

foucault care of the self

Foucault Care of the Self: Exploring the Philosophy of Self-Cultivation

foucault care of the self is a fascinating concept that delves into the ways individuals relate to themselves through practices of self-reflection, ethical behavior, and personal transformation. Rooted deeply in the later works of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, the idea of "care of the self" invites us to reconsider not just who we are, but how we actively shape and govern our own identities. Unlike traditional notions of self-help or self-improvement, Foucault's perspective emphasizes the ethical and philosophical dimensions of self-care as a form of freedom, resistance, and self-knowledge.

In this article, we'll explore what Foucault meant by the care of the self, its historical context, and its relevance to contemporary thought. Along the way, we will touch on related themes such as subjectivity, ethics, and the practices that allow us to cultivate ourselves in meaningful ways.

The Origins of Foucault's Care of the Self

To truly understand Foucault care of the self, it's essential to look at how this idea fits within his broader philosophical project. In his later career, Foucault shifted his focus from analyzing power structures and social institutions to exploring the ways individuals constitute themselves as subjects through ethical practices.

From Power to Ethics

Earlier in his work, Foucault is well-known for his critical investigation of power, knowledge, and discourse—how societal norms control and define individuals. However, by the 1980s, Foucault began to emphasize the concept of "technologies of the self." These are the techniques and strategies that people use to understand themselves, transform their behavior, and act ethically in relation to others.

This shift highlights a move from viewing people solely as objects of power to recognizing them as agents capable of self-governance. The care of the self becomes a form of resistance against oppressive systems, a way to reclaim autonomy through the ongoing work of self-examination.

Historical Influences: Ancient Practices of Self-Care

Foucault care of the self draws heavily on ancient Greek and Roman philosophies, where caring for the self was a central ethical concern. Thinkers like Socrates, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius emphasized the importance of self-knowledge, discipline, and reflection.

In these traditions, care of the self was not a selfish or narcissistic pursuit but an ethical obligation—an essential foundation for living a virtuous life. Foucault admired how these ancient

practices combined philosophy, spirituality, and practical exercises, such as journaling, meditation, and dialogue, to nurture the self.

Understanding the Concept: What Does “Care of the Self” Mean?

At its core, Foucault care of the self is about the relationship between the individual and their own existence. It's a continuous process of self-formation that involves both freedom and responsibility.

Self-Relation and Subjectivity

One of the key insights Foucault offers is that the self is not a fixed entity but something we actively produce through our choices and actions. Care of the self involves cultivating a particular relation to oneself—being attentive, critical, and deliberate about who we are and who we want to become.

This perspective challenges the idea that identity is predetermined by biology or social roles. Instead, it suggests that subjectivity is a dynamic process shaped by ethical work and self-practices.

Technologies of the Self

Foucault introduces the idea of "technologies of the self" as methods individuals employ to effect change in their own bodies, minds, and souls. These technologies can range from meditation and self-examination to writing and physical discipline.

By engaging with these practices, people can transform their ways of thinking and acting, ultimately achieving a form of freedom that comes from self-mastery rather than external control.

Practical Applications: How to Engage in the Care of the Self

While Foucault's writings can be dense and philosophical, the care of the self offers practical insights for anyone interested in personal growth and ethical living.

Developing Self-Awareness

A foundational step in the care of the self is cultivating self-awareness. This means regularly reflecting on your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to understand your motivations and the influences shaping you.

Simple practices like journaling or mindfulness meditation can help foster this awareness, enabling you to recognize patterns and make conscious choices rather than acting on autopilot.

Ethical Self-Formation

Caring for the self isn't just about introspection; it also involves ethical considerations. Foucault emphasizes that self-care requires thinking about how your actions affect others and how you relate to the world.

Engaging with ethical questions—such as what kind of person you want to be or what values you want to embody—can guide your decisions and behaviors. This process transforms self-care from a private activity into a public and social responsibility.

Resisting Norms Through Self-Care

One of the empowering aspects of Foucault care of the self is its potential as a form of resistance. In a world saturated with social pressures, consumerism, and normalized behaviors, cultivating your own practices of self-care can challenge dominant norms and open up new possibilities for living.

Whether it's questioning societal expectations or redefining success on your own terms, caring for the self becomes a radical act of freedom.

Why Foucault Care of the Self Matters Today

In contemporary society, where external demands and digital distractions often pull us away from genuine self-reflection, Foucault's insights on care of the self feel especially urgent.

Combating Alienation and Fragmentation

Many people today experience a sense of alienation—from themselves, their communities, and the world. The constant bombardment of information and the pressures to perform can erode a coherent sense of identity.

Practices inspired by Foucault care of the self encourage slowing down, reconnecting with one's inner life, and cultivating coherence and integrity amidst chaos.

Empowering Personal and Social Change

Beyond individual well-being, the care of the self has social and political implications. By fostering autonomy and critical self-awareness, individuals can become agents of change who question unjust systems and envision alternative ways of living.

This aligns with Foucault's broader aim to rethink power not only as domination but also as potential for freedom through ethical self-practices.

Integrating Foucault's Care of the Self Into Daily Life

Bringing the care of the self into everyday routines doesn't require dramatic upheaval. Instead, it's about small, intentional actions that nurture your relationship with yourself.

Practical Tips

- **Set aside time for self-reflection:** Even 10 minutes a day can help build awareness.
- **Engage in journaling:** Writing helps clarify thoughts and track personal growth.
- **Practice mindfulness or meditation:** These techniques cultivate presence and reduce mental clutter.
- **Question societal norms:** Reflect on which expectations serve you and which you might resist.
- **Develop ethical intentions:** Consider how your actions align with your values and impact others.

By weaving these habits into your life, you start to embody the care of the self as a lived philosophy rather than an abstract ideal.

Foucault care of the self opens a rich dialogue about how we shape our identities through thoughtful, ethical engagement with ourselves. It invites us to become active participants in our own becoming, transforming care from a private indulgence into a profound ethical practice. In a world often driven by external validation and rigid norms, embracing this philosophy offers a path toward authentic freedom and self-realization.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Michel Foucault's concept of 'care of the self'?

Michel Foucault's concept of 'care of the self' refers to the practices and techniques through which individuals attend to their own well-being, ethics, and self-formation, emphasizing self-reflection and self-discipline as a way to cultivate oneself morally and intellectually.

How does 'care of the self' relate to Foucault's broader philosophy?

'Care of the self' is central to Foucault's later philosophy, focusing on the ethical dimension of subjectivity and how individuals actively shape their identity and freedom through practices of self-care, contrasting with his earlier work on power and knowledge.

In which historical periods did Foucault explore the 'care of the self'?

Foucault explored the 'care of the self' primarily in his studies of Greco-Roman antiquity, especially in texts like "The History of Sexuality, Volume 3," where he analyzes how ancient philosophers practiced self-care as an ethical way of life.

What are the main practices involved in the 'care of the self' according to Foucault?

The main practices include self-examination, meditation, writing, and exercises aimed at cultivating virtue and wisdom, which help individuals transform themselves and resist external forms of power or normalization.

How does 'care of the self' differ from modern notions of self-care?

Foucault's 'care of the self' is an ethical and philosophical practice focused on self-transformation and freedom, whereas modern self-care often emphasizes health, wellness, and stress relief without necessarily addressing deeper ethical self-formation.

What role does 'care of the self' play in Foucault's idea of subjectivity?

'Care of the self' is foundational to Foucault's idea of subjectivity as it involves the active process by which individuals constitute themselves as subjects through ethical self-practices rather than passively being shaped by external power structures.

Can 'care of the self' be applied in contemporary contexts?

Yes, many scholars and practitioners apply Foucault's 'care of the self' to contemporary contexts such as psychotherapy, education, and political activism to encourage reflective practices that foster autonomy and ethical living.

How does Foucault link 'care of the self' to resistance against power?

Foucault suggests that 'care of the self' is a form of resistance because by cultivating oneself ethically and critically, individuals challenge dominant discourses and power relations that seek to govern behavior and identity.

What texts are essential for understanding Foucault's 'care of the self'?

Key texts include "The History of Sexuality, Volume 3: The Care of the Self," "The Hermeneutics of the Subject," and various lectures at the Collège de France, where Foucault elaborates on ancient practices and ethical self-formation.

How does 'care of the self' connect to Foucault's idea of governmentality?

'Care of the self' relates to governmentality by highlighting the ways individuals govern themselves through ethical practices, which both complement and resist broader mechanisms of governmental power and social regulation.

Additional Resources

Foucault Care of the Self: Exploring the Ethics of Subjectivity and Self-Formation

foucault care of the self represents a pivotal concept in the later works of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, where he shifts focus from structures of power and knowledge to the practices through which individuals constitute themselves as ethical subjects. This intricate notion underscores the dynamic relationship between power, knowledge, and subjectivity by emphasizing how individuals actively engage in the formation and care of their own identities. The exploration of Foucault's care of the self provides profound insights into ethics, subjectivity, and the possibilities of freedom within modern societies.

This article delves into the core elements of Foucault's care of the self, situating it within his broader philosophical project. We examine its historical roots, theoretical underpinnings, and contemporary relevance, while integrating related keywords such as "ethical self-formation," "subjectivity and power," "self-care practices," and "ancient technologies of the self." Through a detailed analysis, this piece aims to illuminate how Foucault's concept challenges conventional understandings of ethics and autonomy.

The Historical and Philosophical Context of Foucault's Care of the Self

Michel Foucault's intellectual journey can be broadly divided into his early archaeological and genealogical studies of knowledge and power, and his later investigations into ethics and subjectivity. The idea of care of the self emerges prominently in his lectures from the early 1980s, particularly in "The Hermeneutics of the Subject" and "The History of Sexuality" volumes. Here, Foucault critiques traditional moral philosophy that centers on universal moral laws and instead foregrounds how individuals engage in self-practices to shape their own ethical existence.

The concept is deeply rooted in classical antiquity, drawing from Greco-Roman philosophy where "care of the self" was a fundamental ethical practice. This ancient ethos involved rigorous self-

examination, discipline, and cultivation of virtues—practices that Foucault terms “technologies of the self.” These technologies are techniques employed by individuals to influence their own bodies, thoughts, and conduct, thereby actively constructing their subjectivity.

By revisiting these ancient practices, Foucault proposes an alternative framework to understand ethics not as adherence to external moral codes but as a process of self-constitution. This marks a significant departure from modern conceptions of the subject as a fixed, autonomous entity, instead highlighting the fluidity and ongoing nature of subject formation.

Ethics as Self-Practice: Technologies of the Self

Central to Foucault’s care of the self is the notion of “technologies of the self,” which refers to the methods and practices individuals use to shape their identity and conduct. These technologies can range from meditation and journaling to physical exercises and dietary regimes, all aimed at transforming the self in accordance with certain ethical ideals.

In this framework, ethics is not merely a set of rules but an active engagement in self-care. Individuals become artisans of their own lives, constantly negotiating power relations and crafting their subjectivity. This approach also reframes the relationship between power and subjectivity; rather than seeing power as purely oppressive, Foucault’s care of the self reveals how individuals can exercise freedom by appropriating and transforming power structures.

Comparative Perspectives: Care of the Self vs. Modern Self-Care

In contemporary discourse, “self-care” frequently refers to health and wellness practices aimed at stress reduction or physical well-being. While popular self-care shares superficial similarities with Foucault’s care of the self, the philosophical concept is far richer and more complex. It encompasses ethical self-formation and the cultivation of the self as a moral agent within social and power contexts.

Unlike typical self-care trends that emphasize consumption or individualistic comfort, Foucault’s care of the self involves critical reflection and ethical labor. It demands a conscious relationship with oneself and others, fostering responsibility and intentionality in one’s actions.

Pros and Cons of Foucault’s Framework

- **Pros:**

- Offers a nuanced understanding of ethics beyond normative morality.
- Highlights the active role of individuals in shaping their identity and freedom.

- Provides historical depth by linking modern subjectivity with ancient practices.

- **Cons:**

- Can be abstract and difficult to operationalize in practical terms.
- May underplay structural constraints that limit individual agency.
- Risk of overemphasizing individual responsibility at the expense of collective ethics.

Foucault Care of the Self and Contemporary Social Theory

Foucault's insights into care of the self have resonated across various fields such as psychology, sociology, and political theory. The emphasis on ethical self-formation challenges traditional models of governance and power by introducing the concept of "governmentality," where individuals govern themselves in alignment with societal norms but retain a degree of autonomy.

In the context of neoliberalism, for example, the care of the self takes on new dimensions. Individuals are increasingly called upon to manage their own risks, health, and productivity, effectively making themselves "enterprises" of their own lives. This raises critical questions about the balance between empowerment and coercion within self-care practices in modern societies.

Implications for Personal and Social Identity

Foucault's care of the self underscores the fluidity of identity as continuously shaped through practices of self-reflection and self-discipline. It encourages an understanding of identity not as static but as a project under constant revision. This perspective has informed contemporary debates on gender, sexuality, and cultural identity, where self-formation is seen as a site of resistance and creativity.

Moreover, the focus on ethics as care of the self invites reconsideration of social relationships, emphasizing mutual recognition and responsibility rather than mere rule-following. This has practical implications for education, therapy, and community-building efforts that seek to cultivate ethical subjects capable of critical self-awareness.

Conclusion: The Enduring Relevance of Foucault Care

of the Self

While Foucault's care of the self originates in historical analyses of ancient philosophy, its theoretical and practical relevance continues to grow in contemporary debates on subjectivity, ethics, and power. It challenges simplistic notions of autonomy by foregrounding the ongoing, active work individuals perform in constituting themselves within complex social fields.

By integrating self-care with ethical self-formation, Foucault offers a transformative lens for understanding how individuals navigate and negotiate power relations. This concept remains a vital reference point for scholars and practitioners interested in the intersections of philosophy, politics, and the art of living.

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foucault care of the self: *The Care of the Self* Michel Foucault, 1990 This third volume of Foucault's highly acclaimed examination of the experience of sexuality in modern Western society, investigates the Golden Age of Rome, to reveal a subtle but decisive break from the classical Greek version of sexual pleasure. Foucault explores the whole corpus of moral reflection among philosophers and physicians of the era to reveal an increasing mistrust of pleasure and a growing anxiety over sexual activity and its consequences. At the core of this transformation Foucault found the principles of the 'care of the self'. He shows how the self is transformed into an object of knowledge and field of actions so as to control, correct, transform, purify and thus find salvation. His graphic and perceptive depiction of this crucial shift in sexual attitudes deepens our understanding of the modern experience of sexuality. -- Publisher's description.

foucault care of the self: Stoicism and the Care of the Self: Foucault, Discipline, and Subjectivity Mariia Panasiuk, 2025-08-20 This book undertakes a sustained, interdisciplinary genealogy of practices of self-formation by placing the Stoic corpus in productive dialogue with Michel Foucault's late ethical writings. Rather than offering a cosmetic comparison of two attractive traditions, the study pursues a two-fold argumentative strategy. First, it reconstructs Stoicism as a praxis-oriented ethical pedagogy: a dense repertoire of askēseis (spiritual exercises) — nightly self-examinations, premeditatio malorum, prosoche (attentive care), hypomnemata and other writing practices — that together constitute a historically specific grammar for shaping judgment, affect, and proairesis. Second, it reads those micro-techniques through Foucauldian categories — technologies of the self, care (epimeleia heautou), parrhesia, and the genealogy of discipline — in order to historicize and politicize their institutional afterlives (pastoral, neostoic, bureaucratic, therapeutic, and digital). Methodologically, the study combines philological close readings of key Stoic passages (Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius) with sustained engagement with the Collège de France lectures and late essays of Foucault (*The Care of the Self*; *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*; *The Courage of the Truth*), and with reception histories that include neostoicism (Justus Lipsius), confessional and pastoral practices, and modern psychotechnologies (CBT/REBT, journaling, self-tracking). The book employs a genealogical-phenomenological frame: genealogical in the Foucauldian sense of tracing contingent re-configurations and transfers of practice across regimes

of truth and power; phenomenological in the sense of reconstructing the procedural texture and aims of exercises as lived and enacted regimens rather than as merely doctrinal statements. The core analytic contribution is a taxonomy that differentiates (1) inward techniques (cognitive and somatic exercises aimed at modifying assent and desire), (2) relational technologies (tutorship, exemplarity, parrhesiastic interlocution), and (3) institutional frameworks (schools, pastoral systems, disciplinary bureaucracies, market and platform architectures) that re-embed and repurpose those techniques. Using this taxonomy, the book demonstrates how Stoic askēsis can function simultaneously as a resource for ethical agency and as a substrate for processes of normalization and responsabilization characteristic of later pastoral and modern governmental regimes. The study pays particular attention to ambiguous translations and appropriations: how premodern neostoic manuals reframe Stoic stoicism for confessional and political ends, how psychotherapeutic practices canonicalize Stoic cognitive operations, and how contemporary digital infrastructures (journaling apps, habit trackers) instantiate hypomnemata in datafied form — often occluding the social architectures that shape uptake. Normatively, the book offers a critical-practical proposal: to reclaim Stoic techniques for emancipatory practice requires coupling micro-exercises with institutional literacy — an ethically reflexive form of practice that preserves autonomy without naïvely ignoring the power-laden contexts in which self-cultivation circulates. The work will appeal to scholars in ancient philosophy, continental political theory, ethics, intellectual history, and critical studies of technology; it likewise offers resources for clinicians, educators, and public intellectuals interested in the ethical politics of self-care in contemporary life.

foucault care of the self: Care or Control of the Self? Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, and the Subject in the 21st Century Andrea D. Bührmann, Stefanie Ernst, 2020-05-22 The beginning of the 21st century is characterized by fundamental societal changes: in addition to changing demographics and the globalization of economic flows, the transformation of an industrial-Fordistic society to a non-industrial service society is significant. For more than twenty years, these large-scale trends and their inherent chances and risks have been the topic of vivid discussions in all the social sciences. Keywords are ‘risk-society’, ‘post-industrial society’, ‘knowledge-society’ and ‘information-society’. The implications of these developments are also reflected in the challenge to the traditional, hegemonic and rational understanding of subjectivity. Against the background of these great social changes, several factors indicate that the forms of self-regulation or self-governance are also being transformed. A one-sided consideration of the homo economicus and its varieties would underestimate, for example, certain non-rational forms of self-perception and self-reflection, as well as non-rational practices of self-management and subjectivation. The aim of this anthology is to discuss the question, to what extent the relationship to oneself (its regulation with respect to its governance) and the relationship towards others in (post-)modern societies are being transformed. The perspective of Norbert Elias’ process sociology as well as Michel Foucault’s post-structural theory seem especially promising, as they appear to have been the first researchers consistently and convincingly analysing the ‘nature’ of the individual by reflecting upon its long-term historical process of transformation. Both have different visions but similar concerns: they deal with structures of control that exist within society and within the individual.

foucault care of the self: The Care of the Self in Early Christian Texts Deborah Niederer Saxon, 2017-10-05 This book presents the first three Christian centuries through the lens of what Foucault called “the care of the self.” This lens reveals a rich variation among early Christ movements by illuminating their practices instead of focusing on what we anachronistically assume to have been their beliefs. A deep analysis of the discourse of martyrdom demonstrates how writers like Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp represented self-care. Deborah Niederer Saxon brings to light an entire spectrum of alternative views represented in newly-discovered texts from Nag Hammadi and elsewhere. This insightful analysis has implications for feminist scholarship and exposes the false binary of thinking in terms of “orthodoxy” versus “heresy”/“Gnosticism.”

foucault care of the self: Care of the Self Vladislav Suvák, Livia Flachbartová, Pavol

Sucharek, 2017-11-13 The studies included in the *Care of the Self: Ancient Problematizations of Life and Contemporary Thought* focus on different manifestations of “taking care of the self” present in ancient and contemporary thought. Each of these studies approaches the issue of taking care of the self from a different perspective: Part I by Vladislav Suvák focuses on Socrates’ therapeutic education; Part II by Livia Flachbartová centres on Diogenes’ ascetic practices; and Part III by Pavol Sucharek concentrates on Henri Maldiney’s existential phenomenology. Taking care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*) is not just one of a great many topics associated with ancient ethics. Echoing Michel Foucault, we could say that the care of the self applies to all problematizations of life.

foucault care of the self: Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity Margaret A. McLaren, 2002-10-10 Addressing central questions in the debate about Foucault's usefulness for politics, including his rejection of universal norms, his conception of power and power-knowledge, his seemingly contradictory position on subjectivity and his resistance to using identity as a political category, McLaren argues that Foucault employs a conception of embodied subjectivity that is well-suited for feminism. She applies Foucault's notion of practices of the self to contemporary feminist practices, such as consciousness-raising and autobiography, and concludes that the connection between self-transformation and social transformation that Foucault theorizes as the connection between subjectivity and institutional and social norms is crucial for contemporary feminist theory and politics.

foucault care of the self: Church, Community and Power Roy Kearsley, 2016-05-23 In the era of 'post-Christendom', how can church as a sociological reality be switched on to the destructive dangers, yet constructive possibilities, of 'power' flowing in and around its community? Attuned to the current distrust of church power, this book creatively works out responses that could turn painful censure into a re-visioning of church power relations, helped by neglected critical studies. The approach exposes a complexity to power, and filters that insight into a theology of church. The book shows how lessons are available for a religious community from post-modern philosopher Michel Foucault and from recent feminism. The topic of power has universal importance in the study of religion, though the response to analysis and critique in this book is drawn specifically from Christian sources. Kearsley concludes with an exploration for a future renovated, self-critical, authentic and growing community, sensitive to power while remaining in line with classic Christianity.

foucault care of the self: Foucault's Askesis Edward F. McGushin, 2007-04-03 In his renowned courses at the Collège de France from 1982 to 1984, Michel Foucault devoted his lectures to meticulous readings and interpretations of the works of Plato, Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, among others. In this his aim was not, Edward F. McGushin contends, to develop a new knowledge of the history of philosophy; rather, it was to let himself be transformed by the very activity of thinking. Thus, this work shows us Foucault in the last phase of his life in the act of becoming a philosopher. Here we see how his encounter with ancient philosophy allowed him to experience the practice of philosophy as, to paraphrase Nietzsche, a way of becoming who one is: the work of self-formation that the Greeks called *askēsis*. Through a detailed study of Foucault's last courses, McGushin demonstrates that this new way of practicing philosophical *askēsis* evokes Foucault's ethical resistance to modern relations of power and knowledge. In order to understand Foucault's later project, then, it is necessary to see it within the context of his earlier work. If his earlier projects represented an attempt to bring to light the relations of power and knowledge that narrowed and limited freedom, then this last project represents his effort to take back that freedom by redefining it in terms of care of the self. Foucault always stressed that modern power functions by producing individual subjects. This book shows how his excavation of ancient philosophical practices gave him the tools to counter this function-with a practice of self-formation, an *askēsis*.

foucault care of the self: The Secular Care of the Self Ian Whitmarsh, 2024-06-01 The modern desire to care for our health, so obvious to its proponents, has its discontents. Secular medicine denounces the work of those who claim the protective powers of spirits or the Holy Spirit. In this contestation over what it means to care for oneself, Ian Whitmarsh offers an unorthodox thesis: the

modern secular desire toward health is founded in a Protestant congregationalism that shapes its refusal of spirit manifestation, revelation, and the power of deities to shape the world. This proper healthy ethics and aesthetics is then taught to those who lack choice in their continuing to live through these ontologies. Whitmarsh explores these dynamics of power and spirit as they move across the Atlantic, from northern Europe to North America to the country of Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad offers a broken mirror to the ostensibly secular global endeavor of the desire to be healthy. This mirror shows that the threat found in the spirits and practitioners of other religions, such as Pentecostal healing and orisha manifestation, reveals racialized Protestant commitments masked within a modern global secular care of the self.

foucault care of the self: Self-Transformations Cressida J. Heyes, 2007-08-16 Heyes' monograph in feminist philosophy is on the connection between the idea of normalization--which per Foucault is a mode or force of control that homogenizes a population--and the gendered body. Drawing on Foucault and Wittgenstein, she argues that the predominant picture of the self--a picture that presupposes an inner core of the self that is expressed, accurately or not, by the outer body--obscures the connection between contemporary discourses and practices of self-transformation and the forces of normalization. In other words, pictures of the self can hold us captive when they are being read from the outer self--the body--rather than the inner self, and we can express our inner self by working on our outer body to conform. Articulating this idea with a mix of the theoretical and the practical, she looks at case studies involving transgender people, weight-loss dieting, and cosmetic surgery. Her concluding chapters look at the difficult issue of how to distinguish non-normalizing practices of the self from normalizing ones, and makes suggestions about how feminists might conceive of subjects as embodied and enmeshed in power relations yet also capable of self-transformation. The subject of normalization and its relationship to sex/gender is a major one in feminist theory; Heyes' book is unique in her masterful use of Foucault; its clarity, and its sophisticated mix of the theoretical and the anecdotal. It will appeal to feminist philosophers and theorists.

foucault care of the self: Foucault and the Art of Ethics Timothy O'Leary, 2006-09-15 This comprehensive assessment of Michel Foucault's later work responds to the contemporary crisis in ethics, focusing on the way Foucault attempts to bring together the two seemingly-incompatible spheres of ethics and aesthetics through his reassessment of the Greek tradition.

foucault care of the self: Feminism and the Final Foucault Dianna Taylor, Karen Vintges, 2004 Feminism and the Final Foucault is the first systematic offering of contemporary, international feminist perspectives on the later work of philosopher Michel Foucault. Rather than simply debating the merits or limitations of Foucault's later work, the essays in this collection examine women's historical self-practices, conceive of feminism as a shared ethos, and consider the political significance of this conceptualization in order to elucidate, experiment with, and put into practice the conceptual tools that Foucault offers for feminist ethics and politics. The volume illustrates the ways in which Foucault's later thinking on ethics as care of the self can reintroduce a number of issues and themes that feminists jettisoned in the wake of postmodernism, including consciousness raising, feminist therapy, the subject woman, identity politics, and feminist agency. Taken as a whole, the diversity of feminist viewpoints presented provide important new insights into the final Foucault, and thus serve as a productive intervention in current Foucault scholarship.

foucault care of the self: Technologies of the Self Michel Foucault, 1988 This volume is a wonderful introduction to Foucault and a testimony to the deep humanity of the man himself.

foucault care of the self: Foucault, Subjectivity, and Identity Robert M. Strozier, 2002 An examination of the notions of subject and self from the Sophists to Foucault. Although the writings of Foucault have had tremendous impact on contemporary thinking about subjectivity, notions of the subject have a considerable history. In Foucault, Subjectivity and Identity Robert Strozier examines ideas of subject and self that have developed throughout western thought. He expands Foucault's idea of the subject as historically determined into a wide-ranging treatment of ideas of subjectivity, extending from those expressed by the ancient Sophists to notions of the subject at the end of the

twentieth century. Strozier examines these traditions against the background of Foucault's work, especially Foucault's later writings on the history of self-relation and the subject and his idea of historical subjectivity in general. Strozier explores various periods of western thought, notably the Hellenistic era, the early Italian Renaissance, and the seventeenth century, to show that almost every treatment of subjectivity is related to the Sophist idea of the originating Subject. Drawing on a wide spectrum of writings - by Epicurus and Seneca, Petrarch and Montaigne, Dickens and Conrad, Fr

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