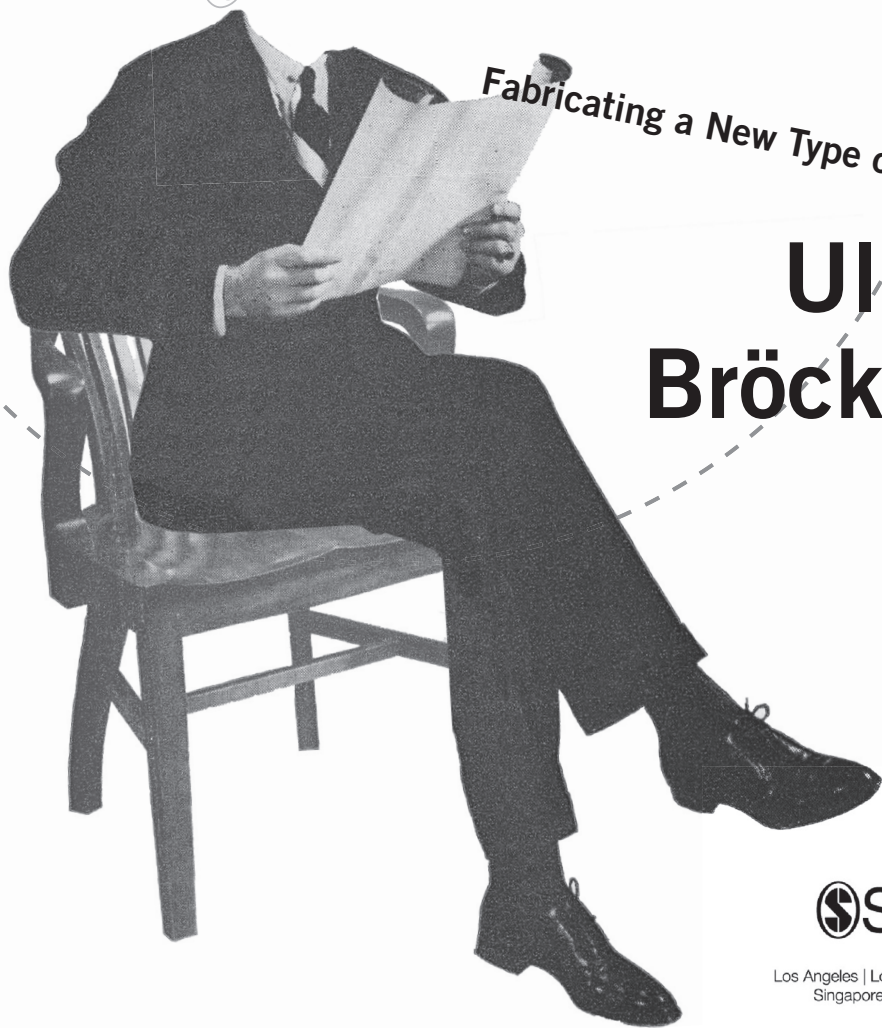# THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF

Fabricating a New Type of Subject

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1

GENEALOGY OF SUBJECTIFICATION

The Subject is a Battlefield.[1]

Paradoxes of the self

Becoming a subject is a paradoxical process in which active and passive elements, autonomy and heteronomy, are inextricably intertwined. According to the version prevalent since George Herbert Mead,[2] the self brings itself about by adopting the perspective of the other, thereby generating a self-image. The self must therefore already exist at least in rudimentary form in order to perform this act of subjectification through objectification. From an anthropological point of view, the contradiction between self-constitution and antecedent constitution is a consequence of the human being's 'eccentric positionality'. The human becomes a subject because it needs to *make* itself what it already is, because it needs to lead the life that it lives.[3] What characterizes this subject is that it recognizes itself, forms itself and acts as an autonomous I. Yet it derives its ability to act from precisely those instances against which it asserts its autonomy. For the self, coming into being coincides with being subjugated.[4]

The paradox of subjectification thus interpenetrates with that of power, understood as the ensemble of forces affecting the subject. On the one hand, power predates the subject. The subject is neither just a docile victim nor a self-willed opponent of power interventions, but rather always their posterior effect. On the other hand, power can only be exercised on subjects and therefore presupposes them. Power is based on the contingency of human action and therefore must presuppose an element of freedom. If human behaviour were completely determined, there would be no need for power interventions and indeed they would be ineffectual, they would

just bounce off. According to Michel Foucault, the exercise of power operates through a 'total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions: it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action'. For the person whose action is affected in this way, 'a whole field of responses, reactions, results and possible inventions may open up'.[5]

The subject absorbs the forces it is exposed to, modifying their points of contact, directions and intensities. By so doing it bends them around and directs them at itself. As Deleuze writes, '[s]ubjectivation is created by folding'.[6] Exercise of power becomes reflexive. As Kierkegaard famously put it, 'the self is the relationship to oneself'.[7] In self-exploration, self-modelling and self-expression, the self constitutes itself as its own object, makes an image of itself and gives itself its own shape. It is here doubly bound; obtaining the status of subject means, as Foucault writes, on the one hand, 'being subject to someone else by control and dependence', while, on the other hand, it means being 'tied to his own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge'.[8] This polyvalence returns on the level of language in the double meaning of most 'self' composites. The 'self' in self-control designates both the controlling and the controlled element; self-determination can mean determining one's own self as well as having one's self determined by others.[9] The subject is both effect and pre-condition, address and author of power interventions. It is an entity that performs its own creation but whose performances are built into orders of knowledge, into plays of force and relations of domination. In this interpenetration of affecting, being affected and self-affecting lies the paradox of self-constitution: 'If the subject is *neither* fully determined by power *nor* fully determining (of power but significantly and partially both), the subjected exceeds the logic of noncontradiction, is an excrescence logic, as it were.'[10]

Paradoxes cannot be resolved, which is why they persist in the form of problems.[11] In other words, logical impossibilities perpetuate themselves as practical tasks. There can be no such thing as a subject free of contradiction. Correspondingly, the work of subjectification is as unavoidable as it is inter-minable. This work is recursive since the worker and her object coincide. Consequently, there is a multiplication of self-references (as is indicated not only by the frequency of the prefix 'self') into which stops can be built, although the movement cannot be permanently halted. The subject of sub-jectification exists only in the gerundive, as that *to be* scientifically examined, pedagogically advanced, therapeutically supported, informed, legally sanc-tioned, aesthetically presented, politically administered, economically made productive, etc.[12] It is neither the final principle of thinking, willing and feeling, nor the imaginational centre of the person, in which an authentic I can crystallize despite all 'alienation', nor is it the potential sovereign that must first free itself from all possible 'colonisations'. It is neither tabula rasa,

in which the social powers inscribe themselves, nor the autonomous author of its own life. The subject is the focal point for all the efforts to define and control it from without and within. It is a social problem and an individual task, not a product but rather a relation of production.

This makes it necessary to radically historicize notions of what a subject is. What a subject is has not been decided once and for all, but rather can only be disclosed via the historical complexes of semantics and knowledge, the self and social technologies that have been and continue to be appealed to in its theoretical determination and practical formation.[13] Such an undertaking is aimed neither at a history-of-ideas approach to the individual nor at an historical reconstruction of the human sciences. Nor is it a variant of psycho-history or historical-genetic psychology, pursuing changes in knowledge and practices of the body, of emotion, imagination, cognition. Finally, no individual life stories or self-portraits will be delineated, as biographically oriented social research attempts to do. As informative as the results of such disciplines and self-disciplines are, the present study adopts a different focus. It follows the research programme that Nikolas Rose[14] terms, with reference to Michel Foucault, 'genealogy of subjectification'. This programme does not investigate the transformations of subjectivity, but rather the way in which the subject has been problematized in certain historical moments and the solutions that have been found. In other words, the study is not asking what a subject is but which knowledge is mobilized in order to answer this question and which methods are applied to actually shape the subject.

Subjectification, understood in this way, is more than just individualization. Inversely, the latter should in turn be decoded as a particular mode of subjectification that is historically contingent and subject to historical transformation; a mode by which individuals, when observing and describing themselves, determine what they are, not in terms of positions or affiliations but by what distinguishes them from everyone else.[15] Since its beginnings, sociology has shown that modern societies cause individualization and socialization to mutually reinforce. The more the individual is socialized, the more it is individualized, and vice versa. Sketching the consequence of these dynamics, Niklas Luhmann writes, 'being an individual becomes a duty' because, for the individual, 'the uniqueness and incomparability of his social existence becomes the premise of social exchange with him'. He 'is categorized in almost all contexts … but so that the category always refers to an individual and the category merely regulates the extent to which his individuality is concretely investigated and needs to be actualized as the premise of further conduct'.[16] The paradox of subjectification returns here in the form of a self-relation that grasps individualization either as a process of replicating social prototypes or as an internal dialogue or struggle between several selves. The oxymoron of a series of unique things follows from the first case, while from the other results the oxymoron of a divided individual. While 'homme-copie'[17] must again and again assure himself of

his own particularity, the plural self is never done with gathering its separate elements into a coherent whole.[18]

Without adopting Luhmann's theory of differentiation, the present study follows his reconstruction of historical semantics by focusing on the terminologies and complexes of knowledge by which individuals are assigned to types and compelled to individualize. However, the study is less interested in the 'cultivated semantics' of social-scientific self-description of society, concentrating instead on the unspectacular yet intrusive 'utility semantics' of training manuals, psychological advice books, management and self-management programmes, which provide concrete instructions on how to deal with people and how people should behave in order to pass as individuals.[19] At the same time, the genealogy of subjectification is concerned not only with the store of rules for making sense within a society or its functioning systems, but it also extends its focus to the institutional arrangements and expertise systems, categories of ordering and methods of sorting, learning programmes and mechanisms of sanctioning, (self) monitoring and (self) formation procedures with the help of which individualized subjects are generated and self-generate. While system theory grasps semantics as idealized and/or post hoc description of societal structures, the genealogy of subjectification analyses the complex processes of joining and translating between discourse formations, social technologies and technologies of the self. It shares with Luhmann his methodical nominalism and a regard for the equally differentiating and homogenizing effects of the regimes of self. Instead of presupposing something like individualization in order to produce descriptions of current phenomena accordingly, the genealogy traces the dispositif of knowledge and practices, which both enables and compels people to grasp themselves as autonomous persons with a distinctive identity they can seek to express authentically; that knowledge and those practices, in short, which have caused them to see and govern themselves as individuals. However, whereas system theory sees a co-evolution of individualization and a social structure of functional specialization, the genealogy of subjectification is focused on the discontinuities, on what goes on beneath a radar system that only picks up stratified and functionally differentiated forms of socialization. Instead of writing a history of the development or even the decline of the subject, it identifies disparate historical configurations in which specific ways of thinking about subjects are combined with specific ways of actually shaping them.

Along similar lines, the geneaology I am presenting here can also be distinguished from Anthony Giddens' considerations of the 'trajectories of the self' in late modernity,[20] which he diagnoses as a phenomenon of the present, as well as Ulrich Beck's related studies on individualization in the risk society. Both emphasize that contemporary forms of socialization present people with an unprecedented range of choices, while at the same time compelling them to choose between them. Beck writes:

To modify Jean Paul Sartre's words, people are condemned to individuality. Individuality is a coercion, a paradox coercion to produce, self-design, self-stage not only one's own biography but also its involvements from outside and its networks, and this must be done throughout the changing preferences, decisions and stages of life. However, it is also done within the social-political conditional framework and stipulations of the education system (acquisition of certificates), the job market, labour and welfare regulations, the housing market, etc.[21]

Forcing people to become individuals also means they end up having to blame themselves for failing. Someone who is obliged to 'conceive himself or herself as the center of action, as the planning office with respect to his/her biography, abilities, orientations, relationships and so on'[22] cannot avoid viewing defeats as bad planning on their part. Subjectification thereby becomes an eminently political project. 'Leading your own life' in turn becomes a series of strategic decisions and tactical calculations, a 'politics of life'. The self comes to appear as a reflexive project, subjecting itself to permanent self-monitoring either on its own or with the help of professional advisors, therapists, coaches and other authorities, in order to continually re-adjust its life trajectory. Here, the chances of self-realization go hand in hand with the risk of crashing.

The genealogy of subjectification intersects with the theory of reflexive modernity at two points: in the thesis that, today, the government of the self is dictated to by self-government and, second, in its concern for the paradox of an obligation to be free. However, Beck and Giddens focus on how individuals seek to master their everyday lives in the fields of possibility provided for them while attempting to assemble their own biographies. Meanwhile, the analysis of regimes of subjectification is concerned with the way these fields of possibility get constituted, the lines of force that traverse them, the way individuals' options are mobilized, restricted or canalized; in short, how they conduct their conduct, and how they are led, 'conducted', to do so. Beyond that, the genealogy is sceptical of epoch labels like 'late modernity', 'reflexive modernity' and 'risk society', which attempt to subsume the present under a single dominant principle. The research programme being pursued here is directed not at 'society' or 'the self' but rather investigates the rationales and technologies that make society as a unit and individualized subjects as agents at all conceivable, and generate them in reality. Instead of reconstructing regimes of the self from a central perspective, it retraces their origins in a set of interrelations. The contours of contemporary subjectification, as thus disclosed, cannot be reduced to a coherent principle of integration, to a dominant ideology or an organizing centre. Instead, they emerge into view as the effect of manifold micro-techniques and ways of thinking that come to consolidate into macrostructures and wider discourses. *Society* and *the self* are the result not the starting point.

Interpellation of the subject and the subject of interpellation

Since talk of the subject always implies a regime of subjectification, a description of the subject is always also a prescription. This fact corresponds to an 'impossible' temporal structure that merges 'always already' with 'not yet'. Louis Althusser embraced this paradoxical demand made on people to become what they already are in the concept of interpellation. In his famous primal scene, a policeman hails or interpellates a passerby in the street: 'Hey, you there!' The hailed individual turns around, becoming a subject in this turning of the body, because 'he has recognized that the hail was "really" addressed to him, and that "it was really him who was hailed" (and not someone else)'.[23] The policeman's call evokes a spontaneous sense of guilt that can only be evoked in the first place because it was always already there. Recognizing this guilt and becoming a subject is one and the same act. Replace in the example the authoritative voice of the policeman as the representative of state power with other voices and the model illustrates the programme of formation and self-formation. Regimes of subjectification confront the individual with specific expectations, which he can try to reject, undermine or fulfil, but which he can never entirely satisfy. And they can only confront him as long as he always already feels basically insufficient: 'Self recognition in the call presupposes assent to subjectification and indicates at the same time that the scene has always already occurred'.[24]

We are perhaps inclined to see the origins of this feeling of guilt and insufficiency in a need for recognition, ascribable to a human dependency on the society of others. Because the 'struggle for recognition' is never-ending and always entrains traumatic experiences of disavowal and rejection, the individual is forced to adapt his relation to himself to the expectations others have of him. This adaptation does not equate to conformity – a distinction that again makes manifest the paradox of subjectification, this time as the paradox of freedom: 'Subjugation, the fact that the human passion for self-preservation makes us vulnerable to those who promise us our bread, also bears the possibility of revolt'.[25]

Despite the subtlety with which Althusser's parable condenses the way the subject is subject to a prior, social mediation, it leaves out two facts: the individual is not only hailed but is also himself a hailer of others; second, his desire for orientation in finding himself can in no way be fulfilled. Franz Kafka captured this in a short parable that can be read as the complement to Althusser's scene. Kafka appropriately entitled the piece 'A commentary'. Althusser was interested in interpellation and the readiness to understand the social determination of the self as self-determination. Kafka meanwhile describes both the inevitability and the futility of all efforts to be oneself:

It was very early in the morning, the streets clean and deserted, I was on my way to the station. As I compared the tower clock with my watch I realized it was much later than I had thought and that I had to hurry; the shock of this discovery made me feel uncertain of the way, I wasn't very well acquainted with the town as yet; fortunately, there was a policeman at hand, I ran to him and breathlessly asked him the way. He smiled and said: "You asking me the way?" "Yes," I said, "since I can't find it myself". "Give it up! Give it up!" said he, and turned with a sudden jerk, like someone who wants to be alone with his laughter.[26]

Kafka's miniature would seem at first to be a lesson in non-recognition. A different reading suggests itself in the light of Althusser's interpellation scene. Now, the story would be about subjectification as a task, as *Aufgabe* in the double meaning of something you have to do, the task, and something you stop doing or literally give up, abandonment. The newly awakened I seeks its way, unquestioningly, as a matter of course – subjectification as *Aufgabe* in the first meaning (task). Then it discovers that its own time and the system's time are not synchronized, that the individual and society are not calibrated to one another and that the I is unfamiliar to itself. This realization triggers uncertainty and dread. The I turns to an authority figure able to show him the way but who instead confronts him with the futility of his efforts, introducing the second meaning of *Aufgabe* (abandonment) with his derisive 'give it up, give it up'.

Althusser's subject is always already socialized and experiences being a self as the compulsion to orient itself on the role models provided. Meanwhile, Kafka's I must spend its whole life exploring and forming itself, well aware that it is doomed to fail because the social imperative to become a subject can never be fulfilled. Neither in Althusser nor in Kafka does there exist an external standpoint from which to deduce criteria for the right use of freedom. Nevertheless, neither of them depicts an entirely pre-determined scenario. In relation to 'work on the self', this means that even though there exists no space that is not covered by social demands, there do exist spaces of play for the individual. Thus, although no paths lead to the true self, there are infinitely many paths that can be taken while vainly seeking it. The drama of subjectification first becomes really palpable in these two sequences of moves: the policeman hailing and the one hailed doing an about-turn, the I seeking help and the policeman turning around. No one can avoid becoming a subject and no one finally succeeds in it.

This brief literary excurse should also have clarified the differences between a genealogy of subjectification and the theory of recognition.[27] In contrast to the latter, the genealogy does not seek a normative basis for critiquing abusive, repressive and exploitative conditions; it forwards no ideal of successful recognition. Instead, it reverses the problem, asking which mechanisms cause people to comprehend their efforts to become subjects

in terms of a struggle for recognition and which strategies they employ. In other words, we are not asking which norms would assure recognition, but rather how recognition itself can become a norm and which practices and discourses secure its acceptance as a norm.

Government of the self

Like Althusser, Michel Foucault grasps subjectification as a conditioning process, in which social shaping and self-shaping merge. While Althusser describes this process on the linguistic model of signification, Foucault is primarily interested in the mechanisms of heteronomy and autonomy in the sets of relations between mindset, conditioning strategies and technologies of the self that make humans into subjects and with which they make themselves into subjects. Foucault is focused on the 'formability of human capabilities',[28] studying them by means of a 'speculative empiricism', a hypothetical 'as if' approach, which assumes that humans are capable of being infinitely formed. Starting from this methodological pre-supposition, he reconstructs those power mechanisms and truth regimes by which humans have been shaped or have shaped themselves in the past. This troika of shaping, being shaped and self-shaping, which he analysed in his earlier work in regard to their discursive orders and disciplinary apparatuses, is given the term 'government' by Foucault in the late 1970s.

Subjectification is for Foucault a task for government in the anachronistic sense in which he used the term generally:

> This word must be allowed the very broad meaning which it had in the sixteenth century. 'Government' did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not only cover the legitimately constituted forms of political, economic subjection, but also modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others.[29]

To this should be added: and one's own activity, since 'whoever wants to be able to govern the state must first know how to govern himself'.[30]

At the same time, the focus is less on the real practices of governing others and governing self as on the *art* of government, 'government's consciousness of itself'.[31] The main concern is the knowledge inherent in the practices, specifically the practices of subjectification, the systematization and 'rationalization' of a pragmatics of government. The disparate ways of problematizing the subject and steering oneself and others are thus implicated in the rationalities and technologies of governing human beings for which

Foucault coined the term governmentality. He also spoke of the 'conduct of conduct', where to conduct in the double sense of the French *(se) conduire* 'is at the same time to "lead" others (according to mechanisms of coercion which are, to varying degrees, strict) and a way of behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities'.[32]

Subjectification unfolds in a strategic field where the individual is exposed to deliberate, targeted efforts to condition her, while at the same time conditioning herself in a deliberate and targeted way. For this reason, we must first concentrate on the epistemic configurations and practices that invest the self-relation with form and direction. We follow Foucault's method when he writes:

> Here we are taking as a homogeneous domain of reference not the repre-
> sentations that men give of themselves, not the conditions that determine
> them without their knowledge, but rather what they do and the way they do
> it. That is, the forms of rationality that organize their ways of doing things (this
> might be called the technological aspect) and the freedom with which they
> act within these practical systems, reacting to what others do, modifying the
> rules of the game, up to a certain point (this might be called the strategic side
> of these practices).[33]

This does not mean reducing the subject to a rationally controlled and self-controlling entity, which would mean neglecting the fact that its motivations and actions are only ever partly conscious to itself, which consequently sets limits on control. Like psychoanalysis, the genealogy of subjectification recognizes that the I is not the master of its own house. Yet in contrast to psychoanalysis, the genealogy is not aimed at draining an inner Zuyderzee,[34] as was Freud, nor providing the other with a free space outside of the hall of mirrors that is the imaginary, as Lacan aimed to do. Instead, it reconstructs those forms of knowledge and methods with which people are supposed to be able to know, explore and govern themselves and their unconscious. We 'know' our unconscious only as far as such knowledge is communicated, i.e. as far as it is spoken and made coherent in specific social settings by means of specific techniques of self-exploration. The psychoanalytic hermeneutic is thus not a tacit premise; it is itself a prominent object of genealogical investigation.

This applies no less to other variants of the search for a hidden truth of the subject. That the self is an inner space to be explored, developed and cultivated is not self-evident. It is the effect of a specific regime of control over the governing and self-governing. The genealogy does not drop the distinction between inside and outside, but instead of cave-diving or interior designing the soul, it asks which bodies of knowledge and methods have occasioned people to determine their self-relation by means of this topology. It investigates how an interior constitutes itself without presupposing it as having always already existed. This is what is meant by designating the self as fold – the self as a more or less fleeting, more or less stable form of the self

relating to itself. A fold is a relation of inside to outside in which each can only be conceived of in terms of the other. The inside is merely an outside turned on itself, and vice versa.

To understand subjectification as strictly relational, a third term needs to be added to the inside–outside binary. Following a consideration by Norbert Ricken, the regimes of the self can be regarded as always operating on the basis of the *given* (human corporeality, life story, historical and cultural situation); second, they confront individuals with *tasks* (e.g. with myriad imperatives to individualize and self-optimize); and third, they are repeat-edly brought up against incidents of the *withdrawal* of something beyond the reach of auto-formation and hetero-formation:

> Subjectivity then means not only being unable to comport oneself to oneself and to others 'completely' and transparently (because it is impossible to present oneself fully to oneself), but also comporting oneself precisely to this removal of self and other. This throws subjectivity into relief as a *differ-ence* that cannot be resolved into an *identity*, but rather is characterized by ruptures, antagonisms and 'blind spots'.[35]

Consequently, the genealogy is not limited to the reconstruction of an historical ontology and deontology of the self, but also traces its limits, blurred lines, unintended effects and contradictions.

In so doing, the genealogy dismisses the idea of a self-identical self. The subject interacts with the models of self-interpretation and self-modelling imposed on it, inventing itself in vastly different ways depending on the context. The ways in which the subject sees and modifies itself are as diverse as the forms of truth and types of power plays it is embedded in. Subjectification is self-invention in the plural, not in the singular:

> You do not have the same type of relationship to yourself when you constitute yourself as a political subject who goes to vote or speaks at a meeting and when you are seeking to fulfil your desires in a sexual relationship. Undoubtedly there are relationships and interferences between these different forms of the subject; but we are not dealing with the same type of subject. In each case, one plays, one establishes a different type of relationship to oneself.[36]

Real fictions

The genealogy is 'not a history of subjectivity as such, but rather an analysis of the events in the history of the technologies of subjectivity'.[37] It therefore cannot be known how many people really come under the influence of specific governing and self-governing programmes and to what extent their behaviour is thus conditioned. The genealogy does not study whether

programmes have effects but which reality they generate. Instead of investigating causes and effects, it concentrates on describing the mode of operation and rationale of subjectification regimes. The main question is not 'why and wherefore?' but 'how?'.

How do subjectification programmes infiltrate behaviour and the sense of self? Two legal sociologists, Michael Hutter und Gunther Teubner, have adopted a system theory approach to give an explanation that can be usefully applied to the genealogy. Their point of departure is the disagreement between economists and jurists on the one side and sociologists and psychologists on the other over the ontological status of *homo economicus* and *homo juridicus*. Hutter and Teubner dismiss the position that these figures are mere theoretical constructs from economics and jurisprudence, which must hold prognostically but cannot claim real content. At the same time, they dismiss the contrary position that sees in them a concentration of empirically verifiable human motives and behaviours. Their thesis is that *homo economicus* and *homo juridicus* are 'real fictions' that supply the economic and legal systems with the agents they need in order to operate. These autonomous subsystems address the surrounding psychic systems as persons, using them as semantic tools for transforming their communication into activities attributable to agents. The psychic systems in turn can be addressed in this way because they deploy a personal construction for the continuation of sense. These fictions of human agency, *homo economicus* and *juridicus*, thus stabilize 'the connection between communication in economy and law and the psychical operations going on at the same time'.[38] By means of the semantic tool of personhood, social systems prey on the inner dynamics of psychic systems, exploiting 'the self constitution of souls toward their own self constitution'.[39] Hutter and Teubner describe this procedure as an interaction of conditioning and self-conditioning:

> By choosing an idiosyncratic construction of personhood and thus creating internal perturbations, the social systems make themselves only at small selected points dependent on the continual, much richer psychic processes. This strictly selective social perception of the psyche is in turn only perceived psychically. The thought processes of the psyche are thus conditioned by the social subsystem, but only indirectly, because the psyche socializes itself. The self observation of psychic systems is oriented on the concept of personhood formed in the social system. In other words, the economy exploits the human 'need to possess' in order to create future opportunities for payment; the law exploits the human 'need for strife' in order to create future opportunities for norm production. At the same time, a self-socialization by the participating psyches takes place. At the same time again, a self-colonization of the psyches takes place, in which the 'ownership drive' and the 'desire for strife' are newly constituted by the fascination for communication based on money and norms. The medium 'money' and the medium 'legal norms' create their own appropriate forms of reason.[40]

Each social subsystem uses its specific rationale to 'see' and personify specific human qualities, 'seeing' and personifying only these. Each 'invents its own social psychology', fabricating the agents it needs to be addressees by presupposing their existence.[41]

Hutter and Teubner start from the observation of functionally differentiated (and continually differentiating), autopoietic, closed subsystems. In contrast, the present investigation of the entrepreneurial self sees market mechanisms encroaching on other social areas. To put it in system theory terms, what is being posited here is an asymmetrical interpenetration between the economic system and the other functional systems. Despite this difference, the theory of the person as an institutional fiction and a parasitic social–psychical structure has the advantage of accentuating the discursive nature of subject construction (fictions must be told), while at the same time tracing this construction back to basic social institutions. The rational agent and the entrepreneurial self are not merely effects of discourse; they are the guises of an extremely practical imperative dictating how humans are to see themselves as people and how they are to act in order to participate in the marketplace. There is much to be learnt about selling things and selling oneself and every act of selling teaches something new. Finally, of further use for the genealogy is the observation from system theory that the various real fictions (or, put in terms of a Foucauldian analysis of power relations, the specific rationalities of regimes of subjectification) only ever actualize excerpts of possible human action, expanding them out to universals, turning the social ontology of the subject into an essentialist anthropological determinant. By turning limited, institutional constructions of personhood into absolutes, regimes of the self damage untapped human potentials, while instantiating an ideal according to which individuals are moulded.

Programmes, appropriations, resistance

The gap between the promises made by programmes of governing and self-governing and their delivery is an integral part of how they work. Such programmes are not automatic stimulus–response systems. Instead, they generate suction, making certain forms of behaviour more likely than others. For this reason, what is here referred to as a regime of subjectification cannot be reduced to a moral code. It not only focuses on a canon of rules of what should and should not be done, but also defines the forms of knowledge in which individuals recognize the truth about themselves, the mechanisms of control and regulation with which they are confronted, the specialists whose advice and instructions they trust, as well as the social and self technologies

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, or ways of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.[42]

Regimes of subjectification constitute fields of force affecting the way institutions are structured and administered, labour and insurance agreements, technical apparatuses and architectural structures, media production and the routines of everyday life. These lines of force enter into such complex interactions that every attempt to fix a general definition of the subject is doomed to fail because these mutually criss-crossing, amplifying, impeding and deflecting forces are continually re-configuring. For this reason alone, the genealogy of subjectification undertakes local analyses rather than attempting to contain everything in a large-scale system.

Although the methodical focus is on the rationales and strategies within programmes of subjectification, we will not be neglecting the contingent processes by which these regimes are appropriated and rejected, the ruptures and resistance that oppose them. We will not only be looking at a normatively deficient and smoothed-over reality. Programmes never translate seamlessly into individual behaviour; appropriating their rules always entails modifying them. The individuality of human behaviour insinuates itself in the form of opposing movements, inertia and techniques of neutralization. Regimes of forming the self and others do not provide a blueprint that needs simply to be followed. They require continual trial and error, invention, correction, criticism and adaptation.[43] In the 'norming of the I by the I',[44] there are always opportunities to refuse social norms of subjectivity, yet the radical refusal of a particular order of selfhood also refers to it by virtue of negating it. The extent to which a programme has failed can only be measured in terms of its aims. In order to describe resistant moments in the subject, you have to know what they are directed at. Conversely, the opposing forces that challenge, undermine, slow down and, in extreme cases, block programmes for governing the self and others are themselves contributing to those programmes' construction and modification: 'Resistance is not merely the counterstroke to power; it also directs and shapes it. Furthermore, just as resistance can be seen as a certain manifestation of failure, so too can failure be seen as serving to direct and shape the process of governing'.[45]

As resistance against the moulding of the self also becomes rationalized, attempting to counteract the subjectification regime via subversive strategies and tactics, it establishes its own form of governing and self-governing, a counter-regime whose workings and rationale would need to be studied in the same way as the regime it combats. Methodologically, this obliges us to dispense with the split perspective. Instead of merely analysing *either* the

effects on the individual *or* the opportunities for resistance, the study must instead trace the broader structure that results from their convergence.

The mechanisms and materials of the subjectification regime and the types of resistance it provokes are as various as its aims. Work on the self can pursue any number of aims, but it is indispensible to have one, or even several. Without such guidance, the individual could be led in any direction. In this respect too, regimes of subjectification are not compact, consistent units. Contradictory targets for moulding and self-moulding conflict and/or combine in a variety of blends.

Different aims are represented by different groups of experts with their own specific knowledge resources, forms of legitimation and cultures. Regimes of subjectification require subjectification 'regents'. The regents lend the pro-grammes authority, define the tasks, disseminate the technologies required to fulfil them, provide motivation and sanctioning, feedback and evaluation of results. The classic specialists – pastors, teachers, doctors – have been supple-mented by countless advisors, evaluators, therapists and trainers. These 'experts of subjectivity' and their preventative, curative or correctional but always nor-malizing interventions 'transfigure existential questions about the purpose of life and the meaning of suffering into technical questions of the most effective ways of managing malfunction and improving "quality of life"'.[46] This devel-opment has been tightly intertwined with professionalizing processes and an elaboration and heightened reflexivity of method. The regimes of subjectifi-cation are themselves subject to the 'scientification of the social', described by the historian Lutz Raphael as a signature mark of the 20th century that con-tinues to increase in the 21st.[47] The genealogy of the human sciences at least partially bleeds into that of subjectification. The figure of the expert extends the paradox of self-constitution into performative contradiction. The expert walks on stage with the appellative gesture of an authority that knows better than his audience members what the latter really need, while at the same time encouraging them to mistrust any outside conditioning, constantly preaching at them to 'become yourself!'. In order to find out who you are, you obvi-ously need someone else to help you. Every piece of good advice entails the humiliating judgement that you are in need of it. Professional help constitutes you as this needy subject. Today, Kafka's policeman would formulate his 'give it up, give it up' in more optimistic tones as a coaching offer.

The present as problem

The genealogy of subjectification follows Foucault's methodological principle of ascending analysis. To do this we must

> begin with its infinitesimal mechanisms, which leave their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then look at how

these mechanisms of power – which have their solidity and, in a sense, their own technology – have been and continue to be invested, colonized, used, inflected, transformed, displaced, extended and so on by increasingly general mechanisms and forms of overall domination.[48]

The starting point consists of local investigations. These concern the real behaviour and self-interpretations of particular people only as far as these behaviours and interpretations trigger, result from or interfere with efforts to govern them. Programmes of governing will be analysed, programmes intended to guide action, but which fail to coincide with it in reality. Examining curricula, textbooks or classroom architecture is not the same as reconstructing individual learning processes. The genealogy of subjectification in no way forgoes empirical research, but the empirical material it refers to consists neither of regularities and probabilities nor of incalculable moments of individual behaviour but rather of attempts to affect this behaviour. We are not asking what a pupil does or does not do, but rather which institutions and people (including the pupil herself) attempt to get her to do certain things and abstain from others.

In this respect, the approach has an affinity with the research programme of a social science hermeneutics. The latter describes the social construction of the self based on observing and interviewing social agents and other means of obtaining self-interpretations and accounts of behaviour patterns, extrapolating from these data an interpretation of their *life-world* orientations. Meanwhile, the genealogy analyses the multiple control and self-control mechanisms regulating the social agents' conception of themselves and their behaviour. It therefore also interprets, but shifts the perspective away from the agents and toward the efforts to control their actions. It interprets programmes of governing set down in practices, texts, images and other artefacts; interpretations of meaning that attempt to influence other interpretations of meaning, behaviours that attempt to influence other behaviours.

There is a similar difference in the sociological analysis of everyday rituals of interaction and role play of the type exemplified by Erving Goffman.[49] Like Goffman, the genealogy of subjectification presupposes that the self is self-generating. It also analyses the effects of institutional contexts and societal conventions on individual self-presentation. Both approaches deal with strategies of conditioning and self-discipline, 'making up people'.[50] The focus, however, is different. Goffman is chiefly interested in the implicit framing of everyday behaviour, whereas the genealogy of subjectification interrogates the explicit rules that seek to move individual performances in a specific direction. The objects of study are not scripts but rather guidebooks on the art of acting.

The work of genealogy is essentially the reconstruction of the past in order to deal with problems in the present. The investigation of the historical dispositif and of the governing of self and others is a critical project, if we understand the 'cultural form' of critique, together with Foucault, as

'the art of not being governed *like that*, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them'.[51] Of course, this type of critique has no fixed location. It is not content to simply replace being passively governed with active self-governing. The genealogy does not pretend to know whether there is a place beyond the government of the self, but it nevertheless insists on making visible the impositions placed on individuals by the regimes of subjectification. To quote Foucault once again – this time the sublime Foucault – what is at stake

> is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom … 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.[52]

In formal terms, the research programme outlined here can and must be deployed in a combination of two ways. The first way is to compare various regimes of subjectification and elaborate on their discontinuities and oppositions. This approach tends to follow Foucault's work on disciplinary societies, the history of madness and the analyses of antique and early Christian concepts of self-governing. The second is to examine a specific configuration and dissect the relations of force that contribute to it, the stores of knowledge and technologies it has recourse to, the rationale that ensures its acceptability, and, finally, the resistance it provokes and that provokes it in turn. The present study follows this second route, investigating a model of subjectification in which a large number of current practices of government and self-government are concentrated: the model of the entrepreneurial self. This is the thesis to be made explicit in what follows.

Notes

1. Paolo Virno (2004) *A Grammar of Multitude*, Los Angeles/New York: Semiotext(e), p. 78.
2. See George H. Mead (1934/1962) *Mind, Self, and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 173ff.
3. Helmuth Plessner (1985) *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch* (3rd edition), Berlin: Suhrkamp, pp. 288ff., here: p. 310. See also Marjorie Grene (1966) 'Positionality in the Philosophy of Helmuth Plessner', in: *The Review of Metaphysics*, 20, pp. 250–277, here: pp. 274ff.
4. See Judith Butler (1997) *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, p. 17.
5. Michel Foucault (1983) 'Subject and Power', in: Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 208–226, here: pp. 219f.

6. Gilles Deleuze (1988) *Foucault*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 104.

7. Søren Kierkegaard (1849/1941) *The Sickness Unto Death*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 14.

8. Foucault (1983) 'Subject and Power', p. 212.

9. Mariana Valverde (1996) points out that many theories – in particular psychological ones – attempt to resolve paradoxes of the subject or the self by indexing the contradictory sides to differing psychical forces or entities: 'The distinction between the self that controls and the (immature, lower) self that is controlled presupposed by the term, self-control' is in some ways a naturalized distinction between two things, between passion and reason, but could also be regarded as a spatial division between two psychic spaces' ('Despotism and Ethical Liberal Governance', in: *Economy and Society,* 25, pp. 357–372, here: p. 369).

10. Butler (1997) *The Psychic Life of Power*, p. 17.

11. An important reason why paradoxical notions are currently proliferating is that neither can the societal contradictions be dialectically resolved nor does it any longer appear credible to describe the effects of capitalist modernization as phenomena of ambivalence; to accept them, recognize them and withstand them as such.

12. Georg Simmel (1917/1984) *Grundfragen der Soziologie* (4th edition), Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 83f., located more precisely this gerundive form of the subject historically. According to Simmel, it first comes to dominate in the enlightenment and in its ideal of perfectibility: 'In the 18th century the feeling becomes extremely powerful that the I that we already are is yet to be made. We are not purely and absolutely identical with it but rather in veiled and distorted form due to our historical–social fortunes. This normalisation of the I by the I is morally justified because the ideal I, in the higher sense more real, is the general human I and, by attaining it, true equality among all people is also attained.'

13. On the concept and reality of self technologies, see Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton (eds) (1988) *Technologies of the Self*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

14. See Nikolas Rose (1996) *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 23.

15. See Niklas Luhmann (1989) 'Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus', in: *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, Vol. 3, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, pp. 149–258, here: p. 215.

16. Luhmann (1989) 'Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus', p. 252.

17. According to Luhmann (1989, p. 221, note), the term is borrowed from Stendhal.

18. On the various possible theories of a multiple self, see Jon Elster (1986) 'Introduction', in: *The Multiple Self*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–34, as well as the other chapters in the volume.

19. Niklas Luhmann (1980) 'Gesellschaftliche Struktur und semantische Tradition', in: *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik: Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft*, Vol. 1, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, pp. 9–71, here: p. 19.

20. Anthony Giddens (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford, CA: Polity Press, pp. 70ff.

21. Ulrich Beck (1993) *Die Erfindung des Politischen: Zu einer Theorie reflexiver Modernisierung*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, p. 152.

22. Ulrich Beck (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London: Sage, p. 135.

23. Louis Althusser (1971) *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London: New Left Books, p. 163.

24. Sven Opitz (2004) *Gouvernementalität im Postfordismus: Macht, Wissen und Techniken des Selbst im Feld unternehmerischer Rationalität*, Hamburg: Argument, p. 82.

25. Judith Butler (2003) 'Noch einmal: Körper und Macht', in: Axel Honneth and Martin Saar (eds), *Michel Foucault: Zwischenbilanz einer Rezeption*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp pp. 52–67, here: p. 67.

26. Franz Kafka (1983) 'Give it up!', in: *The Complete Stories*, New York: Penguin.

27. See, above all, Axel Honneth (1995) *Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflict*, Cambridge: Polity.

28. Osborne (2001) 'Techniken und Subjekte', p. 12.

29. Foucault (1983) 'Subject and Power', p. 221.

30. Foucault (2009) *Security, Territory, Population*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan p. 94.

31. Foucault (2010) *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France (1978–1979)*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2. In the very next sentence, Foucault distances himself from the concept of *consciousness of itself*, turning instead to 'the way in which this practice that consists in governing was conceptualized both within and outside government, and anyway as close as possible to governmental practice'.

32. Foucault (1983) 'Subject and Power', p. 221.

33. Michel Foucault (1984) 'What is Enlightenment?', in: Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, New York: Penguin, pp. 32–50, here: p. 48.

34. 'It's [psycho-analysis'] intention is, indeed, to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego, to widen its field of perception and enlarge its organization, so that it can appropriate fresh portions of the id. Where id was, there ego shall be. It is a work of culture – not unlike the draining of the Zuider Zee' (Sigmund Freud (1964) 'New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis and Other Works (1932–1936)', in: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXII, London: W.W. Norton, pp. 5–182, here: p. 80).

35. Norbert Ricken (2004) 'Die Macht der Macht – Rückfragen an Michel Foucault', in: Norbert Ricken and Markus Rieger-Ladich (eds), *Michel Foucault: Pädagogische Lektüren*, Wiesbaden: Springer, pp. 119–143, here: p. 139.

36. Michel Foucault (1994) 'The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom' (interview with H. Becker, R. Fornet-Betancourt and A. Gomez-Müller, 20 January 1984), in: *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth: The Essential Works*

of Michel Foucault 1954–1984, Vol. 1, New York: Allen Lane, pp. 281–301, here: p. 290.

37. Osborne (2001) 'Techniken und Subjekte', p. 13.

38. Michael Hutter and Gunther Teubner (1994) 'Der Gesellschaft fette Beute: Homo juridicus und homo oeconomicus als kommunikationserhaltende Fiktionen', in: Peter Fuchs and Andreas Göbel (eds), *Der Mensch – das Medium der Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, pp. 110–145, here: p.116.

39. Hutter and Teubner (1994) 'Der Gesellschaft fette Beute', p. 118.

40. Hutter and Teubner (1994) 'Der Gesellschaft fette Beute', p. 119.

41. Hutter and Teubner (1994) 'Der Gesellschaft fette Beute', p. 121.

42. Michel Foucault (1988) 'Technologies of the Self', in: Luther H. Martin et al. (eds), *Technologies of the Self*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, pp. 16–49, here: p. 18.

43. See Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose (1990) 'Governing Economic Life', in: *Economy and Society*, 19, pp. 1–31, here: p. 14.

44. Simmel (1917/1984) *Grundfragen der Soziologie*, New York: Walter de Gruyter, p. 84.

45. Jeff Malpass and Gary Wickham (1995) 'Governance and Failure: On the Limits of Sociology', in: *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 31(3), pp. 37–50, here: p. 43.

46. Rose (1996) *Inventing Our Selves*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 151.

47. Lutz Raphael (1996) 'Die Verwissenschaftlichung des Sozialen als methodische und konzeptionelle Herausforderung für eine Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts', in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 22, pp. 165–193.

48. Michel Foucault (2003) *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the College de France (1975–76)*, New York: Penguin, p. 30.

49. See, in particular, Erving Goffman (1971) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin; Goffman (1971) *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*, New York: Allen Lane; Goffman (1967) *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*, New York: Pantheon; Goffman (1974) *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, Boston: Northeastern University Press. For a comparison of Goffman and Foucault's different research perspectives, see Ian Hacking (2004) 'Between Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman: Between Discourse in the Abstract and Face-to-Face Interaction', in: *Economy and Society*, 33, pp. 277–302.

50. See Ian Hacking (1986) 'Making up People', in: Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna and David E. Wellbery (eds), *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 222–236.

51. Michel Foucault (1997) 'What is Critique?', in: Sylvère Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth (eds), *The Politics of Truth*, New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 41–81, here: p. 45.

52. Foucault (1984) 'What is Enlightenment?', p. 46.