that we also see a kind of blending of the public and the private sectors, wherein markets and market thinking are introduced into several areas of state responsibility so as to “promote an ideology of autonomy and choice” (Pemberton, 2009, pg. 258). In other words (and as I pointed out in chapter 3) neoliberal governmentality actively creates what Pemberton (2009, pg. 258) refers to as “marketed behaviour” across the public sector as well. Neoliberalism therefore sees a shift happening whereby the burden of welfare largely becomes marketed and the State gets a corporate veneer so to speak, leaving homo economicus, the neoliberal individual, as well as businesses, to take on some of the responsibilities for welfare that were previously in the purview of the state in Western democracies.

It is no wonder then that from this neoliberal environment business ethics rose to importance and theorists began to search for ways in which normative ethical theories like utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics could be applied to business ethics. I want to suggest here that a close study of Foucault's work, particularly because he did such a thoroughgoing analysis of the workings and effects of neoliberalism and homo economicus, can provide us with quite a comprehensive approach to business ethics. This would be an approach that avoids resorting to a singular reliance on any one of these approaches. From the basis of this then, I will try to highlight a path ahead for business ethics studies as we navigate what is on the way towards becoming a post-neoliberal environment, due to the cybershift and some of the systemic changes it will ultimately bring forth.

5.2.3. A Foucauldian Approach to Business Ethics in the Era of Managerialism

For Foucault ethics entails the ongoing constitution of the subject, the self, through his own work on himself. Morality on the other hand is associated with rules and norms and the regulation of human conduct and behaviour (Kelemen and Peltonen, 2001, pg. 154), or, put differently, "For Foucault ethics refers to an explicit attempt to shape oneself into a moral subject whereas morality is understood as hidden normativity of seemingly neutral human science knowledge and expert practice" (Kelemen and Peltonen, 2001, pg.160). From the Foucauldian perspective ethics is therefore not the property of the individual, since being an active ethical subject means positing that ethical subjectivity within a framework of organisational structures and norms. This allows us to cautiously accept that codes of ethical conduct are part and parcel of the subjectivation of the labourer within the organisation. These codes act upon every worker, throughout every level of organisational hierarchy, and are part of the disciplinary practices employed by the organisation. However, Foucault paves the way for us to analyse, critique and reveal the games of truth that the codes constitute, and to realize when these codes are creating docile workers and even managers, and when they bureaucratise ethics and finally erode the working individual's ability to be an active ethical subject. In the words of Crane et al. (2008, pg. 312) "Foucault would not suggest that it is possible to be free of the disciplinary forces of codes, but that to act ethically, one has to look to how one can constitute oneself as an active moral agent in the face of them." In other words, Foucault's ethical worker or manager emerges in relation to or sometimes even in opposition to the organisational codes, rules and norms that seek to dictate what he or she should be.¹⁰¹ He or she is "the intersection between acts that have to be regulated and rules for what ought to be done"

¹⁰¹ This of course is exactly what Peter Bloom points out as problematic in neoliberal managerialism. It's the paradox whereby homo economicus is expected to oppose these norms, and to therefore take responsibility for making the whole neoliberal capitalist system into something ethical.

(Foucault, 1994c, pg. 237), but at the same time he or she is also a free moral agent. Foucault (1994c, pg. 284-286) says that freedom is the ontological condition of ethics, which is the conscious practice of freedom. Thus the ethical worker will not be a slave to the organisation's technologies of control and domination, but neither will he be a slave to his own appetites and desires. Ibarra-Colado et al. (2006, pg. 47) note that Foucault's concern with freedom does not give a subject the room to do what he or she wants or desires. Rather, it is a subject whose "freedom is both located and constituted in relations of power" and it is "this focus on power that enables a relation to be established between individual morality and organisational ethics."

This approach then clearly stands in opposition to compliance-based deontological ethical theories in business ethics.

Aside from deontological approaches to business ethics, another approach that is commonly subscribed to by managers is a values-based approach, whereby organisations define the organisational values that employees are supposed to commit to and espouse. The idea behind such an approach to ethics is that they provide an ethical framework that is based on consensus rather than obligation. However, this still implies some sort of a normalisation of behaviours in organisations, and has the effect of simply changing the mode of subjection from coercion to enablement (Crane et al., 2008, pg. 312). That is not to say that a values-based approach should be discarded either, but a Foucauldian approach would redirect the locus of business ethics away from the external, the organisation, from being shaped or formed by the organisation, to self-formation. "Instead of encouraging employees to live up to a set of core values by training them in what the organisation stands for, or even facilitating constructive criticism of these values in order to generate a more adaptive set of values, the focus would be on providing an enabling environment that facilitated active, creative and innovative processes of subjective self-formation" (Crane et al., 2008, pg. 313). Ethics therefore becomes a lived experience, an engaged practice, something which the manager is trained in by the external forces of the organisation, but it is also internalised, rather than being a mere response to externally constructed value statements or codes of conduct. This is something that is necessitated by the neoliberal capitalist environment that business is rooted in today.

According to Munro (2014, pg. 1130) what Foucault managed to do was to bring to light "a fundamental contradiction within the neoliberal discourse between its pursuit of a free economic and political subject and at the same time a subject that will respond only according to an economic rationality of utility maximisation and self-investment, a self that in his words was 'eminently governable'". But, as I noted in the preceding discussion, this subject (*homo economicus*), while being eminently governable, is also made to be morally responsible to the system as well as for it. Failing to invest in himself and to succeed within the system is a moral failing in that he then becomes a burden on the system, and yet, he is also expected to invest in the non-market ideals of cooperation, care and social justice, and to then use that social capital to bring about fairness and justice within the system itself. This is where the curious ethics of rule-

breaking comes into play as well. Homo economicus is supposed to bend the rules so as to highlight the moral shortcomings of the neoliberal capitalist system, but all the while he must also ensure that he succeeds at all costs on a personal level, so as not to become a failure and a burden on the system, which is a moral failing. With neoliberal capitalism then morality becomes inextricably entwined not only with labour, money and career progression, but also with resistance to the system. This is what I referred to in the previous section as homo economicus's burden of systemic ethical responsibility. Bone (2013, pg. 653), drawing on the work of Habermas, argues that with this melding of morality and money what has resulted is a narrowing of our wider value system, causing the imperatives and the instrumentalism of neoliberal capitalism to colonise wider culture. He then goes on to state that "the hyper-individualism at the heart of the neoliberal ideology also provides a convenient mechanism by which the corporate world can denounce its alleged 'villains' as being individual malefactors, as opposed to the product of a system that normalises a culture of impunity and amorality amongst many of its practitioners..." (pg. 657-658). The problem with placing the responsibility for the morality or the moral failings of the entire system on the individual is that this causes a type of tension whereby individuals within organisations find themselves in competition with one another, and failure is considered a detriment to the entire system. This creates an environment within which the temptation to bend or break the rules in order to compete and get ahead regardless of the moral and ethical implications is strong, whilst at the same time, if one follows the logic of Peter Bloom's argument, bending the rules is also encouraged so as to highlight and resist the moral and ethical shortcomings of the system. Thus, each time a market participant engages in questionable behaviour, this provides both a rationale and a legitimation for others to follow suit, whilst at the same time leaving them wrestling with the obligation to ensure social justice. Not only this, but the risk of becoming the scapegoat and taking the fall for the failings of the system increases exponentially, leading to failure and becoming a 'burden' on the very system responsible for that failure.

When one considers the nature of neoliberal capitalism and the labouring subject it produces, Foucault's approach to ethics indeed offers some insight as to how to make sense of this tension while laying the groundwork for another perspective or approach to contemporary business ethics that is as yet fairly unexplored.

Three interconnected concepts laid out by Foucault spring to mind immediately as being of import to this groundwork towards a new approach to business ethics. These are *askēsis*, *parrhesia* and the care of the self.

As discussed in the chapter leading up to this one, Foucault follows the trajectory of the practice of asceticism from Ancient philosophy, through its adoption into Christianity, and on to modernity. It should be noted here however that Foucault explicitly avoids using the word 'asceticism' and prefers to stick to the Greek *askēsis*. He does this because the Greek term encompasses more of the idea of spiritual exercises or technologies of the self, and has less of a religious connotation (as relates to practices of

renunciation and so on) and can be transposed more broadly into moral and philosophical systems in addition to religious systems. Over and above this, it encompasses the listening to and reception of true discourses and then putting them to work in order to transform them into ethos. He also refers to ‘ascetics’, which he describes as the “more or less coordinated set of exercises that are available, recommended, and even obligatory, and anyway utilisable by individuals in a moral, philosophical, and religious systemic order to achieve a definite spiritual objective. By ‘spiritual objective’ I understand a certain transformation, a certain transfiguration of themselves as subjects, as subjects of action and as subjects of true knowledge” (Foucault, 2005b, pg. 416-417). Putting the implications of Foucault’s discussions on *askēsis* for knowledge and the truth aside for the moment, I want to look into an implication I have as yet left unexplored, and which is pertinent to the potential impact Foucault’s work could have on organisational studies and business ethics.

Halsall and Brown (2012) argue that the Foucauldian analysis of *askēsis* frees the idea of asceticism from its religious context and brings it into a cultural context. They make reference to Foucault’s reading of Hadot (Foucault, 2005b, pg. 416-419) wherein he argues that the Ancients’ understanding of *askēsis* as a form of spiritual exercise does not necessarily imply a metaphysical or religious sense as it came to be understood later, in Christianity. These exercises were rather practical, required dedication and training to execute, and were in essence lived practices. In other words they were spiritual “because they involved the entire spirit, one’s whole way of being” (Halsall and Brown, 2012, pg. 240). Within this interpretation of asceticism then, these exercises make it a cultural endeavour as much as a religious one since it involves a programme of training and discipline with the purpose of shaping the self into a desired ideal of some sort. It is this realisation, that *askēsis* is a work of the self upon the self, but within a broader cultural context (as well as within a religious context in certain circumstances) that allows us to understand how working subjects constitute themselves within organisational cultures.

Halsall and Brown (2012, pg. 234) argue that asceticism is in fact nothing new in management thought. They refer to Charles Handy, who wrote a chapter titled ‘Make Your Business a Monastery’ in one of his books. In this chapter, Handy describes how a Benedictine monk spoke at an executive seminar for an audience of hotel managers from a large well-known hotel chain. Another management scholar, Craig Galbraith, also subsequently penned a book¹⁰² on the lessons that corporate management can learn from the teachings and rules of St Benedict in the Benedictine Order of the Catholic Church, whereas Moberg and Calkins, in an article in the *Journal of Business Ethics*,¹⁰³ look at how the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola can be transposed into business ethics. There are a variety of justifications underlying the

¹⁰² *The Benedictine Rule of Leadership: Classic Management Secrets You Can Use Today*. 2004. Newton Abbot: Adams Media.

¹⁰³ Moberg, D. and Calkins, M. (2001). Reflection in Business Ethics: Insights from St Ignatius. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 33(3), 257-270.

transposition of this kind of asceticism rooted in religion onto the realm of business and corporate culture, and perhaps the most poignant underlying cause for this lies in the tension discussed above. It is, at least in part, an attempt at equipping homo economicus with the tools with which to navigate this tension - to cope with the urge to get ahead at all costs in a seemingly amoral environment that justifies doing so, whilst simultaneously carrying the burden of systemic ethical responsibility, as well as being true to his own personal moral framework. In more specific terms however, in the case of Handy, the idea was to inject meaning and moral purpose (in the sense of doing good) into a task which could be seen as inherently amoral. It is a kind of backlash if you will against the idea that business is a cold and callous enterprise that puts profit over people. Galbraith on the other hand, explicitly refers to a process of formation of the self. The Benedictine teachings are supposed to teach values and vision, to instil a way of thinking in employees that line up with corporate interests. As Halsall and Brown (2012, pg. 234) put it: "In the Benedictine concept of 'formation' of the individual to be fit for a corporate vision, a process going beyond 'mere' training, we are, then, supposed to see business as imbued with a 'higher' purpose, which the employee has to internalise." Bell and Taylor (2015, pg. 333) also give some examples of organisations that have taken the ascetic route to try to motivate employees and give them a sense of belonging and meaning in their work. They cite the example of Xerox, which, in a past attempt to increase the extent of their employees' spiritual awareness through the introduction of spiritual-cultural practices, sent a team of senior executives to a Native American desert retreat in New Mexico. And in the UK and the USA there are companies that employ chaplains to provide spiritual counselling on site. Business schools are also not exempt from this trend. An example is the International Program in Practicing Management at the Lancaster University School of Management, which has participants discussing ethics and spirituality so as to "develop a reflective mindset" (Bell and Taylor, 2015, pg. 333).

It is also no accident that the term 'protestant work ethic' has made its way from the work of Max Weber and into our everyday corporate vernacular, since this is the historical precedent for the types of ascetic thinking we see in contemporary management theory.

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century ushered in great changes to religious beliefs and practices, and it also led to a great shift in how people thought about work. Before the Reformation, work was generally seen as a burden to be carried, a yoke on the shoulders of the ordinary man. However, some of the prominent reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin propagated the idea that work, and manual labour in particular, had inherent value and was a dignified exercise (Mudrack and Mason, 2010, pg. 2045). It was Max Weber, in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976), who first made a pertinent connection between religion, money and the world of work. Weber argued that the values of Protestantism had a fundamental impact on the capitalist mode of production. Although he made reference to Luther, it was Calvin's views on the interrelationship between salvation and hard work that he attributed in particular to being at the root of the Protestant work ethic. Calvin saw earthly

rewards like wealth and property as a sign of God's grace if it was obtained through hard work.

Money, after all, represented a source of temptation to wanton self-indulgence, sloth and sensuality. A wealthy person could live a dissolute life of idleness and luxury, or alternatively, an austere and highly disciplined life that resisted hedonistic temptations. In a Calvinistic framework, only the latter response seemed consistent with a state of grace...Protestant work values thus coupled a devotion to hard work with a disciplined asceticism that involved self-denial and the suppression of pleasures in worldly activities (Mudrack and Mason, 2010, pg. 2046).

These Calvinistic values were, according to Weber, the catalyst for the development of the kind of austere capitalism that enveloped Western European economies. This is what his central argument pivoted around, namely that "the values of Protestantism had a significant impact on the capitalist mode of production and, in particular, on the distinctive industrial type found in Western Europe in the nineteenth century" (Bell and Taylor, 2015, pg. 338). It follows from this that the Protestant ethic Weber identified seeped into not just the mode of production and the economy, but it also infiltrated the broader cultural environment, thereby influencing social action and shaping individual attitudes towards the organisation of production in such a way that work came to be seen as a 'calling' - as having a higher purpose. By importing this idea of work as a quasi-religious calling into a secular context, work came to be perceived as a means of gaining salvation and workers were expected to adopt a kind of asceticism that involved self-denial, a suppression of pleasure in worldly things, and a commitment to acting selflessly for the greater good. (Bell and Taylor 2015, pg. 338; Mudrack and Mason, 2010, pg. 2046; Schaltegger and Torgler, 2010, pg.99). Weber saw this as a clear departure from the civilisations of the Greeks and the Romans (except for the Stoics), which viewed work as the purview of slaves, and as something that was dishonourable. The predominant view held by these societies was that the ideal life is a life of self-sufficiency and personal satisfaction. This carried through to medieval times to an extent, where work was regarded as a punishment for man's original sin. It was during the Enlightenment that this changed, and the asceticism spurred on by Calvin and Luther took hold and changed the world of work. Weber (1976, pg. 53) explains this as follows:

In fact, the *summum bonum* of this ethic, the earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life, is above all completely devoid of any eudaemonistic, not to say hedonistic, admixture...Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs. This reversal of what we should call the natural relationship...is evidently as definitely a leading principle of capitalism as it is foreign to all people not under capitalistic influence. At the same time it expresses a type of feeling which is closely connected with certain religious ideas.

It was of course not just the religious influence that shaped labour at that time. There were also certain economic conditions that fed back into the writings and the sermons of the Protestant reformers, for example rapid population growth at the time, serious price inflation, and a high unemployment rate. This led to certain legal reforms to give relief to the poor, as well as educational reforms to increase literacy. With these educational reforms, the teachings of the reformers became more entrenched and this in turn

spilled back into the work ethic as well (Schaltegger and Torgler, 2010, pg. 100).

Work today is of course mostly uncoupled from religion and any overt religious values, but the Protestant work ethic has largely remained because it became culturally ingrained in the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Western) capitalist societies. The very overt asceticism inspired by particularly Calvin largely dissipated during the Industrial Revolution, but did not disappear entirely. Even though the religious emphasis on work as a calling had faded and workers had become mere cogs in the mechanical wheels of Taylor's scientific management practices, the Protestant work ethic, underpinned by Calvinistic values, nonetheless provided the rationale for both the accumulation of capital in this era, as well as the discipline of early factory workers. According to Bell and Taylor (2015, pg. 338), machine and wage discipline were seen as not living up to the task of ensuring that production was maximised and able to operate continuously, even as early as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus, by the start of the twentieth century, companies began to search for a way to establish a kind of social integration or industrial harmony, and in order to achieve this, they turned to religious ideologies.

Philanthropic employers such as Cadbury, Lever Brothers, Wedgwood and Rowntree sought to develop cohesive devices which provided the ideological foundation for the development of a strong corporate culture. Protestant owner-managers sought to foster beliefs that were complementary to the 'psychic component of work discipline'...through conversion or adherence to the religious philosophy of managerial choice, the employee could be transformed from 'pre-industrial labourer' into 'submissive industrial worker' (Bell and Taylor, 2015, pg. 338).

The function of importing religious belief systems into the world of work and industry was therefore to secure commitment from the labour force by providing an ideological justification for their exploitation - a justification that rested on the idea that work is an act of virtue and one of the ways to ensure a smooth transit to salvation. This was the underlying asceticism of both Fordism and Taylorism, systems within which workers were expected to show a commitment to their jobs that went beyond individual economic self-interest, but at the same time to show restraint in the consumption of goods. Not only that, but they were expected to some degree to eradicate their sense of self, to subordinate their will to that of the organisation (Bell and Taylor, 2015, pg. 338; Flood, 2004, pg. 42). The philosopher Simone Weil experienced the Taylorist factory environment first-hand, and wrote quite a bit about the impact of work on human subjectivity within this system of scientific management. She writes in her *Pre-War Notebook* that through work, man creates a universe around him (Weil, 1970, pg.18). Work is essentially the vehicle through which we get to know the world and through which people get to know themselves. While work under Taylorism was oppressive and exploitative, it also provided a means for going beyond the limits that work imposed on human subjects.

The self can inwardly oppose power and overstep it through detached acceptance, so that work becomes a form of asceticism in that it controls the passions and allows for self-mastery...To avoid being crushed by the mindless, mechanistic machine of the industrial process, she chose to turn work into an ascetic practice

as an act of will and to appropriate the bodily discipline that work demanded (Flood, 2004, pg. 42).

As I discussed at length in the second chapter of this thesis, the conditions for the constitution of the subject in a Taylorist working environment were characterised by the careful arrangement and choreography of the bodies of the workers - the meticulous examination and classification of these bodies that were rendered docile through the incentive of bonuses and higher wages, and the threat of job loss. Workers were kept in order and controlled through hierarchical observation and discourses that appealed to science, but there was also a religious element at play, both insofar as religion was imported into the world of work and ascetic practices and a Protestant work ethic were used as apparatuses in the exercising of disciplinary power.

These then were also the conditions that made certain strategies for coping with and resisting such a mechanistic and arguably dehumanising environment possible. In Chapter 2¹⁰⁴ I discussed the strategies of indifference (when subjects isolate themselves from the rest by not recognising or acknowledging shared social constructs), subordination (where the individual simply follows the orders given to him from above without question), domination (where individuals use power asymmetries and relationships with others to exert control over them to protect their own security), and resistance through distance. We can add the strategy outlined by Simone Weil here, namely a strategy of detached acceptance, which has an ascetic dimension to it. Flood (2004, pg. 43) argues that Weil, in contrast to Descartes, sees thinking as an act, and through action comes the constitution of subjectivity. The ability to accept and reject a situation is in and of itself a form of action, and also a form of empowerment, albeit a weak one. He explains, and goes on to quote Weil, as follows (2004, pg.43-44):

A more fundamental category than thinking is therefore this power to act...or willing, and willing is given expression through action and so through the body. However, this personal power of action is very limited, and the limit of that power is externally imposed. I can only act within the boundaries of contingency or chance...This limit or external constraint on personal power is the existence of an other imposed on the self...Only to the extent that I can exert my will over these contingencies in disengaging from them am I free: 'I am free only to the extent that I can disengage myself'. Indeed, liberty is self-control.

It follows from this that the body then becomes detached from the mind in a certain sense. So while the body is mechanically performing its tasks under the watchful eye of a supervisor with a clipboard and a stopwatch, the mind is left to its own imagination. Thus the physical element of work, the detached repetition of bodily action, becomes a kind of ascetic process in the Taylorist workplace, allowing the individual to “transcend the experience of enslavement in depersonalising conditions” (Flood, 2004, pg. 46), and indeed to obtain a sense of freedom.

Managers and shop-floor workers in a factory were therefore not just passive victims of the technologies

¹⁰⁴ Page 18

of power produced by the discourses of scientific management. They were constituted as subjects who either supported or resisted these management practices, or both. They were subjects who were able to find a form of liberty in the repetition of physical manual labour, to transcend the work through a strategy of detachment, and so the work itself becomes a kind of *askēsis* - exercises that leave the mind and the spirit free to shape the working subject.

Towards the middle of the twentieth century a sea change started to roll through the world of work. It is here that the seeds of neoliberalism began to sprout, and in terms of corporate management, Taylorism slowly started to give way to managerialism. The cultural revolution of the 1960's in Western economies in particular played a large part in this process, in that a number of countercultures sprang up that rejected the mechanistic nature of factory work under Taylorism. These countercultures tended to place a greater emphasis on self-fulfilment and self-realisation, and rejected traditional forms of authority as well as the institutions and people who supported them. This was the birth of homo economicus, who did not want to be a mere mechanical part in an industrial apparatus and who started to look at all kinds of ways and means to find meaning in work, and in life in general, in an industrialised society. Some of these counterculture movements started to appropriate East Asian and Indian spiritualities and practices, neo-paganist practices, and the "the widespread promotion of new bodily techniques aimed at well-being and self-awareness, and subject-oriented technologies of all sorts that target the self as an object of optimisation...or of cosmological wisdom. These were neo-Durkheimian practices in the sense of elaborating a 'cult of the individual'" (Burchardt, 2017, pg. 135). The world of work did not escape this subsumption of religious and spiritual ideas either, and the Protestant work ethic, so rampant under Taylorism, also came under fire, making way for a new social ethic which intensified towards the 1980's and 1990's and resulted in large part in the 'management guru' phenomenon of the time. Many examples abound of both the uptake of the greater emphasis on the individual, and the lessons from various forms of spirituality and religion in the business world:

John C. Maxwell is a great proponent of focusing on the self to get ahead in the corporate environment, not in the sense of being selfish or self-centered, but rather in the sense of *askēsis*, by means of working on the self. He argues that "If you change yourself and become the kind of person you desire to be, you will begin to view others in a whole new light. And that will change the way you interact in all of your relationships" (Maxwell, 2009, pg. 8). This he refers to as "the lens principle"¹⁰⁵. He also talks about what he calls "the mirror principle" which is basically an exercise of working on the self through a close examination of oneself, as if by looking in a mirror. This is meant to unveil certain truths about ourselves and allow us to cultivate greater self-awareness, a better self-image, more self-honesty, self-improvement, and more self-responsibility (Maxwell, 2009, pg. 8-9).

Noel Tichy and Warren Bennis on the other hand take up the traditional Judeo-Christian interpretation of

¹⁰⁵ Maxwell outlined twenty-five "people principles" which he deemed essential to building great relationship skills, and which would ultimately ensure success.

the concept of judgment and argue that this is a misunderstood concept. They see judgment as something that is not innate, and neither is it 'given' or 'bestowed' from an external source such as the Church. They argue that judgment should be seen as a skill that can be developed and nurtured, and that it is a skill that lies at the core of good leadership. Good leadership decisions come with a process that

begins with the leader recognising the need for a judgment and continues through successful execution. A leader is said to have 'good judgment' when he or she repeatedly makes judgment calls that turn out well. These calls frequently turn out well because the leader has mastered a complex, constantly morphing process that unfolds in several dimensions (Tichy and Bennis, 2009, pg. 153).

They go on to argue that the extent to which a person develops this skill of exercising good judgment depends, in part, on a person's willingness to go on an individual, "intense" inner transformational quest for self-knowledge which entails a commitment to self-learning and a willingness to "look in the mirror", to self-judge if you will (Tichy and Bennis, 2009, pg. 162).

The takeaway from readings of these, amongst many other theorists on leadership, corporate culture and so on, is that from the latter half of the twentieth century a shift occurred in the way in which we approach labour and leadership. No longer is the body of the worker "scientifically" managed on the production line, and only free to constitute himself, to form his identity, only insofar as he can exercise the modes of resistance mentioned above. No longer is he just an object to be known and studied by a supervisor who subsequently judges and categorises him. The new working subject is one who must now also make himself the object of his own knowledge, often as a precondition for reaching the success - the excellence he is expected to reach under neoliberal capitalism and managerialism. In fact, according to Halsall and Brown (2012, pg. 235) "There is...a paradox at the heart of identity formation in the postmodern organisation: the self is, on the one hand, given greater apparent freedom or autonomy than under Taylorist management; on the other hand, this autonomy is accompanied by an imperative for the organisational self to become increasingly concerned with itself as an object of knowledge..."

At the center of this regard of the self as being an object of knowledge then, lies also a shift from the narrower Protestant work ethic based in quasi-religious asceticism, to the broader form of *askēsis* Foucault referred to, that which incorporates not only religious and spiritual practices but also exercises by the self for the self and on the self that contribute actively to its own constitution. Additionally, the secular environment within neoliberal capitalism is often seen to be lacking in value systems, so this adoption of an *askēsis* is an attempt to infuse organisations with values and belief systems in an effort to replace the de-humanising character of the Taylorist workplace with something more humanistic. In the words of Halsall and Brown (2012, pg. 236): "management realise that employees need some form of emotional or symbolic identification, which is supplied by the firm representing itself as a source of Durkheim's 'realm of the sacred'. Unfortunately for the employee seeking such spiritual sustenance, however, this turns out to be just another 'frontier' of control, perhaps more pervasive than under Taylorism." This then is also greatly engendered in all the works of the aforementioned management gurus, who actively preached for a kind of conversion to whichever organisational culture they were

peddling.

At the heart of this process of conversion lies *askēsis* - all the conscious exercises employees have to practice and fulfil in order to be fully integrated into the culture of the organisation (Halsall and Brown, 2012, pg. 237). To be successful within an organisation, homo economicus is therefore expected not only to make himself into a commodity that exists for the bottom line of the corporation he works for, an entrepreneur of the self who does not weigh down either the corporation or broader society, but he is also expected to actively adopt and espouse the values of the company, which is achieved through certain ascetic practices. In practical terms, this may involve participating in team building exercises, attending company training sessions, undergoing performance reviews, amongst many other things. One famous example of this was Crotonville, the management training institute that General Electric CEO Jack Welch invested into heavily when he took over and restructured the company:

Crotonville became the de facto headquarters of Welch's organisational transformation - a place where GE's best and brightest could go to both expand their intellectual horizons and recharge their batteries...Welch considered Crotonville the glue that held the company together through all the change initiatives. Crotonville, he said, served as a "forum for the sharing of the experiences, the aspirations, and, often the frustrations of the tens of thousands of GE leaders who passed through its campus" (Krames, 2009, pg. 46).

The working individual within this regime of managerialism that characterises corporate cultures within the neoliberal capitalist systems of the West thus finds himself constantly trying to balance his own identity with that which he forges through this ascetic conversion process, through *askēsis*. He in fact becomes somewhat split between having to commit to the system, to give himself over to it,¹⁰⁶ whilst simultaneously carrying the responsibility of dis-identifying with and speaking out against any ethical or moral abuses presented by the system. According to Halsall and Brown (2012, pg. 238),

such an interpretation of (organisational) life as a continual commitment to organisational culture is a fundamental aim of *askēsis* as interpreted by Foucault...For the Stoics and even more in later, Christian, forms of *askēsis*, according to Foucault, the aim of the various forms of 'spiritual exercise' undertaken was to reach the stage where 'the test must become a general attitude towards reality'. The end product of *askēsis* is: a 'questioning of the self by the self...knowing what you are capable of, whether you can do a particular kind of thing and see it through...measuring how far you have advanced...

The mechanisms of *askēsis*, through which this process of questioning and self-identification within the organisation occurs have the effect of transforming the employee's "test of commitment to the culture" into a "general attitude" (Halsall and Brown, 2012, pg. 238).

¹⁰⁶ It is worth noting here that some employees will go through the motions of the ascetic exercises, whether they actually buy into the corporate culture or not. This is similar to the strategy employed by many workers under Taylorism- they go through the bodily motions of the work, while their inner self remains detached.

One of these mechanisms of *askēsis* is *parrhesia*. Parrhesia, as discussed in the previous chapter, encompasses exactly this kind of relation of the self to the self, this self-examination. Foucault talks about parrhesiastic games which require one to confirm the truth about oneself:

It is not sufficient to analyse this personal relation of self-understanding as merely deriving from the general principle "*gnothi seauton*" - "know thyself". Of course, in a certain general sense it can be derived from this principle, but we cannot stop at this point. For the various relationships which one has to oneself are embedded in very precise techniques which take the form of spiritual exercises - some of them dealing with deeds, others with states of equilibrium of the soul, others with the flow of representations and so on... In all these different exercises, what is at stake is not the disclosure of a secret which has to be excavated from out of the depths of the soul. What is at stake is the relation of the self to truth or to some rational principles...What we have to underline here is this: if the truth of the self in these exercises is nothing other than the relation of the self to truth, then this truth is not purely theoretical. The truth of the self involves, on the one hand, a set of rational principles which are grounded in general statements of the world, human life, necessity, happiness, freedom, and so on, and, on the other hand, practical rules for behaviour (Foucault, 1983, pg. 65).

Parrhesia is therefore directly linked to the idea of the care of the self. In fact, the ability to self-critique through the practice of recognising the truth for and about yourself becomes a precondition for having morality. Parrhesia is also a necessary condition for care because telling yourself the truth is the basis of being able to care for others, and in leadership it is imperative (Vandekerckhove and Langenberg, 2012, pg. 37, Deslandes, 2012, pg. 326). Moreover, becoming an ethical subject does not just entail actively engaging in practices of the self that are aimed solely at generating a return on an investment in the self, but these practices also ought to be explicitly self-conscious of the fact that they are actively engaged in a process of self-formation in relation to rules of conduct and prevailing cultural norms (Dilts, 2011, pg. 144). In *The Care of the Self* (pg. 68), Foucault says "The task of testing oneself, examining oneself, monitoring oneself in a series of clearly defined exercises, makes the question of truth - the truth concerning what one is, what one does, and what one is capable of doing - central to the formation of the ethical subject." Dilts (2011, pg. 144-145) argues that these practices of the self are akin to the investments in the self that Foucault attributes to homo economicus. Moreover, the practices of the self are necessarily self-conscious of the rules of the truth game or the regime of veridiction under which they can be said to be true practices. He goes on to say that the links between truth, freedom and reality are also expressed in almost the same way within accounts of what makes human capital within neoliberalism, that "Foucault's turn to practices of the self is at least partially prompted by the work of the American neo-liberals".

The idea of parrhesia as a practice of speaking out is also intimately linked to neoliberal capitalism and plays directly into what I have come to term the 'burden of systemic ethical responsibility' which is thrust onto homo economicus as a labouring subject within neoliberal, managerialist regimes. In fact, in the corporate context, and in particular in business ethics writings, company value statements and so on, the idea of "speaking out" is firmly entrenched. We encounter language like "moral duty", "ethical autonomy", "moral impulses", "social responsibility". In other words, a job is never just a job, but rather has a strong

moral dimension which is shaped not just by the company, its culture, value systems and so forth, but also by the broader expectations of society (Solomon, 1991, pg. 363). Thus, when the two value systems (corporate and societal) come into conflict with one another, it falls on homo economicus to right the conflict through speaking out and standing up for what is right, good and moral, to take on the role of parrhesiastes and to speak truth to power. Interestingly, under neoliberal capitalism and the politics of empowerment that arose out of this system, we find that official channels are often created by businesses and government to facilitate the act of telling truth to power, ostensibly to reduce the risk of this action to the individual, and to encourage courage as it were.

Within managerialist and neoliberal regimes, individuals can usually speak up in the face of a moral or ethical wrong being perpetrated by their company, or even within government, through whistleblowing or institutionalised critique (Vandekerckhove and Langenberg, 2012; Weiskopf and Tobias-Miersch, 2016). In fact, over the last three decades or so, there has been a marked increase in the institutionalisation of whistleblowing which is “associated with a proliferation of legal rules, whistleblowing policies that define channels and procedures for raising concerns and classification that are used in distinguishing legitimate and illegitimate speaking-out” (Weiskopf and Tobias-Miersch, 2016, pg. 7). Thus the act of truth-telling becomes regulated, governed to a certain degree, and tend to impose limits on the type of truth-telling that can occur. Under this type of system, whistleblowing then becomes the moral duty of an employee in the face of suspected wrongdoing on the part of an organisation, manager or another employee. In order to protect such a whistleblower from retaliation, there is an institutional framework comprised of various procedures and stipulations that whistleblowers should follow when they come forward.¹⁰⁷ A consequence of this however, is that this type of speaking out is only seen as being legitimate if it has occurred within the right channels as laid out by this institutional framework. “Its truth value and possible reality effect depend on its compliance with the truth game attached to this speech” (Weiskopf and Tobias-Miersch, 2016, pg. 7). Institutionalised critique is therefore somewhat different to parrhesia. As Weiskopf and Tobias-Miersch (2016, pg. 7) note, true parrhesiastic truth-telling would lack institutional support. It would be given freely with great, even life-threatening risk to the speaker, and would not be bound to any form or structural channel. That is not to say that institutionalised critique is devoid of any parrhesiastic element either. The truth-teller in such instances still has to muster the courage to speak out and take a risk in the sense that there are multiple strategies that are often utilised to discourage and discredit whistleblowers. They could, for example, be treated as a pariah, passed up for promotion or even demoted, made the victim of a smear campaign in the aftermath - threatening not life, but perhaps

¹⁰⁷ These include grievance procedures, speak-up policies and procedures, formal whistleblowing channels, anonymous reporting mechanisms, and so forth.

livelihood.¹⁰⁸

Vandekerckhove and Langenberg (2012, pg. 39) argue moreover that this new type of parrhesia, or institutional critique, that we find within neoliberal organisations also takes on an added dimension that was not discussed by Foucault. They make a case for parrhesia not only involving the courage to speak truth to power, but also to hear the truth. This is “because most organisations are layered hierarchically” and consequently “critique might have to travel upwards”. What this means is that when a lower-tier employee reports a wrong to a manager, that manager will need to have the courage to listen and then speak the same truth to their own line manager, and so on. “Hence, with the exception of the first speaker, none of the others can become a parrhesiastes, a courageous speaker, unless they are able to hear the speaker” (Vandekerckhove and Langenberg, 2012, pg. 39). This then often gives rise to employee complaints within organisations that even though they speak out when something unethical is afoot, a person further up the hierarchical ladder will fail to act on it.

As far as the purposeful organisational structuring that is supposed to provide the space or the scope for institutional critique is concerned, these are often incorporated into company ethics programmes and policies, along with value statements, codes of conduct and the like. However, ethics programmes also take something away from parrhesia and impose constraints on parrhesiastes, even though they are designed to appear welcoming of the idea of speaking truth to power. The reason for this is that these programmes are typically focused on compliance, which means, in a nutshell, that the priority for such a programme, often managed by someone with the title of ‘Ethics and Compliance Officer’, is to monitor and correct behaviours in the workplace. In other words, the focus is on making the parrhesiastes fit the mould created by the ethics programme, rather than to address any disagreement with the rules and procedures in place that are meant to facilitate parrhesia. Not only that, but the codes of conduct enshrined in programmes like these often limit what can be discussed, when these things can be discussed, in what forum, and by whom. The result of this is that ethics programmes often don’t leave enough room to raise and address fundamental discontent, and this can give the impression that these programmes are not taken seriously by the organisation, that they are window-dressing at best, or that the management is deaf to what needs to be heard (Vandekerckhove and Langenberg, 2012, pg. 40; Weiskopf and Tobias-Miersch, 2016, pg. 16-17). For parrhesia to be of the most value in an organisation therefore, it needs to be able to occur outside of this type of structuring, unfettered. This however means that the risk

¹⁰⁸ A recent highly publicised case of this is that of Alexander Vindman, the former Director for European Affairs at the United States Security Council, who spoke out against President Donald Trump during his impeachment proceedings in late 2019. He was promptly reassigned to a role of lesser significance at the beginning of 2020, and has since retired, alleging bullying and retaliatory behaviour from Trump himself and certain senior officials in his administration following the impeachment hearings. During the impeachment proceedings Vindman noted that he was able to speak out precisely because the United States offers whistleblower protections under the law. He cited his parents’ heritage and stated that his life would have been threatened if he had spoken out in their native Soviet Union during the same era as when they had fled to the United States.

related to speaking truth to power also increases, and it becomes more akin to what Foucault described as parrhesia, and less of the institutionalised critique described here.

The takeaway from all of this, is that the working subject within a neoliberal capitalist system finds himself in the precarious position of not only being expected to see the truth about himself, to be true to himself as an entrepreneur of himself, but also to recognise the moral shortcomings of his environment and to take responsibility for courageously speaking out against them, often risking his career in the process. He is also required to do so only within the bounds of the structure set out by the system.

So how would homo economicus go about navigating this precarious position he finds himself in? Foucault finds the answer in the idea of the care of the self, which, as I mentioned in the above, is intimately linked to parrhesia.

As I noted in the preceding chapter, the care of the self ethic is not a form of narcissism in the least, as it is also directly related to a concern for others. The government of oneself carries equal weight to one's government of others, and therefore lies at the heart of the constitution of the subject as a moral or ethical being. However, governing oneself, and by proxy leading others, cannot be done successfully without the parrhesiastic element, without speaking with candour and assessing oneself with equal candour. Neither can a parrhesiastes act without an underlying moral awareness at the base of his decision to do so.

Moral awareness involves a person's sense of whether a situation has a moral or ethical component to take into consideration. It is an individual's ability to judge whether a problem should be approached from an ethical point of view or not. Moral awareness is therefore an important facet of moral reasoning, and ultimately ethical or moral decision-making. One could probably safely argue that without moral awareness, it is unlikely that someone would consider moral and ethical issues when making decisions and taking action (such as speaking truth to power).

An interesting study conducted by Peter Bryant (2009) in fact found that moral awareness is directly related to certain practices of the care of the self (although he refers to these as "self-regulation"). In the study, he defined these practices as the process through which an individual will set goals and then self-direct their own thought and behaviour towards reaching those goals. He argues that "self-regulation is important for the study of moral awareness because being aware of the moral content of situations will influence how a person self-regulates the selection of ends and means in goal pursuit. At the same time, a person's self-regulatory characteristics will influence which moral issues they attend to and care about" (Bryant, 2009, pg. 505). In his study, in which he analysed the relationship between self-regulation and moral awareness in a group of Australian entrepreneurs, he found that entrepreneurs with stronger self-regulatory characteristics were more morally aware, whereas entrepreneurs with weaker self-regulating characteristics were less morally aware. Bryant understood self-regulation to refer to motivation systems, goal frameworks, and "motivational strength, self-reference, and self-reaction processes in goal pursuit" (Bryant, 2009, pg. 507). He argues that people generally regulate their own behaviours and thought

processes in relation to their ethical ideals and their own sense of moral identity. This is a process that an individual consistently applies in their work life, and through which both cognitive and social elements come together to shape an individual's moral identity and to drive their adoption of behavioural norms.

Individuals regularly find themselves confronted with choices in their work lives that involve weighing up the consequences of pursuing personal gain over causing harm to others, or between following normative ethical conventions, or flouting them. Bryant (2009, pg. 508-509) argues that these situations are where a person's moral awareness comes into play:

...if a situation is perceived to entail harm or the violation of behavioural norms, then a person is likely to acknowledge that the situation contains moral content and will consider it from a moral point of view...; the characteristics of persons also play a role in stimulating moral awareness by predisposing individuals to pay attention to the moral features of situations. People are therefore more or less predisposed to pay attention to harm and the violation of behavioural norms, which in turn stimulate moral awareness.

In other words, through the processes of self-examination and situational analysis that individuals need to undertake in order to set goals in the workplace, through processes of self-motivation, and in general decision-making, we are constantly either ascribing a moral component to a situation, or deciding that there is no moral component to consider. We form this judgement based on our personal and cultural sense of morality, but in doing so we are also cultivating our own sense of moral awareness and shaping ourselves as moral or ethical individuals¹⁰⁹. Essentially, what this study achieves from a Foucauldian perspective, is to corroborate the notion that moral awareness, and consequently a predisposition to ethical decision-making by individuals in the workplace, is not something that is transcendental, given to a subject a priori, or some inherent fixed part of an individual's character. It is something that is constantly shaped through self-regulatory practices, and which also then shapes future moral decisions leading to ethical actions and moral awareness, which can be compared with Foucault's notion of "ethical substance", or "the material that's going to be worked over by ethics" (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 263).

This then coincides strongly with Foucault's assertion (in the context of his understanding of the Hellenistic and Roman forms of care of the self) that there is an ethical fashioning of the self that contributes to how subjects constitute themselves, and through which subjects can constitute themselves as rational subjects of right or moral action (Gros in Foucault, 2005b, pg. 537) - an ethical fashioning of the self that hinges on the exercises and work that one puts into it.

A critical takeaway from this, is that ethics in the workplace can, from this point of view, be trained through purposeful exercises. Bryant (2009, pg. 506) makes the case that

aspects of self-regulation can be enhanced by appropriate interventions. Thus one can speculate that

¹⁰⁹ Note that from a normative perspective, moral awareness would have different objects or targets of import. For a deontologist it would be rules and regulations, for a utilitarian the object of moral awareness would be the good of an action's outcome, and for a virtue ethicist the good life, or the virtues.

targeted management, educational and training programs might enhance the self-regulatory characteristics that encourage moral awareness among entrepreneurs. If achievable, such techniques could improve the ethical quality of decision-making, while at the same time imparting a higher sense of moral purpose and personal integrity...

This echoes the stance I have taken in this thesis, namely that a Foucauldian approach to business ethics which brings to light the idea that constant practices of the self as they relate to the workplace can and should in fact be implemented in business environments (and existing ones like performance review self assessments should be overhauled or expanded) in order to complement existing ethics approaches based on company value statements, ethics charters and so on.

This foregrounding of the “self” in studies of ethics and morality in general, and also in business ethics, is not new of course, as there are also clear similarities between Foucault’s understanding of ethics and virtue ethics as it has been applied to business ethics, particularly since the 1990s. So in order to arrive at the beginnings of a viable approach to business ethics in the age of the individual, I would like first to explore these similarities between Foucault’s ethics and virtue ethics, in particular as it pertains to the world of work.

5.2.3.1. Foucault and Contemporary Virtue Ethics

Just like the virtue ethicists draw from the writings of Aristotle, Foucault also turned to the ancients in his later years. As discussed in the preceding chapters, he drew upon the work of Socrates, from whom he took the idea of *parrhêsia*, but he also drew from some of the ideas from the Hellenistic, Roman, Platonic and Aristotelian traditions.

From the Aristotelian tradition he took up the notion that ethics is more about the moral character of an agent than about the morality of their actions. In other words what makes the world a better or more ethical place is not a question of simply creating rules, but rather first and foremost having inherently moral or ethical subjects. According to Aristotle, those who seek excellence over personal gain, who feel an inner obligation to live a good life, are virtuous (Crane et al., 2008, pg. 309). This is a notion that is also taken up by the virtue ethicists. Everett et al. (2006, pg. 7) encapsulates virtue ethics as follows: “Attendant with the thinking of Aristotle, but finding a middle road between the ethical absolutism of Socrates and the ethical relativism of the Sophists, virtue ethics sees morality as both a human convention and the product of an inter-subjectively determined and reasoned search for an answer to the age-old question: what is and how does one become a good person?”

According to Levy (2004, pg. 21), there is one core thesis to be traced through the works of all the virtue ethicists, which is that modern moral theories (such as deontological and consequentialist theories) have placed far too much stress on rules, duties and consequences, and have therefore “overlooked the true

primary locus of ethics: the character of the agent". One problem that the virtue ethicists have with the deontological point of view, is that a compliance with rules effectively removes the moral choice or dilemma, thereby bureaucratising ethics and desensitising us to any form of moral judgment. Thus, rather than seeking out rules and principles in accordance with which to approach an ethical quandary, we should seek to behave in a way that is just, compassionate and charitable, a way that is virtuous. The virtuous person therefore aspires to sustain social practices that are based in excellence, and to promote community values and solidarity, but never for his or her own gain (Crane et al., 2008, pg. 309; Levy, 2004, pg. 21). Virtue ethics adjusts the focus of moral or ethical concern to bring a concern for others into the picture, more so than principles, duties and consequences, and in this is very reminiscent of Foucault's stance as well in his focus on caring for the self as a way towards also caring for others, and achieving a kind of excellence in the form of his aesthetics of existence. Like the virtue ethicists, codes of conduct and consequentialist approaches are of lesser import for Foucault. In *The Use of Pleasure* (1990b, pg. 29-30) he lays out his position as follows:

[A] history of the way in which individuals are urged to constitute themselves as subjects of moral conduct would be concerned with the models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge and self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object. This last is what might be called a history of "ethics" and "ascetics", understood as a history of the forms of moral subjectivation and of the practices of the self that are meant to ensure it...we should not be surprised to find that in certain moralities the main emphasis is placed on the code, on its systematicity, its richness, its capacity to adjust to every possible case and to embrace every area of behaviour...[I]t is easy to conceive of moralities in which the strong and dynamic element is to be sought in the forms of subjectivation and practices of the self. In this case, the system of codes may be rather rudimentary. Their exact observance may be relatively unimportant, at least compared with what is required of the individual in the relationship he has with himself, in his different actions, thoughts, and feelings as he endeavours to form himself as an ethical subject.

This emphasis on history, or of turning to history to determine which transformations are key to the constitution of the self as an ethical subject, is a methodological approach that is shared with virtue ethics. As mentioned in the preceding discussions, Foucault explained that the idea of the care of the self that was commonplace in antiquity, was transmogrified into something that became egocentric, selfish and taboo under the Christian tradition. Rather than caring for oneself, it was expected that one had to sacrifice oneself. The virtue ethicists tell a similar story. Elizabeth Anscombe is one such philosopher. In her paper *Modern Moral Philosophy* (2001), she describes an analysis by Hume of how the word "ought", as used to denote a sense of moral obligation, has in fact survived a historical shift which has essentially seen its original sense as coming from divine law fall away, thereby leaving it devoid of its root meaning for all intents and purposes. She says (pg. 384) "It is as if the notion 'criminal' were to remain when criminal law and criminal courts had been abolished and forgotten." But how did this happen? She situates the answer in history, arguing (pg. 383) that between Aristotle and contemporary ethics, we had Christianity, which brought with it an emphasis on laws, codes and rules, of commandments. As a result of the dominance of Christianity throughout the Western world, we have held onto certain concepts that only

make real sense when we look at ethics from what she calls the “law perspective”. The word ‘ought’ is such a concept, and helped to codify moral duties, and became deeply embedded in our thought and language.

Another virtue theorist that denies moral absolutism on the basis of the historical contexts of moral concepts, is Alisdair MacIntyre, who has the following to say (1967, pg.260-261):

But these attempts [at absolutising moral concepts] could only succeed if moral concepts were indeed timeless and unhistorical, if they were only one available set of moral concepts. One virtue of the history of moral philosophy is that it shows us that this is not true and that moral concepts themselves have a history. To understand this is to be liberated from any false absolutist claims.

In fact, MacIntyre (1967, pg. 257-258) goes so far as to argue that modern ethics is a sort of mishmash of ethical traditions we have picked up, taken elements from, and thrown together through the centuries, and each one has left a mark on our discourses on morality. It is no wonder then that institutions like businesses or corporations have conflicting views on what it means to be ethical in the broader business world. It is also no wonder that individuals are confused and conflicted when faced with certain moral dilemmas. “All of this of course does not entail that the traditional moral vocabulary cannot still be used. It does entail that we cannot expect to find in our society a single set of moral concepts, a shared interpretation of the vocabulary. Conceptual conflict is endemic in our situation, because of the depth of our moral conflicts. Each of us therefore has to choose both with whom we wish to be morally bound and by what ends, rules, and virtues we wish to be guided (MacIntyre, 1967, pg. 259). It is for this reason therefore that MacIntyre searched for a way to make better sense of morality and ethics, leading him to Aristotelean virtue ethics. In a certain sense it is also because of these same observations, albeit from an entirely different trajectory, that Foucault later turns to the Ancient Greeks for answers.

From the rather long Foucault quote on the previous page, it can be inferred that he sees ethics and morality as forming a kind of delicate interplay, whereby a subject is bound to certain moral codes, values or rules of behaviour that are imposed upon him by certain institutions like the family, school, church, and of course the workplace, in a certain historical and cultural context. Given his previous work on power and discourse, I believe it would be safe to say that the historicity of our institutionalised discourses and the relations of power we find ourselves enmeshed in are not too far from his mind either. Like MacIntyre, Foucault also says that it is up to each subject to decide how they will behave in the face of these institutions with their codes of conduct, discourses and power relations.

However, from Foucault’s point of view, these are two aspects of morality. There is a third, and that is ethics - whereby the subject forms himself through this process of deciding how to act in the face of these prescriptive constructs, and also through practices of the self, like introspection, self-examination and so on. Foucault wants to give the latter, subjectivation through practices of the self, primacy over the moral codes in the study of what it means to have ethics.

Like the virtue ethicists therefore, Foucault eschews a singular focus on codification. He feels that it is “rudimentary” at best, and fails to capture the full depth, breadth and scope of ethics. However, unlike most virtue ethicists, he sees this precedence of codification as an over-emphasis that originated with the advent of Christianity, and that now needs to be corrected. He does not see the deontological perspective as a normative position that must be rejected outright. He argues that while it is undeniable that codes of conduct are a necessary part of the environment of the subject, they become problematic where they are very detailed and where there are a lot of rules and codes in place.¹¹⁰ The reason for this is that practices of the self and codes of conduct are mutually exclusive. In other words, the more codes are imposed on the subject, the more the practices of the self diminish, and this in turn erodes freedom (Levy, 2004, pg. 22). The ironic twist here is that without that freedom to act upon oneself, to govern our own behaviour, we tend to abandon any actual moral practice. We simply just follow the rule of law. Thus, Foucault wants to supplement what he sees as “a misplaced stress on codes with an ethics around the self” (Levy, 2004, pg. 23), not just for the reason above, but also because he sensed that the idea of a morality that is entrenched in a principle of obedience to a system of rules is losing significance as the modern era marches on (Foucault, 1989b, pg. 451). Foucault (1989b, pg. 451) therefore turns to Antiquity for a supplementary answer, and argues that at that time the will to be a moral subject was mainly an effort to affirm one’s own freedom, thereby linking ethics and liberty in a way that they are inextricably interconnected. The moral subject searches for an ethics of existence that not only affirms his own freedom, but also gives his life a “certain form” in which he could recognise himself and be recognised by others. This then also ties back to Foucault’s prior work on power and its relation to freedom, which was discussed at length in the second and third chapters - but let it be said that the freedom to resist existing power structures is also what gives an individual the freedom to be a parrhesiastes, to speak truth to power if he so chooses, or to make himself into an ethical subject through technologies and practices of the self. Ethics for Foucault therefore amounts to the “practice of freedom”, and freedom is the “ontological condition of ethics”, but more than that, ethics in the Foucauldian sense serves to limit and control power, since refraining from imposing one’s will, appetites and desires on others requires mastery or an exercise of power over the self. (Foucault, 1994c, pg. 284;288). Thus Foucault seems to start framing a semblance of an ethical theory which incorporates some of his earlier work on power, and his later work that was concerned with the care of the self, morality and ethics. In the interview titled *The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom* (1994c, pg. 298-299) he articulates his position as follows:

I do not think that a society can exist without power relations, if by that one means the strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others. The problem, then, is not to try to dissolve them in the utopia of completely transparent communication, but to acquire the 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...I believe that this problem must be framed in terms of rules of law, rational techniques of government and *ethos*, practices of the self and freedom.

¹¹⁰ This in a way also echoes the sentiment of MacIntyre, in the sense that exceedingly detailed rules and codes often come about because they are adopted, changed, adapted and expanded as time goes on, thereby creating codes that become increasingly complex. Both MacIntyre and Foucault recognise that complex moral concepts and codes are problematic to the practice of ethics.

José Manuel Santos (2006, pg. 631-632;635) argues that this position of Foucault's is actually indicative of an adherence to a kind of Kantian deontological ethics. He argues that freedom resides in the space of the relationship of the self to the self as an inalienable property of the ethical subject, and this can be equated to the central concept of "autonomy" in Kant's ethics. A key aspect to locating freedom within the relationship of the self to the self, however, is that this is really the only space Foucault can eke out in which the subject can escape the normalising effects of any forces of especially political power, and so constitute himself as an ethical subject. This constitutes what Santos refers to as the "third plane" that Foucault lays out when he lays out his own approach to ethics, and which allows for the integration of the Kantian concepts of "autonomy" and "heteronomy". The first of the three planes is comprised of the codes and norms that are imposed and accepted in a society or group, the sociology of morals as it were; whereas the second plane concerns the behaviour of individuals, and relate to the acceptance or violation of established norms, the purview of moral psychology and criminal law.

No fundo, estes três planos determinam uma *polaridade* que corresponde à *dualidade* kantiana entre morais da heteronomia e da autonomia. Com efeito, o comportamento do indivíduo pode ser primordialmente determinado por *normas* 'externas' impostas pela sociedade, pela religião, pela tradição, etc., e por ele aceites sem mais, por incapacidade ou preguiça de 'pensar', para evitar sanções ou inconvenientes materiais, ou bem, ao contrário, resultar da intenção de agir aos seus próprios olhos como sujeito moral. (pg. 631-632).

To act therefore, is to engage in the constitution of oneself as an ethical subject.

Santos (2006, pg. 632-633) then goes on to explain that Foucault points out to us that Western ethics is, in a way, an amalgamation of three different models. Greek and Christian ethics comprise the primary models, and Kant's ethics then adds, in the modern context, a "new supplementary path." The subject's relationship of the self to the self is derived from Greek ethics and is marked by exercises of the self, askesis and so on, which elevate the subject in his own eyes as well as those of others, through exemplary action. Christian ethics on the other hand, is imposed from the outside, through norms and commandments. It is a morality of heteronomy, but which still holds onto a form of the aforementioned relationship of the self to the self. This means that while the Greek subject is literally constructed, the Christian subject is given his "interiority" from the outset. "Daí que a tarefa ética do cristão não consista na construção de uma vida enquanto 'obra de arte', numa 'estética da existência', mas numa *interpretação de si* que toma a forma de uma 'hermenêutica da carne', da interrogação de um 'corpo carnal' ...sempre suspeito de contaminação metafísico-moral pelo pecado e pelo mal" (pg. 633). The third path, belonging to Kant, is more of a historical-conceptual bridge between Greek ethics and that of Kant. Kant was the one who reintroduced the old Greek questions of 'how can I constitute and recognize myself as an ethical subject?', 'will I need exercises in asceticism? Or rather a relation to the universal that makes me conform, morally, to practical reason?'. Santos (pg. 633) goes on to argue that for Foucault, Kant's demand for a relation to the universal cannot consist of a simple identification of the subject with a universal norm as this would make the normative plane equally important, or perhaps even more important, than that of the

relationship of the self to the self. In order to integrate the concept of the universal into an ethics of modernity then, it is necessary to think of the universal as being inherently historical. By doing so, the universal is not restricted to a series of formal structures of universal value or comprising all possible moral action. Rather, they are temporalized, only revealing themselves through historically situated events that lead individuals to constitute themselves and recognise themselves as subjects of what they think, say and do. This historicization of the universal has important consequences for deontological ethics in three predominant areas: as it relates to the present, the historical way of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject. As regards the present, we can infer that since the universal metamorphoses through the passage of time, the question of ‘what I ought to do’ needs to take the events in a given present into account, since these events in any given moment give content to the imperative. It follows from this that the very process of making one’s life into a work of art becomes a fulfilment of a duty to respond to the injunction of the present. In terms of the historical way of being, it has to be noted that historicity denotes inconstancy. No two events will be exactly identical. Thus, the imperative resulting from this takes the form of a paradox, or, as Santos (pg. 636) puts it, “the one paradox of modernity, which we would be tempted to call ‘Luhmannian’...” This is the imperative that one is necessarily inconstant. He further explains,

Em termos práticos, i.e. de razão prática, este imperativo é formulado por Foucault como exigência de uma ‘crítica’ ‘que não deduza da forma do que nós somos aquilo que nos é impossível de fazer ou conhecer; mas que retirará (*dégagera*), da contingência que nos fez ser aquilo que somos, fazemos ou pensamos. Ela não procura tornar possível metafísica, enfim tornada ciência, mas relançar tão longe e tão largamente quanto possível o trabalho indefinido da liberdade.

This indefinite work of freedom is problematic then, in that encapsulated in this idea is the desire to explore and exhaust inconstancy and the indefinite, to constantly surpass its limits. The subject is obliged to prove his freedom ontologically, which results in a radically negative concept of freedom. The critical side of such an interpretation of deontology is an absolute rejection of any kind of humanism since subscribing to a telos of a good or ideal life would not just entail making a value judgment that cannot support the critique of genealogy, but would also put an end to the indefinite work of freedom.

As for the idea of the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject, this is what allows Foucault to construct a bridge between Greek ethics and the idea of exercises to make one’s life into a work of art, and an ethos of modernity. This idea of completing exercises or concrete tasks, to work on the self is, according to Santos (2006, pg. 637), where Kant’s autonomy is realized in concrete terms. He points out, however, that there are key differences between what we can refer to as a Greek ethos and a Kantian ethos of modernity:

o fundamento do primeiro não está nem na natureza (no sentido da *phusis*), nem na natureza do homem (no *ergon* do homem), nem numa ‘forma’ ideal de perfeição da vida humana, mas num *dever* moral revelado na relação ao ‘universal histórico’ da humanidade. Em termos de ética kantiana pode-se dizer que a ‘tarefa’ é a resposta a um imperativo categórico, não hipotético: ela corresponde à obediência a um dever revelado pelo universal histórico; não é um meio para realizar um fim de ordem estética e/ou ontológica...

Moreover, at the basis of Foucault's moralisation of the aesthetic lies the Kantian question of "what ought I to do to make my life a work of art?". This is fundamentally different from the Greek question of "how should I live?" The Kantian or modernist question implies that one should not accept oneself as is, but to work on oneself, and this is, effectively, an obedience to a negative moral duty, to a formal principle within the ethos of modernity. All one's actions or maxims can be tested in the light of this imperative of modernity, this deontological ethic (Santos, 2006, pg. 638).

There is a major problem that reveals itself with this approach, and it relates to a deontology that centres on a purely negative freedom. Foucault fails to solve this problem without Kant's absolute foundation. A deontological imperative that rests upon the ideal to always surpass the limits and to be what one is not, makes little sense at the end of the day.

While Santos ascribes a deontological approach to Foucault, albeit one that he sees as flawed, it is worth noting that other critics of Foucault have asserted that his philosophical and ethical position leaves us entirely without the ability to adequately formulate any kind of normative ethics at all.

Joana Oksala (2005, pg. 170) for example argues (in a vaguely similar vein to Santos) that if ethics is to be understood as an abstract normative code, or a collection of rules or principles that would guide and justify our actions, then Foucault falls short because he advocates for a care of the self that is not a universally applicable theory. It is merely a practice, an activity aimed at transformation and the creation of the space in which an individual can become ethical. This opens him up to accusations of relativism, in that these practices of the self are absolutely individual and relative to a person's personal values.

There are also several other prominent critiques of Foucault's work with a similar slant. Habermas, in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987), argues that Foucault is guilty of an "arbitrary *partisanship* of a criticism that cannot account for its normative foundations" (pg. 277). He contends that Foucault's genealogy in particular is unable to consistently appeal to any norms. It is not just arbitrary, but it is "cryptonormative" (pg. 276).¹¹¹

Nancy Fraser (1989, pg. 31) is another critic. She argues that "Because [Foucault] fails to conceive and pursue any single consistent normative strategy, he ends up with a curious amalgam of amoral militaristic description, Marxian jargon, and Kantian morality. Its many valuable empirical aspects notwithstanding, I can only conclude that Foucault's work is normatively confused."

I think that Foucault was well aware of these shortcomings or targets for critique in his work, and this prompted his turn to the Ancients to some degree. If one was to go right down to the questions at the root of normative ethics, namely 'how ought I to live?' and 'what ought I to do?' then you can see that Foucault was grappling with these, trying to formulate a clear answer through his in-depth search of pre-Christian philosophical thought. In fact, I want to argue that he was approaching these questions in a somewhat

¹¹¹ In other words "Foucault must mask the fact that his judgments rest on normative assumptions to which he is not entitled" (King, 2009, pg. 288).

similar fashion to virtue ethics.

We might therefore consider once again looking at the work of Alasdair MacIntyre in order to better understand Foucault's position. MacIntyre not only rejects a rule-based morality, but also the kind of utilitarian ethics that is concerned with what would bring the greatest benefit or happiness to the greatest number of people. He argues that (1984, pg. 114) "there can be no place for such fictions as natural rights, utility, the greatest happiness of the greatest number." Both of these philosophers, Foucault and MacIntyre, see in deontological and utilitarian or consequentialist philosophies a danger that morality encapsulates thinly veiled expressions of a Nietzschean will-to-power, and both of them turn then, to the question of what kind of person is a moral agent. They both focus on the virtuous subject, or on the character of the individual. The difference between MacIntyre and Foucault however, is that MacIntyre manages to explicitly place the ethical subject in terms of his relation to others, whereas Foucault's ethics is a little vague on this point. He is very clear about technologies of the self being intertwined with relations to the other, as we saw in the discussion of governmentality in the third chapter, but there is a stark difference between his position and that of MacIntyre as well. Crane et al. (2008, pg. 310) articulate this point as follows:

For MacIntyre, ethics is not just choosing what to do as individuals, but also and more importantly discovering who we are in relation to others...Ethics can only serve as a guide on how to behave in particular localised contexts. Although there isn't...an incompatibility...Foucault's...analysis is probably at its weakest in making explicit how this connection might work.

Levy (2004, pg. 26-29) also picks up on this perceived gap in Foucault's work, which he had only just begun to address right before his untimely death in 1984. He argues that Foucault thought of the care of the self as the very condition for being able to care for others. "Care for self is ethical in itself, but it implies complex relations with others..." (Foucault in Levy, 2004, pg. 27). Levy then goes on to ask how it is that care of the self can be the ontological condition for an ethics that nevertheless is concerned about the other?

He contends that this question can be answered by reading Foucault through the lens of virtue ethics, and when we do so, it becomes clear that he regards ethics, defined as the relation of the self to the self, as preceding morality and a relation to the other (Levy, 2004, pg. 28). It follows from this that the care of the self is also the essential condition for caring for others, and this in turn keeps abuses of power in check. The person who abuses his or her power is a slave to his desires, and is therefore lacking in the care of the self (Levy, 2004, pg. 29).

The virtue ethicists furthermore argue that our shared forms of life are what make us inherently virtuous or moral. We are taught, are exposed to certain narratives and practices such as praise or blame, we are in fact trained by our environment, and through this we adopt a certain character. Our forms of life,

specifically our practices of praising and blaming, lead us to internalise certain character traits as exemplary, and thus we are left with an inextricable urge to live a certain kind of life, and this is the basis of our sense of morality. Foucault (1994c, pg. 291) has a similar point of view: "... I would say that if I am now interested in how the subject constitutes itself in an active fashion through practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, and his social group." The virtue theorists argue that it is these shared forms of life that lead us to adopt certain points of view as regards morality and ethics. We live a meaningful life once we belong to "a *moral tradition* which allows for a *narrative order of a single life* and which depends for its existence on standards of excellence in certain *practices*" (Pence, 1991, pg. 251). While Foucault understands practices in a different way, one could fairly safely read him through the virtue ethics lens and assume that he takes on a similar position as regards shared forms of life, and the narratives and discourses that underlie these and colour an individual's outlook, posture and behaviour as regards moral and ethical issues. Levy, (2004, pg. 28) argues that these shared forms of life, which ultimately inform our moral judgments, influence the assessments we make, and determine our dispositions and what we see as virtuous or not, is what leads us to inevitably be concerned about the kind of life we lead. This, he argues, is a fundamental concern that "we cannot *not* have".

In Foucault, we encounter a similar stance, and it becomes apparent when we look at his elaboration of *ēthos*. He explains (1994c, pg. 286) that *ēthos* is a way of being and a way of behaving. It is a mode of being for the subject, but also a certain way of acting, which others can observe. The end game of *ēthos* is to achieve mastery over the self and to make one's life into a work of art - something exemplary, an aesthetics of existence. He says (1994c, pg. 271) "We hardly have any remnant of the idea in our society that the principal work of art which one must take care of, the main area to which one must apply aesthetic values, is oneself, one's life, one's existence."

In this we find another point of congruence between Foucault's ethics and virtue ethics, namely that both are teleological. In virtue ethics, the ultimate goal for each individual is *eudaimonia*, which MacIntyre broadly defines as being blessed, happy, and prosperous, a state of both being and doing well. Even though the character of the individual is of critical importance in virtue ethics, his actions are important too in that actions have consequences that will not only affect the individual himself, but also others. These consequences are what help an individual to evolve and to advance towards their true *telos*, or life's purpose. In the view of the virtue ethicists, and MacIntyre in particular, a lack of virtues, or the qualities that enable an individual to reach *eudaimonia*, will frustrate the individual's movement towards this *telos* (Moore, 2009, pg. 37).

For Foucault, *telos* is achieved through having morals, or what he considered behaviours in accordance with codes or rules and through practices of the self. He says (1994c, pg 265) "Which is the kind of being to which we aspire when we behave in a moral way?...So that's what I call the *telos* (*téléologie*). In what we call morals, there is the effective behaviour of people, there are the codes, and there is this kind of

relationship to oneself...” Later on (pg. 276), he says that this telos or *téléologie* is achieved through the mastery of oneself, which automatically translates into taking account of others as well.

In this discussion, I have tried to demonstrate that there are clear parallels between virtue ethics and Foucault’s ethics, but at the same time both approaches have their gaps and points of critique which I believe complement each other. In other words, a case could be made for a kind of hybrid stance, taking elements from both Foucault’s ethics and virtue ethics (in particular from MacIntyre and the critiques of both, in order to construct an approach to business ethics that makes sense in the world of neoliberal capitalism and managerialism, and which would lay the foundation for understanding business ethics in the era of the cybershift and the individual as well.

5.3. Conclusion: A New Business Ethics for the Era of Neoliberalism and Beyond

I would like to make a few general remarks here as to the main ways in which virtue ethics and Foucault’s ethics come together in the context of neoliberal capitalism and the managerialist workplace, since this remains the springboard from which the current cybershift can be seen to be taking place within the context of business and the economy.¹¹²

The first comment I would like to make relates to the general stance of virtue ethics that it is imperative for an agent to develop good character in order for his actions that follow to be virtuous (ethical) in nature. In other words a person with a virtuous character will perform virtuous acts in a situation that demands moral or ethical action and decisions. The issue with this primacy of character over action is that it subordinates action and the circumstances within which action is taken to character, which, from a social psychology point of view, is problematic in that it also implies that there is such a thing as an inherently “good” or “bad” person who will then act in accordance with his or her natural predisposition. Much has been made of this by critics of virtue ethics, who argue that this point of view gives too little credence to the situations in which people have to take ethical action or make moral decisions. Broadly speaking the argument goes that “people do not have broad and stable dispositions corresponding to the sorts of character and personality traits we normally suppose that people have” (Harman in Moore, 2009, pg. 39) and that actions could

¹¹² While the cybershift may be indicative of the rise of an entirely new era within society as a whole, we are just at the beginning of this paradigm shift. Western democracies still largely operate from within a neoliberal environment, albeit a rapidly changing one.

just as easily rather be determined by responses to particular circumstances. Many virtue ethicists recognise that this is problematic. For example, Solomon (in Moore 2009, pg. 40) argues that “circumstances and character cannot be pried apart and should not be used competitively as alternative explanations of virtuous or vicious behaviour”, and while “character is vulnerable to environment...it is also a bulwark against environment.” This response still leaves a problematic gap in the virtue ethics argument however, which basically boils down to the fact that it creates a kind of binary opposition between character and environment, whereby the individual is subordinated to social conditions and relations, but yet it is possible to talk about the human subject in an abstract manner, outside of all social contexts.¹¹³ This is particularly clear in the work of MacIntyre, who argues that individuals “have a *telos* to their existence that transcends a specific practice”¹¹⁴ (du Gay, 1998, pg. 432) or social context. Although Alisdair MacIntyre might disagree with me vehemently on this, I think that a Foucauldian approach solves this dilemma in that it implies that it is through having the freedom to practice exercises of the self on the self *within* the constraints of an environment consisting of relations of power and moral rules and codes that an individual attains *telos* and can make his or her life into a work of art (itself a kind of eudaemonistic ideal). The implication of this is that as opposed to character and environment being juxtaposed against each other, it allows us to recognise that environment shapes character, but also that character feeds into and impacts environment, particularly in the context of leadership and business ethics. No doubt MacIntyre would disagree with me fervently on this point, as is evidenced by what he has to say about Foucault (1993, pg.60):

[W]e have good reason to be suspicious of any contemporary ethics of free choice, according to which each individual makes of her or his moral life a work of art. For something like this aestheticization of the moral, which places the choices of each individual at the core of his or her moral life and represents these choices as an expression of that individual’s creativity, is characteristic of advanced capitalist modernity. It provides a reinforcing counterpart to the bureaucratized careers of its elites, one which enables individuals to think of themselves as independent of their socially assigned roles, while they live out what is in fact one more... normalising role.

I think that this critique rests upon somewhat of a misrepresentation of Foucault’s earlier ideas on freedom and power.¹¹⁵ Foucault’s ethics can hardly be flippantly labeled an “ethics of free choice”. While Foucault insists that freedom is the ontological condition for ethics, he is very careful to define freedom only insofar as it positions the subject in a relationship with power and domination where he has the power to resist domination and subjection. A slave, while subject to codes, laws and moral rules, does not have the same luxury as a free labourer of making himself into a truly ethical subject because he does not have the

¹¹³ As I noted in the conclusion to the first chapter of this thesis, Foucault wants to avoid talking about a subject that is static or has some sort of an enduring essence. He also does not see the subject as having a foundational status.

¹¹⁴ MacIntyre’s notion of a practice is basically an area of socially established human activity.

¹¹⁵ It is noteworthy that MacIntyre was a vocal critic of Foucault’s genealogy in general, and I will touch on this as the necessity arises, but for the purposes of keeping this discussion narrowed down to the question of establishing a tenable approach to business ethics within neoliberal capitalist societies, I will not go down that particular rabbit hole here.

freedom to do so through resistance, speaking truth to power, attaining knowledge and self-knowledge, and working on himself through the exercises he chooses to do. Moreover, in my view, this kind of critique that is levelled at Foucault's view of ethics is also based on a somewhat reductionist interpretation of subjectivity in the age of neoliberalism specifically - of *homo economicus*. As I discussed at length in previous chapters, *homo economicus*, the subject that underpins neoliberal governmentality, is situated in a paradoxical place in the world, somewhere between having the freedom to make certain economic choices, while at the same time being actively engaged in a myriad of power relations that are pivotal in his subjection as well as his subjectivation. He is governed and governs himself, and his choices are largely based on calculations of cost versus benefit. Moreover, he is a subject within a system of biopolitics, in which almost every facet of his physical existence is subjected to some form of bureaucratised regulation or administration, from his birth to his death, thereby situating the modern state and the modern individual in a relationship where they co-determine each other's emergence. *Homo economicus* is furthermore a subject of discourse who submits to its rules and conventions and its dispositions of power/knowledge, and who is unable to stand outside of the limits of the episteme and the regimes of truth that characterise his environment and circumstances. This makes decision-making, including ethical decision-making, in the era of neoliberal capitalism contingent upon a far more complex and intricate set of relations of power, domination, discipline, self-discipline and so on than MacIntyre is wont to admit. The individual's creativity and his ability to make himself into an aestheticised rendition of himself, is at all times contingent upon his place in the world and in society, and within its system of laws, codes and relations of power and domination. It is therefore impossible for any individual to think of himself as being independent of his socially assigned role or as being exempt from the effects of normalisation.

One more problem I would like to point out with regards to the critique encapsulated in the quote above, is that it also seems to misconstrue Foucault's view of what we mean when we talk about ethics. As discussed at length in the preceding pages, Foucault thinks of ethical action as being situated at the junction between strategic relations of power and so on, and governmental technologies - with two goals at its core: to allow an interplay of strategic relations with the minimum amount of domination through the provision of a moral code or a set of rules and techniques for managing the relationship between the individual and others; and to exercise power in such a way as to augment freedom, for this is the way in which both resistance and creation can manifest. Freedom is the ontological condition for ethics, since freedom is necessary in resistance, in acts of *parrhesia*, in self-governance and so on. However, this freedom is not absolute, it is conditional. It does not exist outside of the governmental context, or outside of the parameters of normalisation, moral codes and so forth. Thus the choices at the core of an individual's moral life are not mired in some sort of a moral relativism as MacIntyre seems to imply, but neither are they grounded in any form of absolutism. Foucault tries to navigate a middle road somewhere between the two extremes. He wants to recognise that human subjects are bound by broad sets of more or less universal societal norms, laws and codes of conduct, but that these are fluid to some degree, depending on culture, historical era etc. He also wants to put forward the point of view that far from solely being bound to some kind of a set of universal ethical standards, the human subject, particularly under

neoliberalism, finds himself in a far more complex environment than that. This is a subject who can exercise certain freedoms of choice, but simultaneously finds himself examined, categorised, classified and on top of that bearing the burden of moral responsibility not just for himself, but also for the system to a certain extent. All of this has a direct influence on how he interprets the ethical standards and moral codes that inform his decision-making, how he constitutes himself, and how he makes decisions - and yet he is a transactional being who will almost always take the course of action with either the greatest benefit or the least harm to himself. Ironically, this has also led to the increasing development of more efficient and even more standardised systems and mechanisms of control within neoliberal capitalist societies, all of which operate at an almost insidious level insofar as they are not overt and the individual is not always aware of the subtle controls and influences that guide his choices. Far from espousing an ethics of free choice, I think Foucault was raising the alarm, trying to make us aware of the inner workings of neoliberal capitalism and its effects on individuals and society. I also think he found it to be a very bleak place to have ended up in, and his “turn” to an aestheticisation of ethics in his later years was an attempt to find a less hopeless outlook, to show that homo economicus has actual freedom to resist and to shape his own life, that he has actual agency and character, and is not just powerlessly moulded and acting in accordance with the dictates of his circumstances within a highly bureaucratised nexus of complex power relations. If Foucault had not taken up this position, he would also have found himself in the untenable philosophical position of subscribing to a form of nihilism.

As far as a new business ethics for the era of neoliberalism and beyond is concerned, I want to argue that it is imperative not to juxtapose character over environment or vice versa, especially as it pertains to the “beyond” that we are entering, the cybershift. As we forge into this new era, there are complexities arising from the new technologies that we are incorporating into our existence that are unprecedented, and approaching ethical issues within this new era will require a thorough understanding of the outer limits of both character and circumstance in the context of this paradigm shift.

Foucault actually gives us quite good insight into the whole question of character in the age of neoliberal capitalism, as he lays bare the psyche of homo economicus in quite a bit of detail. And in fact the transactional character of this neoliberal man is also something that some of the virtue ethicists take into consideration. According to Moore (2009, pg. 41) Robert Solomon is one such a theorist. He says that Solomon explicitly links the individual with the business organisation and society in a kind of trifecta whereby personal values like integrity directly leads to corporate success, which in turn is good for the economy and for society. But, Moore argues, there is a danger in this type of approach in that values like integrity themselves become transactional. In other words the underlying motivation for applying such virtues in the workplace becomes an economic calculation as opposed to being grounded solely in moral character. “This is, in other words, ethics for profit’s sake rather than ethics for ethics’ sake or, alternatively, what we might term a strategic approach to ethics” (Moore, 2009, pg. 41).

The takeaway from this is that placing character in a position of primacy over circumstance has two pitfalls, namely that one cannot be sure when homo economicus is practicing virtue for virtue's sake or because of a cost versus benefit calculation; and the presupposition that moral character is something a person has before being faced with a circumstance that calls for moral action. A Foucauldian approach attempts to address these problems by first of all recognising that virtue can be trained or internalised through exercises, as the study by Bryant discussed earlier on in this chapter illustrates. Moral character is therefore something to be worked on and built up, rather than something which is given. Additionally, a Foucauldian approach recognises that simply having codes of conduct or value statements in place does not ensure ethical action in every circumstance. For an agent to truly act ethically they have to be doing so for their own sake, even if it comes at their own risk (such as when speaking truth to power), and not because there is a moral dictate in place. However, it also recognises that codes of conduct are drivers of behaviour, as are social or organisational norms and conventions, and indeed circumstance. With a Foucauldian approach it becomes possible to shift the focus onto ethical character development as opposed to simply reverting to a strategic approach to ethics. Not only that, but a Foucauldian approach forces us to consider every aspect of a person's subjectivation, from the relations of power that are exercised by, over and through body and mind, to the constraints and resistances, and to the technologies of the self he employs in the process of subjectivation that ultimately lead to the subject constituting himself as ethical. I believe that this type of approach will become critical moving forward, since with the pace of technological change and the implications of this change, it has become incredibly difficult to just rely (as is the norm in the business world) on codes of conduct and value statements as a strategy for dealing with the myriad of old and new types of ethical issues that present themselves within this new paradigm.

Conclusion

Today's subject no longer finds himself in a Taylorist working environment, and neither can he be described as homo economicus in the Foucauldian sense, strictly operating under a regime of managerialism either. He is a homo informaticus whose actions at work are governed algorithmically, who operates within a set of power relations that now includes a new dispositif of power - that of pregenerative power. He is also a dividual, who constitutes himself as part data in a world where data is a prized commodity. In this final chapter I therefore set out with the intention of exploring what it means to be a subject during this pivotal period in human history, the cybershift. What implications do the changes in the ways in which (in)dividuals constitute themselves in this era hold for ethics and for business ethics in particular? How can the particular changes and challenges I outlined in the previous chapters vis-à-vis discourse, power, knowledge, the truth, and indeed subjectivity, impact how we think about ethics and ethical practices in corporate and other business environments?

From the outset of this thesis, I noted that it is my belief that approaching business ethics from a Foucauldian perspective (but taking its limitations into consideration) will have the effect of directing organisational ethics away from a narrow focus on compliance, and place a greater emphasis on the rights and the ethical and moral capacities of the individual manager or working subject as s/he navigates the new algorithmic and connected technological environment s/he operates in. In doing so, I hoped to expand on the current approaches to business ethics to reach beyond just considerations of individual morality and organisationally prescribed values and codes, while trying to understand the unique changes and challenges the 'cybershift' has ushered in (Crane et al., 2008, pg.313; Ibarra-Colado et al., 2006, pg.45). I also hoped that this would start to lay the foundations of an approach for organisations with a *practical* application. Any approach to organizational ethics should be able to make the transition from theory, normative or otherwise, to real-world applications, and this one is no different. I hope I have opened the door to a new approach that will lead to several new avenues of study in the field of Business Ethics, starting with a renewed understanding of what it means to be a subject, or to constitute oneself as a subject, in the twenty-first century.

Subjectivity in the Era of the Cybershift

As discussed in the first two chapters of this thesis, one of the central pillars of Foucault's work was essentially an investigation into the ways in which the subject constitutes itself in any given era. He was after what he referred to as a "genealogy of the modern soul". In his earlier work, Foucault argued that the

subject is born into a world comprised of certain discourses, and also a world wherein relations of power actively forge human subjectivity. Power is not only exercised physically over the body in the form of imposed control (as is evidenced through, for example, Taylorist management practices), but it also inscribes the very soul of the subject. Discourse and power are productive - they bring subjects into being. They are also intricately connected to knowledge insofar as power relations give rise to certain forms of knowledge, and that knowledge in turn reinforces the effects of power. In terms of discourse, individuals produce texts, rhetoric, narratives, and so on, to which they are beholden. We cannot step outside of the discourses of our epoch, outside of the boundaries of the episteme. Discourse subjects us, and in and of itself holds a certain power over the subject. We submit to the rules and conventions not only of the discourse itself, but also those produced by or through discursive events. Discourse therefore also has a disposition of power/knowledge, since the knowledge a subject has, has invariably been produced by discourses, which in their turn become vehicles through which power is relayed. Thus the intricate dances between discourse, knowledge and power all lie at the heart of human subjectivity, and these ebb and flow with time, from one epistemic shift to the next. So what does this mean for subjectivity at this point in time, during this episteme, during the cybershift?

Today's subject essentially occupies two realms, the world where his physical body resides - where the sun shines on his face, where he listens to the rain patter on his rooftop, where he moves his body, and where he is subjected to relations of power over his physical body. He also finds himself operating within another dimension, one that did not exist before the late twentieth century, namely cyberspace. This is a world made up of data, of ones and zeros, bits and bytes of information, a world organised by mathematics and computer code, by algorithms. It is the world of the cyberopticon, where both transformed and totally new modalities of power and forces of subjection have sprung up - relations of power that bridge the divide between the physical world and this world of ones and zeros.

One such a transformed modality of power springs forth from the effects of the cyberopticon with its ubiquitous electronic gaze. The constant collection and collation of data through dataveillance is not just used to record our behaviours and actions online and in the physical world, but this collated data represents knowledge which is then used for the subjection of the body. There are many examples of how this works, this new modality of disciplinary power. One such a (particularly egregious) practice, for example, gained a lot of traction during the Covid-19 pandemic as the vast majority of office workers were forced to work remotely from home: the use of attention tracking software. Companies obliged workers to install software on their home computers that uses the computer's webcam to track attentiveness. This type of software usually utilises biometric data such as eye movement, body shifts and facial expression to evaluate whether a worker is paying proper attention to the task he is engaged in. It also ensures that the worker remains at his desk, working, within the timeframes and schedules mandated by the company. The software will then compile a report and highlight where an employee committed an infraction, whether they are distracted while working from home, and so forth. Armed with this knowledge, the employee's line manager can then choose to take punitive action, the threat of which is supposed to keep

the worker disciplined and productive throughout the workday, even if that workday is spent at home. This effectively keeps the body of the worker tethered to his desk at the company's behest.

Another power effect that has sprung forth from the cyeropticon is that unlike the panopticon, power for the most part does not flow unidirectionally. There is a kind of democratisation of the panoptic effect that has happened in the cyeropticon, in that individuals can now also surveil institutions, other individuals in positions of authority, or anyone else they want information on, to a far greater degree than ever before. Surveillance is no longer unidirectional, enforced from the top down. One important effect of this is that large swathes of knowledge have also become available to anyone with an internet connection, and is therefore much more ubiquitously and evenly distributed than at any other point in the history of humankind. The consequence of this of course is that ordinary individuals who have not traditionally held positions of great power and influence in society, have become more empowered than ever before in this particular sense, with the side effect of the legitimisation of any and all voices, even those that misinform or disinform.

The internet has also greatly changed how we communicate and produce discourses. It is now possible to reach a far bigger audience far faster, and across any physical distance, which has had some marked consequences for Western societies. Access to information in this age is no longer reserved for the privileged to be used to classify and normalise other, less privileged, individuals. The field of knowledge that was limited in the past to the privileged has shrunk, and new fields of knowledge have sprung up that have become the purview of a new, albeit much smaller and much wealthier class of privileged.¹¹⁶ Thus the locus of power and the power effects grounded in access to information and knowledge has shifted. It is not so much about who has access to information these days, but rather how that information is managed, arranged, interpreted and presented. A curious development that comes with the cybershift, is that today's subject is not just the producer of information and knowledge who disseminates what he knows through discourses and so on. He is more than that - he is constituted in part as information or data itself.

Throughout this thesis, I have referred to this subject that has emerged from the cybershift as a 'dividual' - a term I loosely borrowed from Gilles Deleuze because it encapsulates perfectly how today's individual is now very clearly a divided entity who has a presence in the physical world as well as the digital world. Thus today's individual is not just a physical being with a flesh and blood body, but he also has a datafied, digital presence which is representative of him and makes up an integral part of his identity. This 'datavidual' is a virtual self of sorts, not a representation or a simulacrum of the dividual, but an authentic division of the self. I argue that it is an authentic division of the subject because not only is it made up of the created personae and the various images, writings and videos of the dividual in question, but it also contains remnants, bits and pieces of the dividual's actual authentic movements and actions in the form of metadata that he leaves in his wake as he criss-crosses the web. The modern day dividual is therefore not just an object for scientific study in his physical iteration, but he is also part data - the study, classification

¹¹⁶ Think about people working in IT and other technology areas. Also consider the rise of the tech moguls like Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg.

and analysis of which is used to influence his actions in both the physical and the digital worlds.

Today's dividual is thus constituted as body, soul and data, and in the sense that his datavidual (the datafied division of himself) is born from all of the conscious and unconscious bits and bytes of data that he deposits into the web, this modern-day subject is in the very curious position of both being born and giving birth to a part of himself.

Another power effect that arises from this is that the subject of this century, the dividual with his associated datavidual in the web, is an object of his own knowledge in a way that Foucault could not have foreseen in the 1980s. Man as an object to be known is a far greater source of information than ever before, not only as a subject in general, but as an (in)dividual identity too. There are a myriad of aspects of the (in)dividual's private life that are easily unearthed and laid out in a very public way through data mining or collection, data analysis, and data management. This information is then in turn often used to preemptively influence and drive the dividual's actions and behaviours, both online and offline. This ability of governments, organisations and even other individuals to access a subject's personal data without their explicit awareness, or to use the metadata they generate online for targeted profiling, has resulted in a new dimension to the aforementioned power/knowledge dynamic. The subject of the cybershift provides the data, and subsequently the information and knowledge through which his own knowledge as a knowing subject is altered and in some cases purposely directed in order to elicit a certain behaviour or action - an action which he will regard as a completely autonomous action based on his frame of reference or the knowledge he holds. This is a modality of power that goes beyond the targeting of the body. It is a modality of power that targets the mind, the thoughts, the psyche of the subject directly in order to elicit a desired action or behaviour from him. It is what I have come to term 'pregenerative power'.

Today's subject is also no longer homo economicus, as described by Foucault. He is rather homo informaticus, for in constituting himself as part data, as a datavidual in the web, he is taking the neoliberal tendency to be an entrepreneur of the self to a new level. Today's dividual often measures his own value or self-worth through the types of quantification of the self that occurs online - the number of social media likes he gets and so forth. He is on a quest for validation from others, and therefore carefully curates his online presence and identity. This homo informaticus therefore finds himself in the curious position of not only having to be an entrepreneur of the self in his physical space, but to also validate himself and give himself value in his online space. Moreover, since he constitutes himself as part data, he has also become a commodity. Homo informaticus is therefore a far more complex entity than the Foucauldian homo economicus. He is both present and absent as an object over which power is exercised in the sense that while his body is still a target for subjection, there is now also his virtual self. This virtual self, comprised of data, is as much a target for subjection as the physical body of the subject itself. Homo informaticus is carefully managed through the data, through stimuli, by means of a power that is exerted

in the space between himself as a physical entity in the world and his data-identity in cyberspace. He therefore grapples with an entirely new technology of the self, wherein he self-constructs a part of his data-self while another part of this data-identity is also constructed through his actions without his full awareness. This is probably the central problematic for homo informaticus, in that all of his actions online, and even many of his offline activities are contained in bits and bytes of data which can be mined or collected and collated into data sets that are then algorithmically sorted, analysed, and used to manage his future actions. Homo informaticus, as a data-identity, is a subject who is caught up in a system of algorithmic governmentality. This raises a very important problem, namely that of freedom. Homo informaticus provides the means -the data-whereby his present and future actions can be managed and controlled, whereby he can be subjected, and through which elements of his subjectification and subjectivation also become possible. However, his data is obtainable for management, and consequently the exercise of power and control over him is possible precisely *because* he has greater freedom than at any point in history - if one considers that freedom includes the ability to transcend vast distances and geographical barriers, to participate in new social movements, to bring himself to life as a data-identity, and to be the architect of his own identity in ways that were impossible at any other point in time before this.

Another dimension of this problem relates to having all of this personal data and metadata incorporated into big data sets together with data from other (in)dividuals. Once these big data sets are put to use for the purposes of subjection, homo informaticus finds himself losing track of where and how his own data is used, with little recourse to question or resist it, since the entire data management process is managed algorithmically. This has serious implications for individual agency and gives rise to a disposition of power which is impossible to resist, and therefore impossible to be free from. Homo informaticus in effect becomes the mason who provides the stones with which his own prison cell is constructed.

Moreover, the algorithms that sift through the data and metadata that is produced by every (in)dividual with an internet-connected device have a direct impact on that (in)dividual's life, not only online, but also in the physical world. I touched on many examples of this throughout this thesis, but one worrying trend that rose to prominence as the global pandemic sped up the development and adoption of ever-more complex programmes and algorithms, is the escalation of electronic surveillance systems, even in Western democracies. These range from enhanced facial recognition software designed to bypass facial masks, to tracing and tracking applications that were hastily rolled out and mandated in order to keep track of viral outbreaks and clusters. In many cases the data that was collected, and whether or how that data was and is being used beyond the context of the pandemic, is opaque¹¹⁷. One thing that is certain however, is that these applications played a major role in the restriction of individual movement and in enforcing compliance with lockdowns and so on. We see therefore, in action, how algorithms are increasingly being used by governments and organisations to exercise power and to automate certain disciplinary practices.

¹¹⁷ These measures are ostensibly only in place for the duration of the pandemic, but it remains to be seen if they will be rolled back once Covid-19 is under control, and if they are not completely rolled back, how and where they will be used to manage the behaviours of both individuals and populations.

Aside from the implications for our freedom of these types of data harnessing and harvesting, there are also implications in terms of how we understand knowledge. The fact is that the data and metadata we give up for harvesting is categorised into raw data sets, using algorithmic calculations and processes that the vast majority of us do not quite understand. Even those who do understand the underlying mathematics and processes, cannot easily keep track of them simply because of the speed with which they are executed and the ubiquity with which it occurs. These algorithmic activities have a direct impact on our lived lives, but yet it is difficult to understand exactly when and how they occur, where our data is being mined, where it is being deployed for use, and whether for governance or other purposes. If we consider again the idea that we are individuals with an associated dataindividual presence, then we also have to consider that if we lose sight of our data, or indeed we are unaware of the metadata that springs forth from us, then there is indeed a part of ourselves that falls outside of our ability to fully know ourselves. There is therefore a part of the self that remains opaque to us, but upon and through which power is exercised over us.

This has implications for the care of the self as well, for how can one fully care for oneself if there is a part of the self that is unknowable? This problematic of knowing oneself and taking care of oneself therefore takes on critical importance in the age of the individual/dataindividual. Because the dataindividual, made up of the data and metadata emanating from all of our online activities and many of our offline activities, becomes a vehicle through which power is exercised over the (in)dividual, it is imperative to take the approach that human subjects are not just comprised of body and mind, but also of our data. It is necessary to unequivocally equate data with the subject, to see the individual as being a dataindividual with a dataindividual. It is only through doing this that we can truly pave the way for a proper ethics. Care of the dataindividual needs to be equated with care of the mind and care of the body, as an indelible part of the care of the whole self. A mindset shift is needed whereby we can view the subject's right to manage and care for their own data, to know what it is being used for and what the consequences of these uses will be, as an inalienable human right. Just like we would expect to know what is being done to our bodies when we visit a hospital (for example what treatments we are given or what our plasma or DNA samples will be used for), we should also expect to have the right to know what happens to our data and metadata. There can be no discussion about ethics, and in particular business ethics, without considering the custody and care of data, or the care of the dataindividual.

This then needs to form the basis of such a new approach to ethics and business ethics, together with an understanding of the cybershift, the environment it is engendering, and the paradigm shift from governmentality to managementality.

Managementality and the New Organisational Environment

I chose to use the term “managementality” not just because it is a play on Foucault’s “governmentality” as well as on “managerialism”, but also for its etymological significance. Encapsulated in this word are three concepts, namely “management”, the suffix “-ality”, meaning “having the properties of”, and “mentality”, which refers to an intelligence, a way of thinking about something, or having a particular mental power or capacity. This encourages us to think about what kind of mentality or what kind of intelligence¹¹⁸ is involved in the management, as well as who or what is being managed, and what that management looks like. It is a term that indicates that there has been a shift from managerialism to something that, while retaining some of the characteristics of managerialism, also incorporates a whole new set of elements. The central question then is what is left of neoliberalism and managerialism, and what has changed or been added to the mix? In other words, how exactly do we define and characterise managementality?

It would be a mistake to assume that the new episteme brought about by the cybershift has resulted in a displacement of neoliberalism and managerialist workplace practices. As was the case with the major epistemic shifts that Foucault highlighted, some things remain as they have always been, some things have fallen away or are in the process of doing so, some things have metamorphosed, and some new things have taken hold.

As noted in the preceding chapters, neoliberalism ushered in an era in which the role of the state changed significantly. The state started to marketise its activities and services under neoliberalism and to take a more hands-off approach as far as regulating the broader economy and the markets was concerned. Neoliberal capitalist regimes such as the USA and many other Western democracies left the individual to shoulder the burden of his own welfare, and they left companies and corporations to get on with the business of making money and innovating with less oversight and regulation than in preceding times. This resulted in the rise of an era of unfettered competition and a shifting of responsibility for welfare from the state to the individual. Neoliberalism thus marked a move towards the decentralisation of traditional state powers and mechanisms of control to increasingly allow companies and individuals to participate in power structures that were previously well beyond their reach. Homo economicus, the individual that emerged from neoliberalism, as well as the businesses that sprang up within neoliberalism, therefore had the freedom to develop new skills sets and to innovate without too much overt interference or regulation from the state. This spirit of investing in the self, of entrepreneurship and innovation, and of deregulation and decentralisation lies at the root of the cybershift. Without the competitive, market-driven neoliberal spirit of the latter half of the twentieth century, the competitive environment in which the invention and

¹¹⁸ Human or artificial?

development of these new technologies were allowed to proliferate and flourish, and the rapid growth of today's networked society, could probably not have taken place. One could probably safely speculate that any new technological developments would have been heavily regulated and controlled by the state from the outset, thereby slowing down the pace of innovation. In other words, it was because of this type of laissez-faire approach to economics and the idea that individuals are human capital, that the networked society was brought to life. However, neoliberal society has also somewhat paradoxically proliferated today into a society of intense control, especially as the networks emanating from and spanning the Internet are being harnessed to extend surveillance practices through dataveillance, and to institute new forms of statistical analysis, examination, ranking, categorisation and so forth. In other words, while homo economicus was given the relative freedom to work, to have ideas, and to innovate (but always in service of the markets and in service of valorising himself), it also gave rise to the development of many subtle yet ubiquitous technologies that have been harnessed in order to consolidate power and control in the hands of those who know how to implement, manage and maintain these.¹¹⁹ We therefore encounter a rather paradoxical consequence of the ubiquitous implementation of these technologies, in that a great many aspects of the management of people and populations has become automated and managed algorithmically, thereby expanding many of the traditional controls that governments maintained over their citizenry, whilst simultaneously removing them from the purview of the people who traditionally held the power of control and distributing it between algorithmic systems and a far smaller group of technically skilled people.

Another important point to take note of relates to the pivot from previous systems of governance to the kind of governmentality that arose with neoliberal capitalism, and the subsequent shift in the mindset underlying morality and ethics. This is clearly illustrated by examining the workplace, or the corporation (much like Foucault did with the asylum and the prison). I already pointed out in the second and third chapters of this thesis that the disciplinary Fordist and Taylorist workplaces that preceded neoliberal capitalism and managerialism were characterised by a strong Protestant work ethic grounded in Calvinistic values. In other words, the religious values that were reflected in the values of the Protestant Reformation were carried through to business and the workplace as a kind of austere capitalism that had a fundamental impact on the mode of production. This then also lay at the basis of Fordism and Taylorism, whereby work came to be seen as something that had to be done with the utmost discipline and precision. But it also gave rise to certain workplace reforms and, as time progressed and Fordism and Taylorism gave way to managerialism, a certain softening of management attitudes in relation to the

¹¹⁹ We are also now beginning to see a backlash against this - a society forming within this networked reality that seeks to redefine control, and to truly decentralise some of the traditional institutions that are able to control and determine so much of an individual's actions and circumstances. A major example of this that springs to mind is blockchain technology, which has its origins in a sense of disillusionment with the current modus operandi of the financial sector (and particularly the central banks), which is firmly rooted in neoliberalism but which has embraced all of the new technologies used to perform dataveillance, automated categorisation and so on. There is already some evidence that blockchains and cryptocurrencies are democratising and decentralising certain aspects of what we would regard as the traditional financial system, but at the time of writing it is early days and it remains to be seen how this technology will play out and whether it will result in any new dynamics of power or control at all.

health, wellbeing and happiness of the worker ensued. This shift is also reflected in how morality was viewed vis-à-vis business, the markets and the economy. Whereas the markets were widely regarded as being guided by the “invisible hand” and inherently amoral, societal pressure increasingly demanded more humane working conditions for labourers, a better work-life balance, and for businesses to recognise that they have certain ethical and moral responsibilities. Managerialism therefore birthed homo economicus as an ethical capitalist in a society that was constructed atop neoliberalism as an entire ethico-political system. The result of this was that for the first time in human history, morality and ethics became overtly connected with economics and the markets, and business ethics issues became a regular part of the discourses of the world of finance, economy and business.

Moreover, since the start of the Industrial Revolution, business has gradually entrenched itself as the dominant social institution, and so the neoliberal discourses that stem from the world of business feed back into the ways in which individuals interpret, experience and live in the broader world. A very significant consequence of this, which I also discussed in Chapter 5, is that this amalgamation of ethics and business, capitalism, and the economy had the effect of shifting the burden of systemic ethical responsibility from the state to the individual. Homo economicus therefore became responsible for transforming an amoral capitalist system into an ethical one.

All of these elements of neoliberalism and managerialism laid the groundwork for the type of governance that is now arising from the cybershift, that which I have been referring to as managementality.

I argued in Chapter 3 that the Western governments of the twenty-first century are increasingly acting like corporations in the ways in which they are managing themselves and offering their services to citizens. The cybershift has seen states putting more of their services online, usually with the help of contracted, outsourced software firms, using interfaces that mimic the customer-centric approach used in the business world. Some governments are also marketing themselves to wealthy investors and skilled workers from other countries in the form of putting citizenship up for sale or offering special working visa conditions for certain industries and digital nomads. Estonia, as mentioned before, is even selling a kind of digital citizenship. States, in other words, are actively seeking to add value to themselves in a world where they are increasingly competing not for physical territory as in bygone eras, but for economic dominance, skilled workforces, and pioneering technological advancements.

This change in the way in which governments do business has its roots in neoliberalism with its staunch opposition to economic interventionism, inflations of governmental apparatuses, and bureaucracy; but it is also attributable to rampant globalisation, the dissolution of geographical barriers to business and communications, and the rise of the networked society that the twenty-first century brought with it. At the center of this change however, lies the catalyst for the entire cybershift, and that is the increased and ubiquitous use of computer systems driven by software algorithms and, increasingly, artificial intelligence. Governments are deploying algorithms and relying on big data with increasing regularity to make

decisions and to take action in any number of ways. Large data sets are constantly being created, sorted and collated algorithmically through satellites, mobile phone networks, computers, and the Internet of Things, to name but a few. Patterns and anomalies are identified, flagged or filed away, and lie at the basis of inferences about the population at large. Big data is routinely used by nation states to make assumptions about the behaviours, emotions, and even possible future actions of their citizens, both on the level of the collective and the individual. Thus the governmentality that characterised the neoliberal capitalist societies of the West in the twentieth century has given way to a new type of ‘algorithmic governmentality’ in the twenty-first. This algorithmic governmentality lies at the very heart of this era of managementality, and it perforates every aspect of society, the human experience, and ultimately the constitution of the subject.

I have discussed several instruments of algorithmic governmentality through the course of this thesis, starting with the cyberopticon, the modern iteration of Foucault’s panopticon.

The cyberopticon is the vast seeing network of dataveillance that ensnares virtually every (in)dividual in every society on the planet. It tracks not just our physical movements in our lived-in world, but also our dataveillance as we go about life both online and offline. This is the data and the metadata that is used by big business as well as government to profile (in)dividuals¹²⁰ and to influence or direct their actions and behaviours. The cyberopticon therefore gave rise to a new form of power, in addition to the disciplinary power that Foucault laid bare. This is a type of power that is permanent in effects and ubiquitous. It no longer simply just encompasses a dyad of seeing and being seen, or a dichotomy of power/knowledge. Neither is it a power that is exercised directly over the body or the soul of the (in)dividual. It is a pregenerative power that is exercised in the space between the will of the (in)dividual and the action he takes. It is a power that, in addition to surveilling almost every aspect of a person’s lived life, seeks to preempt and manage their future actions through the management of their data, usually algorithmically and with little human intervention. The new power relations resulting from the formation of this new kind of power, and the management of the masses of data that are generated every second of every day, are therefore not only inextricably entwined, but they are also largely automated. They are predicated on a new human-algorithm relationship wherein trust is placed in algorithms to sort through the data and look for patterns, correlations, anomalies and so forth which are then used to make inferences and take action. These patterns, anomalies and correlations that are extrapolated from the data make up a kind of knowledge that is therefore effectively one step removed from the humans that contribute to their making and interpretation. Because of this, at least in part, we tend to perceive the data as neutral, as devoid of the messy human stuff like politics. The usual social frames of reference that we, as humans, would apply

¹²⁰ There is a strong backlash developing against this practice, especially by large companies such as Facebook that profile individuals and then sell those profiles to other companies. The highly encrypted privacy-focused messenger app Signal and Apple have been leading the charge in taking action against these practices in the business world, much to the chagrin of Facebook, Google and others. Signal has been running an advertising campaign that explicitly unmask the type of profiling done by Facebook, whereas Apple has updated its privacy policies to be stricter on data mining practices by apps in its App Store and giving users better insight and choice into how their data is used.

to data interpretation is not generally regarded as being present in algorithmic data processing.¹²¹ This perception that data is neutral and untainted by human bias is coupled with another perception, which is that data inevitably produces truths and knowledge as a result of a fully democratic process. After all, nobody escapes from having their data extrapolated and used, and so the norms and knowledge that emerge from the data are seen as an expression of the majority, as all-inclusive, transparent, and above all based on irrefutable truths.

These perceptions have their roots in certain cultural conceptions to be sure, but there is another element to them that bears pointing out, and that is that the process of data sortation, the mechanics behind the algorithmic calculations that are involved, lie beyond the average person's realm of comprehension. Moreover, as algorithms start to take on a more interpretive function, and as artificial intelligence takes over more and more traditionally human functions, we increasingly rely on these condensed data sets without questioning the underlying algorithmic processes.

Two major consequences arise from this. The first is that by allowing ourselves to be examined, categorised and profiled according to raw data by algorithmic processes and calculations that we cannot accurately follow or fully comprehend, we are in effect actively relinquishing a certain amount of quintessentially human power and control to something outside of ourselves for the first time in humanity's existence. The fact is that we have given over a certain amount of decision-making power that affect our lives directly to algorithmic processes, or, when this is not the case, we have tainted our own ability to make fully informed decisions independently by basing many of those decisions on knowledge and information that has been created algorithmically without our full comprehension of the processes involved. Algorithms therefore play an ever-expanding role in the exercise of power, since we have come to automate many disciplinary practices and forms of biopower. Moreover, with the algorithmic profiling that is so ubiquitous, man is now in the entirely new position of providing the data, the vehicle for his own subordination. He provides the information or knowledge through which his own knowledge as a knowing subject can be altered and purposely directed so as to elicit a certain action or behaviour - an action or a behaviour which he will see as an autonomous choice which is based on his frame of reference, his knowledge base. If disciplinary power targeted the body of the individual in order to render him docile or compliant, this new power targets the individual's psyche directly through his ability to be a subject who knows in order to elicit a desired action or behaviour. This is not a power that only acts upon an individual either - this is a power that can be enacted on groups or populations as well. It can direct public opinion without the awareness of the public¹²².

The second consequence stems from the fact that since the knowledge and information we gain through algorithmic processes are seen as neutral, true and irrefutable, it is often privileged over information

¹²¹ As I pointed out previously, this is an illusion since algorithms have been shown to contain the biases of the people who programmed them.

¹²² This is an issue that really came to the fore during the Covid-19 pandemic, where anti-masking and anti-vaccination misinformation spread to groups who were essentially locked into algorithmic echo chambers on social media, galvanised opinion to the point that these became massive polarising issues around freedom and responsibility, government power and intervention, and resistance.

given by people. It is assumed that the data will reveal how people think act and feel, so there is no need to ask them anymore. This, coupled with the fact that people with decision-making powers often do not understand how the algorithms work, or how the data output upon which they are basing their decisions are compiled, tend to defer to the data or to the computer system in question, without question. In this manner they are able to then absolve themselves from accountability for their own decisions.¹²³

I referred to this as a neutralising schism that arises between the data and the user. In the case of people in positions in government or corporations where they have to exercise responsibility, this space between the user and the data within which the data is given neutrality, legitimacy, and ultimately authority, becomes a sort of a void where accountability tends to disappear. An example from the corporate sector comes from the use of software programmes to schedule the work shifts of employees working in large chains in retail, the hospitality sector, and the food service industries. Many firms, like the retailer Target in the USA, are increasingly using these programmes to determine the shifts that employees should work, based on algorithmic analysis of seasonal sales patterns, consumer behaviour and trends, and even the weather. The idea behind scheduling systems like these, is to be able to control employees' time and activity, to cut labour costs, and to maximise profits. The problem with this type of computerised system is that it makes scheduling decisions that affect workers' lives in a very direct way, but it often fails to take circumstances into account that a human manager might. One Starbucks employee gave the following example: "I live three hours away from my family and I can only return home on weekends. Last semester, I only saw them three times" (Loggins, 2020). With the neutralising schism that occurs, appealing an algorithmic decision such as this and demanding better or more fair treatment becomes incredibly difficult, and in some circumstances downright impossible. Some human managers might shrug off any problems and respond that they cannot do anything about it because the decision was not made by them but by the system - that it was the best, most democratic decision based on the interests of all the parties involved (other employees, the company and so on). Another manager might comprehend that an algorithmic decision was unfair, but would be unable to do anything about it because doing anything about it would mean creating a knock-on effect of having to switch shifts around and throwing the entire system off balance. Such a manager might also appeal to the neutralising schism by claiming to not be able to work around the constraints imposed by the scheduling system in question. Appealing to the companies that produce the software that is used to make these decisions also routinely fails - they put the burden of poor algorithmic decision-making squarely on the shoulders of the companies that purchase and use the programme. To date "no major software company has publicly subjected their algorithms to an outside audit to identify any potential issues - and claiming they can't control how their clients use their products is an increasingly common way of dodging responsibility for intentional decisions built into their tools" (Loggins, 2020).

¹²³ This bias in favour of algorithms is sometimes referred to as "math washing". People are generally predisposed to the assumption that if something involves mathematics, it is automatically objective.

In Chapter 5, I discussed what I referred to as the ‘burden of systemic ethical responsibility’ that came with the transition to neoliberal capitalism and the birth of homo economicus in the previous century. Homo economicus was an individual who was forced to take full responsibility for himself, regardless of economic and societal circumstances. He had to ensure that he never became a burden on society, but more than that, he also had to take responsibility for identifying and working on changing any moral and ethical shortcomings in the system itself, all while navigating the constraints of the system. In other words, within Western neoliberal capitalist societies, morality and ethics became tangled up with labour, money, career progression, as well as with resistance to the system of governance.

While homo informaticus retains many of the characteristics of homo economicus, there is an important change that is occurring as it relates to this burden of systemic ethical responsibility: the neutralising schism that arises with algorithmic governmentality conveniently allows humans to abdicate a certain amount of this burden of systemic ethical responsibility to algorithms and AI applications. It means shifting some of this burden right into that neutralising schism between the user and the system, but also to subordinating the (in)dividual to the authority of the algorithms and the data sets that they produce. In the discussion above, we have a good depiction of this very troubling facet of managementality. We see that a human manager can relinquish a key part of his managerial role to the computer system in question. In so doing, he can wash his hands of his own ethical and moral responsibilities as a manager, while also no longer feeling obliged to carry the burden of systemic ethical responsibility. And so the system becomes responsible for managing the (in)dividuals the manager is responsible for. Algorithms become the governing authority, and poor ethical or moral outcomes as a result of algorithmic decision-making or data output becomes the problem of this seemingly amoral, non-human system. This is a phenomenon that runs all the way up through the traditional power structures and hierarchies of both government and business and has significant consequences for business ethics, and indeed ethics in general.

In terms of the macro (socio-economic) environment that businesses find themselves in today, there seems to be a bit of a hangover from the effects of the neoliberal capitalist policies and practices that drove state, business and individual action through much of the latter half of the twentieth century. These neoliberal policies and practices were aimed at deconstructing the welfare state that had emerged just after the Second World War and were characterised by a kind of social austerity and the birth of homo economicus. This is in large part what has led to the hangover effect we are experiencing at present, during this paradigm shift, the cybershift. According to Valencia (2015, pg. 2), “the structural crisis unfolding in the centre of the global capitalist system has affected (and will increasingly affect) the main economies and societies of the world...[and]...we can infer that for capital and large corporations there is no way forwards other than to deposit the entire weight of the crisis on the shoulders of workers and society.” This is already being felt by workers in companies and corporations in the form of ever-increasing wage cuts, the rise of the gig economy, dismissals from manufacturing and service jobs due to automation, cuts to social services, reductions in pensions and increases in the retirement age, longer

working hours, and having to be available online even when at home or on vacation.¹²⁴ The clear objective behind what can only be seen as the exploitation of the working subject of this era, is to increase corporate profits, and in particular at the behest of the large multinational behemoths (like Amazon, Uber and so on) that monopolise not only the markets they operate in, but also the labour market to some degree. The structural crisis that is responsible for this litany of miseries facing the working stiff of the early twenty-first century has been brought on in part by the rapid development and acceleration of technologies used throughout the economy and society. A new competitive landscape has come into being which has resulted in a massive allocation of new resources and tools, and the reallocation, en masse, of existing ones. This is having far-reaching implications for society in terms of the future of human work, cuts to jobs, the rise of entirely new jobs and fields of expertise, new educational needs, and the training or retraining of a large swathe of the labour force. It is therefore becoming incredibly urgent that we recognise the changes and their consequences to the new working environment brought about by the cybershift and the shift from neoliberal managerialism to post-neoliberal managementality.

I discussed the use of dataveillance and people analytics in the new working environment of homo informaticus at length in the second chapter of this thesis, but a few points and observations bear repeating here. People analytics is increasingly being used to surveil, analyse, categorise, normalise and control working subjects in corporate environments. The use of these kinds of software and artificial intelligence applications in the workplace is aimed at managing not only the behaviour of workers, but also their character, through quantitative analysis of their conduct and psychological makeup. The intention is most often to improve the working experience of employees, to reduce stress, increase job satisfaction and motivation, and to enhance personal and professional development and growth (Gal et al., 2020, pg. 1).

In some instances the use of these types of algorithms can and do improve worker engagement, motivation and so on, but their use also poses some serious ethical challenges and have socio-economic consequences that are far more extensive than companies would like to recognise or admit to.

Dataveillance and people analytics involve an algorithmic analysis of large datasets in order to facilitate decision-making that can be deemed objective, fair, transparent, productive and efficient. “These algorithms can be used to optimise, filter, rank, and classify data to recommend courses of action to decision-makers: who to hire and fire, who to promote, how to optimise resource-allocation across projects, how to construct work teams to maximise their productivity, etc. However, algorithms do more

¹²⁴ At the time of writing, as we are emerging from what is hopefully the tail-end of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is becoming evident that there is a strong opposition forming against these practices. Many news outlets are already writing about “the great resignation”, as many workers have decided to pursue new jobs and careers after the lockdowns started to lift and the return to the office and its dreary conditions looms large. Wages in some sectors, like hospitality, are rising as a result, and working conditions and work-life balance have become important considerations when employing new workers and retaining existing ones. It remains to be seen whether this will have a lasting impact, or if it’s just a short-lived consequence of the pandemic.

than objectively detect subtle associations in large datasets to provide actionable recommendations. Algorithms have the power to govern their environment because they act as data filters in some cases and amplifiers in others. They plan and carry out analyses on data and render it meaningful, and they legitimise this meaning by producing results with apparent accuracy, simplicity, and objectivity. Algorithms can therefore affect how we conceptualise the world, modify its social structure, and alter our relationship to it” (Gal et al., 2020, pg. 4). Algorithms are also often employed for their ability to churn out predictive data, and the ability to make increasingly accurate predictions based on analyses of large datasets is improving consistently as artificial intelligence applications become more advanced. This ability to predict what could happen and how people will behave in certain situations and contexts is opening up a whole new field of knowledge for companies, and with it come whole new business opportunities and areas, a redefinition of many existing ones, and therefore a whole new approach to strategy and decision-making. In this new algorithmic world reigned over by managementality, businesses are finding themselves having to rethink their purpose, objectives, strategy, organisational structure and design, human resources development, and much more. They find themselves grappling with questions of how far to go in trusting the algorithms they employ to in fact make the right decisions. Are they better than managers in this regard? Are they free of inherent bias? How can the quality of the datasets underlying algorithmic decision-making be assessed and guaranteed? Is all of the data visible and available for evaluation? Do the people working with the data have a comprehensive understanding of the processes with which the datasets were collected and compiled? Where should algorithmic judgement begin and end, and when should a decision be left solely to a human being? This new corporate environment in which dataveillance and people analytics are so ubiquitously implemented is therefore exceedingly complex, and presents managers and workers alike with a minefield of new challenges, all stemming from what I referred to in previous chapters as the rise of datafication.

We find ourselves working within a system of datafication that is characterised by extensive algorithmic networks that gather information and data, churn out analyses of the data, and make, guide and inform decisions. But datafication is so much more than this. It is a decentralised dispositif or apparatus of power and control, as well as a form factor in the constitution of the subject of the twenty-first century - homo informaticus - who constitutes himself as a dividual or a divided self who is both a physical being-in-the-world and a datavidual. This datafication of contemporary society as well as its subjects has had a number of consequences which naturally also carry over into the workplace. Organisations as datafied entities themselves treat all stakeholders as dividuals - as both full-fleshed beings, but also as dataviduals, as subjects reconstituted into their own datafied form. The data that make up the datavidual in the workplace are generated both actively and passively, intentionally in the course of the job, or as metadata as (in)dividuals go about their day in the office or on the factory floor. “These data can be gleaned from performance evaluations, personality and psychological analyses, online activities, and relationships with colleagues. Once collected, these data can be systematically aggregated, analysed, and fed to algorithmic decision-making technology which are used to hire and fire members, allocate work, assess performance,

assign financial rewards, and manage in-company communications. When applied across an organization, such management-by-metrics becomes an all-encompassing exercise in quantifying and measuring members' practices" (Gal et al., 2020, pg. 6). It follows from this that in many contemporary companies and corporations even interactions between humans are becoming increasingly managed and regulated by algorithms. Gal et al (2020, pg. 6) give the example of companies like Uber and Deliveroo, which are highly datafied. These companies' business models are designed to reduce interactions amongst employees that are not algorithmically managed and mediated. "Instead, digital data and algorithms are applied to construct representations of members and their work, which form the basis for all decisions made about workers. Whenever feedback is given to workers about their performance, it is brief, quantitative and one-sided" (Gal et al., 2020, pg. 6).

There are a number of consequences that arise from this, one of which is the aforementioned neutralising schism. Other consequences include the fact that algorithms often miss or cannot account for anomalies and idiosyncrasies in human behaviour, and therefore a whole dimension in the comprehension of what motivates human behaviour is overlooked. Gal et al (2020, pg. 6) cite the example of an analytics platform that classifies employees into five types of pre-specified persona based on their behaviour and their social networks within the company. The analysis is done by counting how often employees engage in certain pre-defined types of behaviour. Once an employee has been classified accordingly, the platform will make decisions and suggestions as to how to manage that employee and influence his/her conduct. Additionally, the datafication of the workplace, the working subject, as well as the management, leads to a kind of reductionist mode of communication which "can severely impair [the] ability [of employees] to be meaningfully socialised into the organisation, and develop an understanding of organisational norms, values and culture" (Gal et al., 2020, pg. 6)¹²⁵. Not only this, but managers also run the risk of falling prey to analysis paralysis. Because the data that is gathered and analysed algorithmically is so readily available and easy to use, it is tempting for managers to use ever-increasing numbers of data sets as a basis for decision-making. That is until the data deluge becomes overwhelming and over-analysis results in no decision being made at all (Birkinshaw, 2020, pg. 26-27).

The datafication of the workplace also once again highlights the manifestation of pregenerative power. As noted in the preceding paragraphs, the data that is collected in the datafied workplace is analysed and then used to assess, interpret and evaluate employees' actions, emotions and communications in order to

¹²⁵ From a Foucauldian perspective, morality (in the sense that it refers to the values and rules for action that people adhere to because they are given by some kind of an authority) then also becomes problematic in the workplace of the twenty-first century.

classify, rank, sort and ultimately manipulate and manage their conduct at work¹²⁶, often pre-emptively. Not only has this given rise to the aforementioned new modality of power, but it has also resulted in the datafication of power in and of itself. Through the use of these types of algorithmic practices, the exercise of power has become automated to some extent, as have certain aspects of subjection and subjectification. It is a power that is not wielded solely by a human manager, but is often automated and exercised algorithmically in the space between the traditional human management structures and the employee, thus raising once again the spectre of the neutralising schism, which makes it difficult for employees to question or resist its exercise.

Additionally, we could argue that normalising judgement in the contemporary workplace has also become mechanised and, to a large degree, black-boxed, as algorithmic governmentality has taken hold throughout our societies and economies. A major problem with algorithmic normalising judgements, is that there is no agent, manager, or entity that is directly responsible or accountable for the judgement in question. The process behind the determination of such a judgement is also very often completely opaque to both the management of a company and its employees. So how do you question or resist a judgement from an entity that you cannot rightly identify or comprehend?

Another issue worth mentioning here, is that companies and corporations often shroud the data upon which managers base decisions in confidentiality policies. “Therefore, workers cannot follow the decision-making process and have no way of contributing to it. Consequently, algorithmic decisions can be encountered as arbitrary and nonsensical and leave workers with no recourse when they impact them negatively. This situation can become worse when recommendations are delivered in a formulaic fashion that is divorced from the local discourse that characterises the algorithm’s context of application” (Gal et al., 2020, pg. 5). So the question arises as to how workers within this new paradigm adapt.

In Chapter 2, I described how, under Taylorism and later under managerialism, workers applied certain strategies of coping with and offering up resistance to the technologies of power at play within their working environments. These included machismo or masculinisation, indifference, subordination, domination, resistance at a distance, amongst others. These are of course still in play in corporate cultures in varying degrees, but the question for today is how are they changing and what, if any, new strategies are emerging due to the effects of the cybershift on organisations?

¹²⁶ Some companies even monitor what employees do in their leisure time or at home, and use that data as a basis for making decisions. This mostly happens of course without employees’ full knowledge of just how much of that data is gathered and used. This is done especially via fitness trackers provided by the company, or through the GPS capabilities of mobile phones and company vehicles. Clawson and Clawson (2017, pg. 3) note that in the USA in particular, there are no statutes restricting the use of GPS by employers. In other words, employers have no obligation to let employees know that their phones are being used to track them when they are not at work. They mention an example of a company whose employees realised this and began to turn their phones off. The response from the company in question? Threaten to fire anyone who continued to do so!

As far as the strategy of machismo or masculinisation is concerned, dataveillance in many instances becomes a direct threat to this strategy of resistance in itself. Karen Levy (2016) conducted a study on the effects of dataveillance in a hyper-masculine workplace - in trucking in the United States. She found that dataveillance technology is widely perceived by individuals in such a workplace to be emasculating, thereby challenging this kind of gendered strategy of resistance. She notes (2016, pg. 363) that trucking companies are increasingly using digital fleet management systems to capture a whole host of metrics as regards a trucker's work. These include metrics on fuel efficiency, geolocation, driving habits (braking/ acceleration), speed, and even fatigue and general behaviour monitored through dashboard-mounted cameras facing the driver. Truck drivers, however, see these as a direct threat to their autonomy as well as their economic worth. "[M]any truckers describe such systems as treating them like children. Electronic management systems are seen to deride and devalue their autonomy and knowledge, and concomitantly, an element of their identity" (Levy, 2016, pg. 363). This then coincides with another strategy that I have already discussed, albeit in general terms and not as a strategy of resistance per sé - the strategy of creating an idealised persona or datavidual presence as a manifestation of resistance. In the case of men who feel disempowered or emasculated in the workplace or in the networked society in general, there is a tendency for them to curate their cyber self to strongly reflect their masculinity. Moreover, men in this position would be more likely to involve themselves in online communities comprised of other like-minded men. And so the kind of banter and camaraderie that occurred in workplaces like Hotpoint as a means of resistance in the Taylorist organisations of old, has found a new space in which to exist online. A study conducted by Schmitz and Kazyak (2016, pg. 6) analysed this phenomenon and found that these online communities tend to emphasise activities associated with traditional masculinity, for example weight lifting and hunting, in addition to offering "a breadth of lifestyle advice aimed at empowering men and encouraging them to unapologetically embrace their masculinity." This all takes place within a discursive environment characterised by "lad culture" which "emphasises men's independence from the constraints [of] social institutions such as the family, and critiques the 'new man' as feminized and disingenuous."

In fact, the inability of the dividual to escape dataveillance, coupled with his ability to be able to curate an idealised self (to a certain extent), or to control (at least somewhat) the metadata that makes up his datavidual, has resulted in the rise of a battleground between pregenerative power and resistance. Much of what the dividual does as he lives his life both offline and online generates all sorts of data sets that are ultimately used in service of this pregenerative power, and the dividual has little to no control over this. However, where the dividual does have a modicum of control, and therefore the ability to choose to resist this technology of power, is in his ability to curate the datavidual and to cultivate an awareness and knowledge of how his metadata is collected and used. This means not only trying to control what metadata he relinquishes to the network insofar as possible, but also to try to evade the dataveillance that

is responsible for the power effects he wants to resist. This type of resistance through evasion can be overt if indeed workers are aware of where and how they are being surveilled, and depending on the complexity of the technologies being put to use in dataveillance practices. Clawson and Clawson (2017, pg. 5) give an example of this: “Workers we spoke with offered sophisticated understandings of the coverage area and technical capacities of camera and audio surveillance. Workers might turn off their company-issued smartphones, or put a piece of tape over the camera of their company-issued laptop.” During the pandemic, surveillance practices increased exponentially as workers were forced to work from home, and they became far more invasive too in that they were now being used in the employee’s private space. Many employees therefore turned to software designed to counter this, like a programme that mimics the movement of a computer mouse when you are away from your desk, so that it looks like you are there working.

But evasion may also be far more subtle, in that dataveilled subjects in the workplace could carry over the kind of detached acceptance described by Simone Weil in the Taylorist workplace, into the twenty-first century workplace. This means adopting a similar kind of ascetic self-mastery in the sense of carefully considering and editing every action and every word spoken or written in any forum that is shared with colleagues and employers. It means being acutely aware, for example, that every keystroke on your work PC is being logged and algorithmically analysed and therefore self-editing at all times, and never giving the employer more information than is absolutely necessary, and never sharing one’s creativity with them. If the surveillance is supposed to act on your mind and psyche (as opposed to your body as with disciplinary power), then the one thing that a dividual can black-box is their innate talent, creativity and intelligence, especially by employing techniques aimed at acquiring knowledge of the self. It is essentially also an attempt then at cordoning off a part of the space between the dividual and the datavidual within which algorithmic governmentality operates by limiting how much of yourself you give over to data collection, at least as far as the circumstances will allow, and as far as is possible within the limitations of your knowledge. Opposing pregenerative power in the workplace then, insofar as it means withholding certain abilities and talents from the employer in the course of doing the work, is a form of empowerment or resistance that operates in much the same manner as Weil’s detached acceptance. It is a form of freedom that results from self-control, from carefully curating the datavidual at work, and is a manifestation of a new technology of the self and a new kind of askēsis.

There is another new strategy of resistance, which I have already discussed in Chapter 2 but which warrants another mention here, and that is the ability for workers to turn the tables of surveillance or dataveillance back on the ones perpetrating the surveillance. According to Clawson and Clawson (2017, pg. 5), “Employees can sometimes...surveil their own bosses and companies; downloaded digital records can document nefarious employer practices. Because of their videoing capacity, phones can be used to document sexual harassment, challenge the truth of a supervisor’s claims, or collect and disseminate wage theft data. Such actions can work to destabilise employers’ authority; for example, during a strike, workers can post videos of managers struggling to perform worker jobs.” Surveillance has, to some degree, become

democratised in that with its migration from physical, panoptic structures to the internet and algorithmic applications (the cyberopticon), it has taken on a multi-directional character as opposed to being hierarchical. This means that anyone can be the surveillant and anyone can be surveilled.

In Chapter 5, I discussed at some length the prevalence of institutionalised critique and whistleblowing in managerialist environments, and now also those characterised by managementality. It is clear that a line can be drawn between this, and the democratisation of surveillance. I noted in that chapter that the burden of systemic ethical responsibility that arose from neoliberal capitalist regimes also, as a consequence, gave rise to a form of institutionalised parrhesia, wherein homo economicus became required to speak truth to power in the case of ethical violations or injustices, but only insofar as the official channels designated for this purpose would allow. The subject of today finds himself in a position whereby he has access to the tools and mechanisms to not only speak truth to power, but also to back it up with surveillance evidence. Yet he still faces the same constraint of having to use official channels within which to expose the surveillance, or face the great risk of being a true parrhesiastes. This type of resistance of turning the tables on the surveillance being perpetrated therefore becomes weakened because the exposure of the truth through such means is regulated and constrained by institutional limits.

The working subject within managementality, homo informaticus, therefore still finds himself in the same precarious position that homo economicus found himself in at work: a position in which he is expected to see the moral shortcomings of his environment and to take responsibility for speaking out against them. However, if this is done by gathering electronic evidence of the wrongdoing, then his position can become even more precarious, since this type of evidence gathering is often seen as an unacceptable course of action, is downright forbidden within the confines of the system's channels of institutionalised critique, or is illegal. This makes information gathered and reported in this way far more of an act of parrhesia in the Foucauldian sense, since it usually entails unveiling the truth at great personal risk.

The new working environment under the regime of managementality has therefore left us with an ethical landscape that is markedly different from that which we became accustomed to under managerialism. We have entered a post-neoliberal era, and yet business ethics is still most often seen through a neoliberal lens. I believe that the time has come for us to find a new approach to business ethics, and to do so, I look to Foucault for answers.

A New Business Ethics for the Era of the Cybershift

The discussion of the cybershift and its consequences throughout this thesis raises no doubt that it has ushered in an era in which both (in)dividuals and organisations are increasingly facing an environment in which the traditional ethical frameworks in business and society need to be reconsidered.

In the business world, there is a strong tradition of implementing a deontological approach to ethics. Companies spend a great deal of time and money coming up with sets of ethics rules and regulations, writing up moral codes and ethical standards, implementing bureaucratic procedures, and drawing up value statements. While this approach certainly still has its place, there are strong signs that it has become inadequate as a standalone approach when it comes to the practice of business ethics in contemporary organisations. The fact is that new ethical issues are cropping up at an unprecedented rate because of the speed of technological innovation, whilst policy making is inherently bureaucratic and slow. Moreover, ethical codes and standards increasingly have to account for algorithmic decisions and actions as well, and, as I have already discussed at length in the preceding paragraphs, these pose significant challenges - not the least of which is the issue of trying to hold someone accountable for any ethical breaches arising from algorithmic decisions.

Another problem that has arisen within the new business environment of the twenty-first century, relates to the application of a deontological approach in the design of data compilation and decision-making algorithms themselves. Lim and Taeihagh (2019, pg.19) point out that when deontological rules are written into algorithms, there is a strong possibility that rule conflicts could occur or that legal and ethical ambiguities are difficult to write into the code in the first place, thereby creating problematic outcomes during a decision-making or data compilation process.¹²⁷ This situation is complicated even further by algorithms (notably machine learning and artificial intelligence algorithms) that are programmed to construct their own rules,¹²⁸ since the possibility then arises for an algorithm to override the original ethical rules it was programmed to follow as it learns, while at the same time increasing opacity or the ability for a human analyst to find out where and how such an event occurred during the algorithm's learning process. In the words of Hauer (2018, pg. 2), "We cannot reveal how the machine comes to a rule that tells it that something is ethically correct or incorrect...And maybe we will have to admit that these machines will create their own ethics."

This idea that machines could create their own ethics is a frequent topic of discussion in machine ethics, and some argue that if machines can create their own ethics or act as moral agents by making decisions that have ethical or moral outcomes, then they should be considered blameworthy or responsible agents in and of themselves. Mittelstadt et al. (2016, pg. 11), however, make a case against considering algorithms

¹²⁷ In fact, algorithms are often designed with Kantian categorical imperatives in mind - in other words fixed moral rules and principles are built into their code simply because these kinds of fixed rules are translatable and understandable for a machine, which in turn allows algorithms to build upon themselves and apply these imperatives as they learn. However, what this ultimately means, is that there is often no human arbiter, no common-sense mediator as it were, that can step in when the application of the rule results in an unintended undesirable or unethical result during algorithmic decision-making. Another element to this is frequently mentioned in literature on the development of autonomous vehicles - the issue of how to teach an algorithm to deal with the complexities of the famous trolley problem. In other words, how should an autonomous vehicle react when it is on a collision course that will claim the lives of either pedestrians, passengers in another vehicle, or the passengers within the autonomous vehicle itself?

¹²⁸ Mittelstadt et al. (2016, pg.3) explain how this works: "The algorithm's work involves placing new inputs into a model or classification structure...The algorithm 'learns' by defining rules to determine how new inputs will be classified."

that can learn as moral agents that should be assigned some degree of moral responsibility. They note that only humans have intentionality, and that having intentionality is a prerequisite for taking moral responsibility. They argue that “[a]ssigning moral agency to artificial agents can allow human stakeholders to shift the blame to algorithms. Denying agency to artificial agents makes designers responsible for the unethical behaviour of their semi-autonomous creations; bad consequences reflect bad design.” The fact of the matter, however, is that holding a designer of an algorithm responsible for the rules that were written into the code, as well as the rules that the algorithm might have created through its learning process, is simply not realistically executable. One reason for this is the opacity of algorithms, especially as they become more complex and advanced. Another is the practical obstacle of needing to mobilise massive amounts of resources (manpower and money) in order to be able to effectively do so in every instance where an algorithmic decision has had an unethical or immoral outcome. And, as mentioned in the previous section, companies designing algorithms are diametrically opposed to accepting responsibility. They tend to pass the buck to the user.

A consequentialist approach is also an ethical minefield within this new environment of managementality or algorithmic governmentality. As I noted in Chapter 5, consequentialists tend to place an emphasis on the limits of actions and behaviours over moral character. They favour a focus on the utilitarian or beneficial outcomes of actions, rather than consider the costs and benefits of the actions themselves. It is very tempting to take a consequentialist view of ethics within algorithmic governmentality since, if you cannot identify or understand the processes and logic inherent to an algorithmic decision or action, or take the point of view that an algorithm cannot have a sense of morality, then there is nothing left to consider but the outcome. Moreover, it is commonplace for algorithms to have been written or designed from within a consequentialist framework to begin with, so it is easy to automatically regard an algorithmic decision as inherently the best decision for the greatest number of stakeholders. However, when collective rather than individual harms are minimised, it could lead to discriminatory outcomes (Lim and Taeihagh, 2019, pg.19; Mittelstadt et al., 2016, pg. 1). The fact that a consequentialist approach is inherent in the algorithm itself though, gives us a normative justification for the outcomes of algorithmic decisions, even if they are discriminatory in nature. Not only is this a challenge to human epistemic authority, but it also allows considerable room for deniability or scapegoating in the face of ethically dubious outcomes - in other words here too we run into the problem of the neutralising schism. If we defer to math washing, or the idea that the data generated by, or the decisions and recommendations made by algorithms are inherently neutral because they're algorithmic and therefore 'scientific' or 'mathematical', then we run the risk of finding ourselves at an impasse between our human morals and values, and the perceived neutrality or amorality of the system.

Mittelstadt et al. (2016, pg. 5) point out another facet of this neutralising schism, and that is that algorithmic decision-making, data collation and compilation and so on have a transformative effect on the world at large, and on the ways in which we do business. They argue that:

The ethical challenges posed by the spreading use of algorithms cannot always be retraced to clear cases of epistemic

or ethical failures, for some of the effects of the reliance on algorithmic data processing and (semi-) autonomous decision-making can be questionable and yet appear ethically neutral because they do not seem to cause any obvious harm. This is because algorithms can affect how we conceptualise the world, and modify its social and political organisation. Algorithmic activities, like profiling, reontologise the world by understanding and conceptualising it in new, unexpected ways, and triggering and motivating actions based on the insights it generates.

In other words, the very premise of a consequentialist design is brought into question by the perception that algorithms are inherently neutral or not causing any harm, since the algorithms themselves may have changed the ways in which we view harms, the greater good and so forth. This may account, at least in part, for the broad and unquestioning acceptance of some of the forms of workplace dataveillance and people analytics that were discussed in earlier chapters.

A common argument found in machine ethics literature, is that in order to effectively address any ethical and moral issues that may arise from the ubiquitous use of algorithms both in society and the workplace, transparency is necessary. Since algorithmic decision-making, and even data compilation for use in human decision-making, have been shown to be prone to inherent bias, are complex, and reflective of patterned institutional and organisational practices, it is important that all data is made visible and open to analysis and scrutiny. The idea is that it would then be possible to evaluate whether algorithmic decisions and recommendations are fair, reasonable or even ethical (Gal et al., 2020, pg. 5). Once again, this brings up the problem of opacity.

I discussed three kinds of opacity that we routinely encounter in corporate environments, in this thesis. The first has been around for as long as businesses have been in existence, and that is corporate secrecy. In the business world of today, corporate secrecy as it relates to anything algorithmic would simply mean protecting business data and information, and keeping sensitive data under wraps. Typical ethical issues surrounding this type of opacity are well understood in business ethics, and there is a wealth of literature from all of the relevant normative ethical perspectives on these. Usually there are also regulatory frameworks and policies in place within industry to deal with ethical issues surrounding corporate opacity, such as reporting channels and whistleblowing procedures, although these run into their own issues within the technological landscape of today, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The second type of opacity is a lack of technical know-how, which occurs when the inner workings of an algorithm cannot be understood well by the people who have to account for the consequences of algorithmically-produced data used in human decision making, or the outcomes of a decision suggested or made by an algorithm. However, insofar as it is possible to obtain expert analysis of algorithmic decisions, or even to train or educate users in the processes used by an algorithm in question, it is indeed possible (albeit difficult) to employ some of the existing business ethics approaches that are commonplace in organisations to deal with any issues that may arise. It is possible, for example, to establish policies, standards and procedures for dealing with ethical issues that arise from this type of opacity and to defer to

a human decision-maker. For example, in the types of cases mentioned in the above relating to staff scheduling. This is a well-recognised problem in the information technology sector and there are several companies and academics working on reducing this type of algorithmic opacity by making the algorithms and their inner functioning more explainable or comprehensible.¹²⁹

The third kind of opacity is the most troubling one in the context of this discussion. This is the opacity that arises when an algorithm is essentially black-boxed. In other words, the logic and the processes it employs when it produces data sets or makes decisions are so complex that it defies most, if not all, human comprehension. These algorithms are the ones that drive machine learning, deep neural networks and artificial intelligence. They are also responsible for more of a neutralising abyss than a schism. It is very difficult to attribute or accept responsibility for ethical problems caused by an algorithm that is beyond comprehension, and in fact it also invariably becomes a convenient type of escape from the neoliberal burden of systemic ethical responsibility.

This is where a hybrid deontological/consequentialist approach becomes, at first glance, the most obvious seemingly tenable solution to ethical issues that arise from this type algorithmic decision making. Magalhães (2018, pg. 2) argues that the consequentialist side of this approach stems from the prevalence of the notion of algorithmic harm in the pervading discussions regarding ethical approaches to algorithmic decision-making, whereas the deontological side is prevalent in discussions relating to “universal moral values as a measure of good.” In other words, when algorithms are black-boxed, it is up to the end user (the manager or the employee in the case of business environments) to assess whether the outcome is harmful or not, and to govern their own behaviour in relation to any dubious algorithmic decisions in accordance with the prevailing values, norms and codes that govern other behaviours and interactions in the company.

I want to argue that this does not go nearly far enough to deal with the many complexities and challenges arising from the cybershift that I have raised throughout this thesis. For all the reasons laid out in Chapter 4, I believe that a hybrid virtue ethics and Foucauldian approach is a better fit for the corporate environments of the twenty-first century and the unique issues that have arisen with the advent of the cybershift.

Virtue ethics of course entered mainstream business ethics discussions quite some time ago, and there is a wealth of literature on the subject of implementing a virtue ethics approach to ethical and moral challenges in business contexts. It is a far more recent addition to the field of ethics in technology however, and has occurred because of certain concerns with approaches based in deontology and consequentialism, both of which tend to lose sight of the character of the moral agent. In the words of Reijers and Coeckelbergh (2017, pg. 98), “virtue ethics does not focus on right action or intent but on the cultivation of character, which avoids the increasing difficulty of facing unpredictability in technological

¹²⁹ This is not without its caveats, as pointed out by Grote and Berens (2020, pg. 208): “First explainable to whom?... Either the bar might be set too high for some stakeholders, or the explanation might become too simplified, omitting meaningful information.”

change.”

Consequentialism has a problem of being unable to predict the outcomes of emerging technologies, algorithmic decisions and recommendations, and data aggregation. Deontology, on the other hand, has a problem with being able to establish universal rules and norms in an environment where change is happening rapidly. In other words, deontology has a bureaucracy problem, which makes it slow to adapt and respond to rapid change. Reijers and Coeckelbergh (2017, pg. 98-99) argue that virtue ethics is a tenable alternative because it “retains a necessary dynamism (cultivating virtuous character to cope with contingent circumstances)” and, on top of that, “does not only represent an ethical tradition in the Western world, but can be found in different shapes across cultures (notably in Buddhist ethics and Confucian moral philosophy)...” In other words, it is an approach that is better suited for the global context of the present day.

Virtue ethics moreover brings a concern for the other into focus. As discussed before, virtue ethicists like Alisdair MacIntyre regard ethics not just as a question of what we ought to do as individuals, but also to discover who we are in relation to others. It is our shared forms of life that make us inherently virtuous or moral. The fact of the matter is that the cybershift has brought with it new shared forms of life, notably in social media and the like. Deontological and consequentialist approaches in business ethics are not able to adequately explore how social media, intranets, the Internet and so forth have changed or are changing the ways in which (in)dividuals relate to others (or to these technologies in and of themselves for that matter), and what impact this may have on ethical and moral action and decision-making.

In terms of the dilemma posed by a deontological, utilitarian/consequentialist, or even a hybrid approach to the ethics of algorithmic decision-making, an argument made by Vallor (2016, pg. 24) seems to solve at least some of the problems outlined. She posits that virtue ethics claims that fixed principles and rules are just codifications of the patterns of reasoning that are typically exhibited by virtuous people. She says that from this point of view, “moral expertise does not come from fixed moral principles, but is *reflected* in them...” Viewing the issue of the morality of algorithmic decision-making in this way, allows us to separate man from machine as it were. We can recognise that moral principles and codes can be programmed into machines, and even that algorithms could very well construct their own kind of moral reasoning atop of these codified principles. However, it also allows us to acknowledge, at the same time, that a virtuous human needs to exercise moral judgement in the face of a dubious ethical outcome from an algorithmic decision.

Vallor (2016, pg. 26) goes on to say that “moral virtue presupposes knowledge or understanding. Yet, unlike theoretical knowledge, the kind of knowledge required for moral virtue is not satisfied by a grasp of universal principles, but requires recognition of the relevant and operative practical conditions. Moral expertise thus entails a kind of knowledge extending well beyond a cognitive grasp of rules and principles to include emotional and social intelligence...”

At present this kind of knowledge lies beyond the purview of machines and algorithms, even artificial

intelligence. Bringing a virtue ethics point of view to the debate, therefore, will allow us to address the problems posed by algorithmic opacity, math washing, and the neutralising schism. Recognising that only human individuals have the capacity for this kind of knowledge is imperative to maintaining ethical and moral accountability.

There are of course also shortcomings to a virtue ethics-based approach. As I noted in the previous chapter, one problem that virtue ethicists have with a deontological approach in business ethics, is that a compliance to rules effectively bureaucratises ethics by removing moral choices from actors and desensitising people to moral judgement. When it comes to a virtue ethics approach to algorithmic decision-making, a similar problem crops up. If we recognise that the aforementioned kind of moral knowledge or expertise is what sets man and machine apart, we run the risk of relegating codified ethical and moral rules to the domain of machines and focusing solely on the moral character of human individuals when faced with moral and ethical decision-making, thereby desensitising people to moral codes. Another caveat is that by focusing solely on the moral character of the humans who have to hand down or field algorithmic decisions or decisions based on algorithmic data, and ignoring the ways in which technologies and algorithms affect the ways in which humans constitute themselves as agents of moral and ethical action, we run the risk of actually widening the neutralising schism. Additionally, virtue ethics discussions in the field of ethics in technology tend to focus primarily on the ways in which we, as humans, can cultivate our virtues so as to be able to handle the challenges and changes posed by this new technological environment in an ethically better way. Agency, therefore, “is mainly attributed to humans who can cultivate her [sic]...virtues, not to the technologies that are involved in this process of cultivation. Thereby [sic], virtue ethics of technology currently lacks an account of how virtues are in turn shaped or mediated by technologies” (Reijers and Coeckelbergh, 2017, pg. 99).¹³⁰

What is clear from the above, is that there is no singular normative approach to business ethics in the era of the cybershift that fully addresses all of the challenges and pitfalls we face. In this thesis, I therefore attempted a Foucauldian analysis of this paradigm shift itself in order to understand what has changed, what brought about the changes, in what ways these changes have manifested, and how they might affect the ways in which we can and should approach business ethics in the current environment we find ourselves in. My intention therefore was never to simply apply Foucault’s ethics to business ethics in the twenty-first century, but rather to understand if and why a new approach to business ethics is necessary through a Foucauldian analysis of our current paradigm shift, and to then try to hammer out the beginnings of such a renewed approach.

¹³⁰ Another element to this, is the incorporation of virtue ethics into algorithm design. Mittelstadt et al. (2016, pg. 11) note that it is possible for virtue ethics to provide rule sets for easily computable algorithmic decision structures. They say that an “ideal model for artificial moral agents based on heroic virtues” is possible “wherein algorithms are trained to be heroic and thus, moral.”

The cybershift has swept some fundamental changes into every corner of Western society. Some of these changes are things we have seen and experienced before, albeit in different iterations, in different historical eras. However, some of these changes are truly unprecedented. We can, for example, go back as far as Plato to seek answers as to what is currently happening to Western democracy and the relation of that to free speech, the truth and so on. What we cannot find in the annals of history, is how to deal with the fact that human beings are now effectively living in an added dimension within which we encounter and interact with forms of intelligence and knowledge that are not inherently human or, in some cases, no longer purely of human creation. What complicates matters further, is that artificial intelligence and the knowledge that springs forth from it is growing at an exponential pace, and this, in turn, is feeding the explosive growth of emerging technologies. We are, without a doubt, living, working and doing business in the fastest-changing landscape in human history, and this acceleration is not showing any signs of decreasing. We are therefore dealing with a world in which specific past practices and a reliance on conjecture based on past experience in order to foresee consequences is no longer possible for a vast array of problems we face. In the words of Vallor (2016, pg. 28):

The problem is that *emerging* technologies like social networking software, social robotics, global surveillance networks, and biomedical human enhancement are not yet sufficiently developed to be assignable to specific practices with clear consequences for definite stakeholders. They present open developmental *possibilities* for human culture as a whole, rather than fixed options from which to choose. The kind of deliberation they require, then, is entirely different from the kind of deliberation involved in the former set of problems.

In terms of ethics then, and particularly business ethics, we find ourselves facing several sticky challenges, many of which have already been addressed, but which bear mentioning again, as these are the challenges I hope to have addressed through a Foucauldian approach.

The first point I would like to make is that a Foucauldian approach allows us to give context to the environment within which ethical decision-making occurs, and to acknowledge that this context is fluid. Through taking a holistic view of Foucault's body of work (as opposed to just his ethics) and bringing that forward into an analysis of the present, we can establish that we are indeed experiencing a profound paradigm shift at this point in the history of humanity. It allows us to acknowledge that established philosophical concepts such as knowledge and the truth have also changed at a fundamental level.

A Foucauldian approach therefore, a genealogy of the twenty-first century if you will, shows how Western societies are beginning to shake off the vestiges of neoliberalism and adapting to a post-neoliberal world characterised by managementality and populated by homo technologicus, or the twenty-first century dividual. This gives us a deeper understanding of not only the new world within which we find ourselves, but also of who we are and how we should conduct ourselves within that world. In other words, it allows

us to reevaluate and reconsider the established approaches to issues of morality and ethics in business and in society that we have relied on for so long, but which now seem to be on shaky turf.

It is my position that, in order to make sense of the moral and ethical landscape we find ourselves in, and in order to find a tenable approach to the sticky ethical questions we are increasingly having to deal with as we produce more and more technological innovations,¹³¹ a Foucauldian approach whereby we can go back to the philosophical drawing board as it were, and ask questions about what it means to be a subject in this period in human history and development, is critical. From there we need to ask how this subject of the twenty-first century is brought to life, especially vis-à-vis power, resistance, freedom and so on. It is only once we understand the dynamics of the world within which we currently find ourselves, and through a deep understanding of how we constitute ourselves as subjects within this world, that we can begin to understand what it means to live well, do good, and flourish as a society at this particular juncture in time.

I have therefore contended that a Foucauldian approach to ethics (and in particular a care of the self that is predicated upon a deep and fundamental understanding of what it means to be a self within the cybershift and everything it brings with it) could be very useful in dealing with the new moral and ethical issues we face in the business world in particular. I also believe that where a Foucauldian approach has certain shortcomings, a virtue ethics approach is a good complement (as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5).

Not only is such an approach dynamic and fluid enough to deal with the unprecedented challenges of the twenty-first century, but it also hinges on concrete practices. It recognises that morals and ethics, as opposed to being imposed upon the (in)dividual from an external source like company value statements and codes of conduct, can be trained and experienced internally, as part of the cultivation and growth of the subject of our era, *homo technologicus*. Vallor (2016, pg. 174) says that “moral self-cultivation presupposes effective habits of self-appraisal...” I want to argue that by being a curator of the self, by being aware of our dividual/datavidual constitution, and very importantly, by continually evaluating how our actions and interactions both online and offline feed back into how we constitute ourselves as ethical (in)dividuals, we have a ready pathway towards exactly those habits of self-appraisal. In order to be able to deal with the unique environment humanity finds itself in, particularly at work and in business, it is necessary to retain the current deontological and consequentialist practices insofar as they are useful for dealing with the knowns, but then to supplement these with practices of the self, with deliberately cultivated moral and ethical skills and virtues.

The idea of the dividual as a divided self with a datavidual presence online in the web, and soon in the metaverse, is an important one within this approach to ethics and business ethics. By seeing the datavidual as an authentic division of the self, we give it an elevated status. We are no longer just dealing with data that we simply produce and release, like sheafs of paper scattered in the wind. By coming to the realisation

¹³¹ Consider for example the new technologies that are being developed and will still arise from virtual reality, or the metaverse as it has recently come to be called.

that this data is an accurate and telling portrayal of as well as a facet of our identity, our personhood, we can also imbue it with certain rights. Harvesting that data then becomes akin to harvesting a person's organs. It is a part of the self as much as any appendage. This has important implications for human rights, but is also a first important step towards bridging the neutralising schism and establishing a basis for accountability. According to Vallor (2016, pg. 169),

too many new social media investors, developers, and engineers still believe that ethics is not their business - or even that it is inimical to innovation and productivity. In response to a media question about whether his company had ever thought of hiring an ethicist to consult on their decision to conduct secret experiments on their users, Christian Rudder, co-founder of OK Cupid, joked 'To wring his hands all day for \$100,00 a year?...No, we have not thought of that.'

Adopting a mindset change, in which user data is seen as an extension of the person, and consequently treating that data as an extension of the person, with transparency, care, and the full consent of its associated individual, would go a long way towards combating any harm that may arise from attitudes such as these in the business world. Ideally it would lead to greater care being taken when developing and coding new technologies and innovations to address potential biases and so on; monitoring existing ones consistently to evaluate the impact of data produced, algorithmic decisionmaking and so on; and assigning a human point of contact in every company to deal with ethical issues that arise from the misuse of data or from algorithmic decisionmaking.

Moreover, by seeing the data as an extension of the individual which carries with it certain human rights, we can begin to combat the problem of pregenerative power - that power that operates in the space between the will to act and the action itself. By being aware of when and how our data is being used and by having control over the data we relinquish, we would be in a better position to understand when and how our behaviours are being managed or orchestrated, when we are being preemptively judged for actions we had not yet undertaken, and when we are dealing with asymmetric power relations that require resistance. We would also be better positioned to develop strategies of resistance, particularly in the face of harm.

Another advantage of a Foucauldian approach to business ethics issues is that it allows us to retain an understanding that codes of conduct are still very much in play in how we deal with ethical problems, as well as how these have shaped not only the business environment, but also our perceptions, preconceptions, relations of power, and our subjectivity. In this world where we are faced with new power relations, the phenomenon of post-truth, and an epistemic crisis like we have never encountered in any age before this, we need to rethink what it means to be an individual, a society and what it means to live well and flourish from the ground up. It is a new philosophical age for sure.

It is clear at this point that the technologies being developed and the decisions that are being made in the twenty-first century, whether by humans or algorithms, will impact the future wellbeing of the entire

human species and its future generations, and since technological development is largely concentrated in the hands of businesses and corporations, business ethics has become more important than at any other point in the short history of the discipline.

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