The "Relations of Affect" and "the Spiritual": Towards a Foucauldian Genealogy of Spirituality

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ABSTRACT: In his book *Foucault and Religion*, Jeremy Carrette presents a compelling argument against Foucault's genealogical method (what he terms "relations of force"). In brief, Carrette holds that while Foucault's genealogical method effectively unmasked the origins of "rationality" and "madness," it was less successful when explaining the materialization of "the spiritual." Foucault's analysis of spiritual practices is at best functional and, according to Carrette, fails to explain the psychophysical state of subjects engaged in religious customs. In the following paper, I argue that Carrette is correct; there are limitations to Foucault's genealogical method, especially when explaining subjectivization processes, such as conversion experiences. However, I demonstrate that we can perform a successful genealogical investigation of the spiritual by adding an additional lens of analysis to "the relations of power" and "the relations of meaning" Foucault employs. I call this lens "the relations of affect." I use this tool to explain Augustine's transformative process, as observed in the saint's *Confessions*.

KEY WORDS: Spirituality, Foucault, Genealogy, Emotions, Carrette, Augustine, Conversion

I n his ground-breaking book *Foucault and Religion: Spiritual Corporality and Political Spirituality*, Jeremy Carrette argues that Foucault's genealogical method fails to account for the historical emergence of "the spiritual." Carrette writes in this regard: "Foucault had attempted to suspend the 'spiritual' by prioritizing the 'relations of power' against the 'relations of meaning,' but as we have seen this failed to provide the interconnection between the two."[1] Carrette's charge, in effect, is that a power analysis or genealogical approach fails to explain (or explain away) the significance, meaning and efficacy of religious

practices. A genealogical approach to the study of sacred texts, behaviors, and observances cannot account for the very real material, social, political and economic impact these things have on believers and non-believers alike. In all its sundry forms, spirituality, Carrette evinces, remains unsullied and unexpunged by a genealogical critique.

In the following, I argue that Carrette is correct: there are obvious limitations to Foucault's genealogical method. However, I also demonstrate that we can perform a successful genealogical investigation of "the spiritual" by adding a lens of relational analysis to those of "the relations of power" and "the relations of meaning" that Foucault employs. I call this lens "the relations of affect." I demonstrate that this new type of analytics allows genealogists to investigate and explain what Foucault calls the process of "subjectivization." This new genealogical tool resolves the problems Carrette diagnoses concerning Foucault's "functional" approach to spirituality.

Section I: Genealogy as a Philosophical Method

It is Foucault's 1971 essay, "The Order of Discourse," where we see him openly cast his lot with Nietzsche by extolling the virtues of employing a genealogical method of philosophical and historical inquiry.[2] Genealogy is a distinctive philosophical and historical method of moral critique. As the name implies, a genealogist criticizes a particular concept, idea, discourse, practice or feeling by demonstrating how the specific thing being investigated emerged in history. The genealogist traces the lines of descent of a contemporary thing to its earlier origin. By demonstrating the origin or perhaps better put the soil from which the concept emerged, the genealogist thereby undermines its perceived value.[3]

The genealogist discredits traditional ideas deemed to be sacred and absolute. She demonstrates that such ideas are not timeless and immutable entities but are completely contingent and arbitrary. Such concepts like "moral goodness" or even feelings such as guilt are not homogenous things but rather forgings from older discourses, ideas, and emotions. They are like tapestries that have been woven from the threads of earlier concepts and practices over a substantial period of time. Such notions only exist because relationships came to be established between what were once thought to be, and perhaps were in *realia*, two separate entities. Genealogy seeks to unravel the threads that make up such tapestries in order to show how new tapestries may be sewn.[4]

The genealogist's task is threefold: first, to criticize traditional accounts of how and why specific moral concepts originated; Two, to offer a more epistemically justified account of the true origins of the construction being analyzed; and three, to demonstrate that new interpretations are possible by showing the arbitrary and contingent source of the idea under investigation. We might do well to look at

a concrete example in order to flesh out more fully the first aspect of genealogy. Historians of psychology might trace our current concepts of mental pathology to an earlier, less refined concept. Madness, it may be argued, existed in the sixteenth century, but now in the twenty-first century, we have a much better understanding of the kinds of madness there are along with the symptoms of these kinds. Understanding what signs to look for allows the psychiatrist to prescribe the appropriate treatment. The fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* is resounding proof, or so it may be argued, of psychiatry's evolution. But this analysis, according to the genealogist, does not go far enough. It remains on the level of the "relations of meaning": such historians are simply tracing the threads of madness, as it were, on a merely discursive level of analysis. That is, they understand the genesis and interpretation of a concept or practice by seeing its relationship to other ideas within an academic discipline but do not perform a more thorough investigation of how the profession itself emerged.

The genealogist, however, must pay attention to the dark underbelly of history. She must pay careful attention to the confluence of forces that created what we define as either normal behavior or lunacy, as the case may be. As well she must also perform a genealogical investigation of the study of psychiatry itself. As Foucault shows in his early work, *Madness and Civilization* (*Histoire de la Folie*), madness, as a concept, was created in the seventeenth century through a myriad of pre-existing, non-discursive practices and discursive models.[5] By shifting our perspective to "the relations of force," we see the true soil from which these ideas sprang, namely, power and the struggle for greater and greater quanta of power. In other words, all of our contemporary concepts, ideas, institutions, discourses, and values were born through the confluence of competing modes and perspectives of power. Genealogy unmasks the *real* soil of our existing beliefs and understandings as nothing more and nothing less than the ideas and institutions that were victorious over their respective rivals. In sum, values, whether they are legal "values," moral "values" or even rational "values," can never be valued in and of themselves. All values presuppose evaluations, while evaluations originate from individual evaluators who evaluate with a specific plan in mind. Genealogy is *the* study that exposes such hidden agendas and brings them to light.

The goal of genealogy is to study how values such as Christian morality, "Rationality" and others came to have value. That is: "Why did some things come to be valued above others and why did certain ideas, practices and concepts become devalued?" For the genealogist, we answer such questions by understanding how values relate to power. Genealogy then, is the diagnostic study of "power relations" (or Carrette's terminology the "relations of forces"). A study of power relations includes, but is not limited to, answering the following questions: "How were these relations formed?" "How were alliances between powers made?" "How did these alliances become dismantled?" "How did the goals of these alliances become re-

interpreted?" By examining the "actual historical record," Nietzsche and Foucault believed that they were offering a more justified account regarding the emergence of historical events than the ones normally proffered by more traditional narratives.[6] When we examine more closely the relationship between the "relations of meaning" and the "relations of force" in section II, we will see why both Nietzsche and Foucault believed genealogy to be a more justified method of philosophical investigation than more traditional techniques.

Nietzsche and Foucault also thought of themselves as "physicians of culture." The goal of genealogy is to trace the pathogenesis of ideas (like God), feelings (like guilt), concepts, discourses, and practices (like Christian morality) to determine where these so-called "new" ideas originated and how old beliefs and customs came to be re-interpreted for different ends. By de-mystifying such concepts, that is, by showing how such conceptions are simply historical and arbitrary constructions that did not have to be, we bracket them: the genealogist reveals that no idea is necessarily and absolutely true. All concepts are perspectival and historically contingent.[7]

But concepts are not just perspectivally true in the sense that some statements will be confirmed in some perspectives and not in others. Ideas contain hidden agendas. It is by unmasking these hidden agendas that genealogy's therapeutic powers become manifest. Nietzsche, for example, called genealogy the single path to *Fröhlich Weisheit* or "joyful wisdom."[8] Foucault also believed genealogy to be a form of treatment. The conclusion of a genealogical inquiry helps the investigator challenge her traditional beliefs, thereby allowing for new belief formation.[9] In effect, genealogical investigations enable us to establish new theories and outlooks to live more creatively, joyfully, and indeed, experimentally than before. In short, the genealogical method, as understood by both philosophers, is a technique and personal practice of investigating traditional philosophical puzzles and *aporias* in order to offer a "way out" or an exit from our all too common disenchantment with modern society.[10] Genealogies provide the contemporary human being with an opportunity to push beyond what Foucault calls our historic limit-attitude: the current norms that govern how we act, believe, think and desire. Genealogy in the hands of Foucault is transformative.[11] Genealogy asks us to experiment with our lives, our thought processes, and our behavior to develop a unique, individual "aesthetics of existence."[12]

SECTION II: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN RELATIONS OF MEANING AND RELATIONS OF FORCE

Relations of meaning and relations of force are also related. Though Carrette is right to note that Foucault distinguishes these two methods of analysis in his work, Nietzsche is the first to mark this difference. In *On the Genealogy of Mor-*

als, Nietzsche warns against treating the contemporary meaning of punishment, namely deterrence, as the real source behind the cause of punishment in the raw as it were, namely, mental or bodily procedures of the discipline itself. In other words, punishment was not always meant to "punish." Nietzsche makes us realize that the force, the practice of punishment, the pain inflicted upon another human being, is always more stable than the fluid element of the same act, namely what the so-called punishment is meant to correct. Nietzsche in this regard writes: "In accordance with the previously developed major point of historical method, it is assumed without further ado that the procedure itself will be something older, earlier than its employment in punishment, that the latter is projected and interpreted into the procedure.[13]" Thus, the first aspect of punishment Nietzsche posits is the enduring part, "the custom, the act, the 'drama'; a certain strict sequence of procedures."[14] The other aspect is the fluid element—the meaning, the purpose, the expectation of what the punishment is supposed to punish etc. These two aspects are distinct from one another. We make a grave mistake if we think, as some naïve genealogists of the English variety do (such as Herbert Spencer and Thomas Buckle), that the *meaning* of punishment can be projected back onto the means of punishment. That is, the second aspect, the meaning aspect, always comes later. Nietzsche accords more weight to the first aspect, the pure violence of punishment as it were, because the second aspect, the meaning of punishment, is indexed to the discursive practices of a culture and thus cannot be decoupled from the culture in which it is embedded. Tracing the second aspect of punishment gets us no closer to understanding the punishment's real, historical source. In contrast, tracing the first aspect, the pure force or the procedures of discipline in question, allows us to go beyond a culture's selective interpretation of "correction." Establishing the meaning given to a particular system of violence by tracing its corporal methods of torture entails documenting how the body has been actually treated in a given culture and determining how the meaning of this punishment changed from regime to regime, from culture to culture.[15]

The way in which the genealogist traces the first aspect of punishment is to determine how a regime views the body. That is, the body provides the external or non-doxastic link between different historical regimes. An external link is required because a genealogist needs a single line of descent in order to trace a practice from era to era. After all, if the genealogist's contention is that concepts are completely fluid in that they are assigned a specific meaning by the particular culture under investigation, then tracing the history of a concept will not provide us with the stability required for a genealogical investigation. It is for this reason that the body serves as the primary document for any genealogical inquiry.

Allow me to clarify the above point by looking at an example from Foucault's power/knowledge period of the seventies. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault traces

the practices, discourses, and techniques used to control the body, to harness its forces, to prevent rebellions etc. in different historical dispositifs (power/knowledge apparatuses) in order to demonstrate how other practices, techniques, and discourses in contemporary society are genealogical developments of these older, more ancient practices.[16] The timetable, a device employed by Medieval monks for centuries to regulate their day, was re-employed (and deployed) in several new settings: schools, army barracks, prisons, and the workplace. The new interpretation of time produced via a myriad of practices Foucault calls "disciplinary time." He defines it as follows: "Time measured and paid must also be a time without impurities or defects; a time of good quality, throughout which the body is constantly applied to its exercise."[17] Thus, no thing, not even time, Foucault argues, is essential. Not even time is timeless. All entities are historical constructions. The "soul," "individuality," "rights," even "rationality" itself are simply assemblages of what were once disparate strategies and practices. Foucault's task is to demonstrate how such so-called "eternal" ideas were fashioned and transformed according to the demands of a new confluence of power. The body for the genealogist, then, is the common link between *dispositifs*. Without the body, different regimes of power/knowledge would be incommensurable. The body provides the source or well-spring for a "naturalistic" justification for a genealogical interpretation of an event's emergence.[18]

We see a more explicit recognition of the importance of the body for genealogical inquiry when we turn to Foucault's "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." Foucault there writes: "Descent (*Enstehung*) attaches itself to the body. It inscribes itself in the nervous system, in temperament in the digestive apparatus."[19] This statement is the first time the Frenchman in his published work connects genealogical inquiry and the body, but it will certainly not be the last. Foucault describes the body as the primary document for the genealogist because it is the body alone that is "the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas) the locus of a dissociated self adopting an illusion of substantial unity and a volume in perpetual disintegration."[20] Foucault argues that historical events not only can be read, as it were, by paying close attention to the markings on bodies but indeed only emerge from a new interpretation being applied to bodies. The body is a "volume in perpetual disintegration" created by a dispositif and one which is capable of being read, re-read, interpreted, and re-interpreted, but is never exhausted. Genealogy's task, according to Foucault, is then "to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body."[21]

Several points have now come to light from this brief analysis of how Foucault views the body as a historical document. First, the body has a select type of epistemic place within a genealogical investigation, which other texts such as peace treaties, diaries, or political documents do not have. When viewed as a historical document, the body is much different from more traditional historical writings

because it is directly targeted and invested by power relations (relations of force). Foucault writes:

> The body is . . . directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest, mark it, train it, torture it. . . . This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but, on the other hand, its constitution as labor power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection. . . . [T]he body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body.[22]

By attentively reading the body's markings, by power, we come into contact with the historical emergence of the economic forces that remained dormant within the body until they were brought to light. The body is quite simply "the inscribed surface of events" and nothing else.[23] Based on the above passages, it is clear that Foucault argues that the body holds a privileged epistemic place in any historical investigation that explains how different strategies of power came to be. The body is the non-doxastic touchstone the genealogist requires in order to trace the historical emergence of different dispositifs. Without the body, there would be no way to perform a genealogical inquiry.

Genealogy's real importance is to provide individuals with tools to understand how pathogenic ideas have not just shaped but produced our subjectivity—a process Foucault calls "subjectivization." Foucault articulates this process in one of his last interviews: "I will call the process of subjectivization the procedure by which one obtains the constitution of a subject or more precisely of a subjectivity which of course is only one of the given possibilities of organization of self-consciousness."[24] Disciplinary and surveillance techniques transform the very heartland of subjectivity in that they become technologies of the self. The individual internalizes the judgment of those she deems qualified to know her true self (e.g., the teacher-judge, the warden-judge, the employer-judge etc.). The tragic element of this process is that we become a tool of our own self-management such that we become co-opted by bio-power. "Just as power relations can be affirmed, only by being carried out [Deleuze declares in his wonderful exegesis of Foucault], . . . so the relation to oneself, which bends these power relations can be established only by being carried out."[25] One of the most potent tools of power/knowledge is the manufacturing of a deep self because in attempting to understand our true selves, we employ the disciplinary techniques given to us by our *dispositif*. As Karen Vintges explains: "We are nailed, according to the middle Foucault, by the so-called authentic deep self. It is our own prison house in which we cannot escape and in which we are trapped, locked and secluded from others."[26]

The problem I will investigate is whether the relations of force here, understood as corrective procedures applied to a body, seem adequate, all by themselves, to

explain the meanings we give to ourselves as subjects. This problem is autochthonic to the genealogical method. It appears in several manifestations throughout *On the Genealogy of Morals* but especially in the second essay. In the section titled, "Guilt, bad conscience and the like," Nietzsche explains the formation of memory and the bad conscience as the consequence of the psychical digestion of drives: primal instincts like sex and violence become internalized via the forced inurement and subsequent torture suffered by our early ancestors. This problem of psychical ingestion, as I shall call it, is a specter that haunts Foucault. Subjectivization, like psychical digestion, denotes the process of the internalization of disciplinary strategies. I turn to Carrette's critique of Foucault's definition of spirituality to bring the problem of explaining the process of subjectivization into sharper focus.

Section III: Carrette's Critique

In *Foucault and Religion*, Carrette argues that Foucault's genealogical method fails to appreciate the causal efficacy of beliefs fully. That is, Foucault (as we have already seen) holds that the "relations of force" (those forces and actions that affect the body) trump the "relations of meaning" when it comes to understanding the real engines at work in history. Political and religious ideologies can be explained away as unique historical events emerging from practices that were engaged in by bodies or by a regime of disciplinary procedures that was enacted on bodies. Perhaps all the more perplexing is that this denigration and indeed eschewing of the "relations of meaning" on Foucault's part seems to be at odds with his previous extolling for careful, conceptual and discursive analysis when examining a historical idea or practice. Indeed, in his archaeological work of the sixties, Foucault boldly asserted that certain kinds of literature could serve to transform both the body and soul of their readers. For example, Foucault, in "Fantasia in the Library," argued that reading Flaubert's *The Temptation of St. Anthony* may cause one to experience a new way of thinking about one's relationship to sex, to the body, to language, and to God.[27] Carrette is then curious to know why Foucault seems to abandon his earlier archaeological approach in what is often referred to as the power/knowledge era of the mid-seventies. Carrette writes:

> The body was trained and mastered in the mystical and ascetic life in the hope of salvation and a 'beyond.' These religious ideas are seen by Foucault to be 'illusory.' But earlier we saw that when he followed a 'spiritual corporality' and a Deleuzian metaphysics, theological ideas were no longer 'illusory.' His later remarks about the illusion of religious ideas were created, therefore, by falling back into a traditional religious epistemology and failing to recognize how theological ideas were earlier grounded in the body.[28]

According to Carrette's analysis, the seeming nuggets of wisdom that Foucault was able to sift from subversive works of literature by Flaubert, Blanchot, Sade,

and Artaud were not nuggets after all, but philosophical iron pyrite—fool's gold. Viewing theological ideas as mere illusions is not only to the detriment of genealogy as an investigative historical and philosophical method which claims to be more justified than its rivals, but, as Carrette also shows, forecloses untold possibilities of self-transformation, a project Foucault is deeply interested in examining and practicing in his later work.

As Carrette explains, before the publication of *Discipline and Punish* in 1976, Foucault was very critical of religion not because he believed that religious ideas were illusory, but because religion served to silence the power of poetic discourse. Religion serves to order speaking, writing, thinking, and even desiring by placing limits on the kinds of speaking, writing, thinking, and desiring considered to be permissible. Religion only serves to stifle the creative powers of language, or so Foucault thought. In the sixties, Foucault was interested in revealing new ways to think about one's relation to history, to one's self (*rapport a soi*), and even to one's language. In "Preface to Transgression," "The Father's No," and in "Language to Infinity" Foucault is at pains to show how writers like Blanchot, Bataille, Artaud, and Hölderlin were able to discover the hidden, "mystical" powers of language yet were not thereby religious mystics. These writers broke religion's previously held monopoly on the possibility of ecstatic experiences. Such writers promoted new ways of thinking, feeling, and relating that were non-religious.

Carrette classifies the themes that emerge in this period of Foucault's writing (1962–1976) as Foucault's "spiritual corporality" phase. Carrette is careful to distinguish the word "corporality" from "corporeality." The word "corporeality" implies a tension of sorts between body and soul. However, Foucault did not believe the soul to have any ontological reality as he was a committed atheist from an early age. Therefore, Foucault is not a "spiritual corporealist." He is, Carrette thinks, a "spiritual corporalist," at least during this phase of his career because he still believed that ideas and concepts were historically and personally efficacious.

The post-1976 Foucault completely abandons the spiritual corporality model. Instead, he adopts a relation to religion that is both external and political: external, because Foucault no longer deems it worthy to understand religious ideas as concepts in their own right and as political because Foucault is only interested in tracing the relationships of the economic alliance between religion and political regimes. Carrette calls this new phase of Foucault's writing on faith the "political spirituality" period. Instead of treating theological ideas from the inside, that is, how they affect the reader's behavior or how they change the relationship the believer has to possible ways of conceiving the world, Foucault now demonstrates the political ramifications specific religious practices had in the secular world. For example, in *The History of Sexuality Volume One*, Foucault shows how the *practice* of confession gradually formed a new relationship within and to the subject, namely one of continuous circumspection in individuals' consciousness. This practice of

confession (the relations of force), which Foucault's terms "pastoral power" was then later modified by psychiatrists. Freud then gives this earlier practice a fresh interpretation with his "talking cure," and behold, Foucault exclaims, a new audience, a new flock is born. But, Carrette argues, Foucault never gives an account for the religious rationale of the practice of confession itself. And this failure to account for this rationale is a serious genealogical gap in the investigation. Carrette writes: "Foucault's dilemma in DP is whether the analysis of the body stops at a description of the location of the body in the religious space (sociology/practice) or whether one examines the religious rationale behind the time-space location of the body (theology/belief)."[29] Foucault, it seems, abandons his earlier interest in the efficacy and historical existentiality of theological ideas, but in doing so, presents a shallow and indeed stale analysis of religious doctrine.

Carrette identifies the problem in Foucault's peculiar rendering and redeployment of the term "spirituality." In a later paper, Carrette argues that the use of spirituality in Foucault's 1981–1982 lectures at the College De France (recorded and then published as *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*) is ambiguous. Also, its application to the ancient Greek philosophical tradition is questionable. On the one hand, Foucault seeks to situate Christian spirituality within the ancient Greek and Roman intellectual context of transformative knowledge in general. However, in doing so, he employs a Christian conception of spirituality to understand ancient philosophical texts, so Carrette evinces.[30] A Christian understanding of spiritual practice entails a conversion, a seeking to rehabilitate one's form in the eyes of God. Such rehabilitation may utilize a whole swath of distinctly religious practices depending on the Christian sect in question.

On the other hand, however, Foucault assumes he can extract the metaphysical beliefs and practices from Christianity itself in order to provide a "functional" definition of spirituality that would apply to both Christian practices and ancient philosophical exercises (*Askesis*). As Carrette puts it,

> The enigmatic gesture is primarily related to the creative attempt by both Foucault, and Pierre Hadot, to use "spirituality" and "spiritual" to reflect practices of self-transformation in the Greco-Roman and Christian world and their attempt to draw out a distinct deployment of the "spiritual" that separates the word from its Christian theological associations, but which is simultaneously burdened with such history.[31]

The essential philological proof for this enigmatic gesture, according to Carrette, is found in Foucault's own definition of the term. It is a characterization that Carrette calls merely functional. Foucault says: "By spirituality, I understand—but I am not sure that it is a definition which we can hold for very long—that which precisely refers to a subject acceding to a certain mode of being and to the transformations which the subject must make of himself in order to accede to this mode

of being."[32] Carrette argues that Foucault realizes that he cannot hold the term for very long because spiritual practices for the Christian do not have a satisfactory Greek-Roman analog. As Carrette puts it:

> The ontological claim of "conversion" is distinct from "transformation," but Foucault quickly slips from one to the other without comment. This is significant because, in the Christian schema, the discourse of spirit informs conversion in very specific ways, but transformation can be without spirit. The question is precisely one of specificity, where Foucault rests on the functionalist transfer of a discourse of spirit to frame his own analysis.[33]

To concretize Carrette's functional criticism of Foucault, I turn to the most famous conversion story in Christianity's history: *The Confessions* by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. In Book VIII Chapter 12, passages 28–29, we find the paragraphs where Augustine converts to Christianity and takes up a vow of chastity. The depth of Augustine's anguish is profoundly moving.

> 28. And, not indeed in these words, yet to this effect, spoke I much unto You —But You, O Lord, how long? How long, Lord? Will You be angry for ever? Oh, remember not against us former iniquities; for I felt that I was enthralled by them. I sent up these sorrowful cries —How long, how long? Tomorrow, and tomorrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?

> 29. I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo, I heard the voice as of a boy or girl, I know not which, coming from a neighbouring house, chanting, and oft repeating, Take up and read; take up and read. . . . So, restraining the torrent of my tears, I rose up, interpreting it no other way than as a command to me from Heaven to open the book, and to read the first chapter I should light upon. For I had heard of Antony, that, accidentally coming in while the gospel was being read, he received the admonition as if what was read were addressed to him, Go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me. . . . No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended — by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart — all the gloom of doubt vanished away.[34]

It is hard to find a parallel passage in Greek and Roman philosophical texts. The closest "journal" to *The Confessions* that comes to mind is Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* (*Ta eis heauton*). But Aurelius's work consists of "notes to myself," one might retort. Still, these entries read more like strategies he needs to remember and employ when facing *stultitia* (stupidity or false valuing). The desire to transform himself is certainly present in the text but at no point would we call Aurelius's passion for self-transformation a conversion experience—the emotional markers and indeed drivers of conversion such as longing, anguish, and torment

are not present. The lack of these powerful emotions points to a transformational framework, to be sure, but one that it is hard-pressed to call "spiritual."

Section IV: The Relations of Affect and Genealogical Inquiry

As shown above Foucault views the body as the primary historical document in a genealogical inquiry. The body may be "read" to unmask how bodies have been historically controlled, subjugated, disciplined, and harnessed from political regime to political regime. Carrette is critical of this approach. He argues that a method that merely focuses on bodies is myopic: the body is not the only target of regimes of truth. Hearts and minds make real differences in history, too, and therefore they also are targeted by power. Carrette argues that we cannot collapse the "relations of meaning" into the "relations of force." Both are separate yet equal. A genealogical inquiry, presumably, would have to undertake an analysis along both planes of relations.

However, there is a second way to use the body in a genealogical inquiry. This second way is for the genealogist to understand the relationships between power and the body by understanding one's embodiment. It is this second method of understanding the body, within a dispositif, which interests us here. A dispositif is responsible for forging the attitudes, feelings, and even desires of an individual. It creates the individual from the outside in and from the inside out. Desires, feelings, and drives are all part of the production of a historical dispositif. However, since emotions are sometimes assumed to be primordial and ahistorical, it is incumbent upon a genealogist to investigate these and other so-called affective "intuitions." More specifically, a genealogist must reassess how our affects have been harnessed so that it may become possible to re-direct these affects to new goals and of course, according to Foucault's own understanding of the practice of genealogy, new possibilities of existence.

I intend to use the critical method of genealogy (separating the drama of punishment from its procedures) and apply it to a new target. In keeping with an appraisal view of feelings, I hold that affects comprise four elements: 1. a phenomenological object that elicits an emotional response (e.g., I am afraid of this lion before me, I feel ashamed before God); 2. an appraisal or judging component concomitant with the object in question; 3. a behavioral element; and 4. the feeling of the emotion itself. Here I am following the analysis of John Dewey's *Theory of Emotions* and layering this with a modern cognitive appraisal approach of the likes of Richard Lazarus.[35] I contend that both the behavior associated with the emotion and the *quale* or "feel" (to borrow Dewey's term) are older than the respective phenomenological object part and appraisal dimension of one's emotional experiences. I further contend that when the behavior associated with this *quale* is exaggerated, the feeling becomes intensified and refined over time. These behaviors and feelings

are then appraised and tethered to new relations of meaning (phenomenological objects). New feelings help explain the subjectivization problem noted above because emotions, as appraisals, assign both sanctions and endorsements to affective behaviors such as weeping, groaning, and wailing.[36] It is the very content of these spiritual practices, such as the Christian's relationship to her faith, Scripture, and God, which are responsible for producing a new subjectivity, as Carrette rightly maintains. My affective genealogical approach helps to elucidate how the process and problem of Foucauldian subjectivization take place. Let me explain.

In section four of Nietzsche's *Genealogy*, Nietzsche writes: "The signpost to the *right* [*Rechten*] road was for me the question: what was the real etymological significance of the designations for 'good' coined in the various languages?" (Nietzsche's emphasis).[37] Nietzsche calls this turn to etymological evidence a fundamental insight as it may be used as a tool for determining the origin of values. It provides him a way of moving beyond our pre-conceived liberal sensibilities when viewing the past to reveal how ancient peoples thought of themselves. However, as a genealogist, Nietzsche is not satisfied in limiting his analysis to the relations of meaning: he does not want to understand ancient peoples in terms of how they understood themselves. Instead, Nietzsche employs a rule of conceptual transformation to help his readers understand how pre-civilized subjects thought of themselves and others. He notes: "A concept denoting political superiority always resolves itself into a concept denoting superiority of soul."[38] He then shows how tracing the etymological roots of the Latin *Bonus* (good) reveals rather ironically that contemporary notions of goodness are corrupt: goodness was initially used as a descriptor to mark out high-status, not character. Nietzsche writes: "I believe I may venture to interpret the Latin *bonus* as the warrior provided I am right in tracing *bonus* back to an earlier *duonus* (compare *bellum=duellum=deun-lum*, which seems to me to contain *duonus*). Therefore *bonus* as the man of strife, of dissension (duo) as the man of war."[39] Notice that Nietzsche's insight is to pay close attention to descriptions of bodies. Warriors—those defined by their physical attributes and abilities—were deemed *duonus*.

Nietzsche explores this insight further in noting that "pure" and "impure" do not refer to notions like "character" or "soul" for ancient peoples because these concepts, being more abstract and complex, arrive later on the scene. The original meaning of evaluative words was closely tethered to practices that orbit the body. As he declares:

> all concepts of ancient man were rather at first incredibly uncouth, coarse, external, narrow, straightforward, and altogether unsymbolical in meaning to a degree that we can scarcely conceive. The "pure man" is merely a man who washed himself, who forbids himself certain foods that produce skin ailments, who does not sleep with the dirty women of the lower strata, who has an aversion to blood—no more hardly more![40]

Nietzsche's insight was to trace the roots of words that denoted to their bodily practice. I will use this same insight but apply it to emotions. Therefore, I will bring together Nietzsche's etymological tool noted above with the method of separating the meaning of punishment from the act of punishment itself. I will superimpose these two lenses and apply them to the affective realm.

I now return to Book VIII, Chapter 12, passages 28–29 of *The Confessions*. I draw the reader's attention to Augustine's vivid description of his distraught state of "spiritual" crisis. Augustine is neither ashamed of weeping (*Fletus*) nor groaning (*gemitus*) before the object of his consciousness, God, or, more accurately stated, Augustine's conception of how God views him. Indeed, one notices that Augustine's state of despair, exemplified by his paralinguistic emotional behavior, reaches a crescendo as one moves through the *Confessions*. In the opening of Book VI for example, Augustine states that he is not yet groaning in prayer, but this all changes when the reader reaches Book VII when his moaning finally commences.[41] In Book VIII, we reach the depths of Augustine's anguish, where he declares that he is "pregnant with weeping" (*Fletus gravidus*).

Yet as Philip Burton notes, this unabashed, unrestrained weeping and groaning is inconsistent with the widespread ancient Greek and Roman observance of self-control, especially for men.[42] What's more, it is clear that Augustine himself embraced these observances. Burton writes:

> In purely human matters, Augustine does espouse a version of μετριοπάθεια [*Metrio* (medium) *Patheia* (state)], proportional passion; this he fails to realize after the death of his anonymous friend in Book 4 but after the death of his mother in Book 9 he is able to hold in check the tears at his funeral, then consciously release these tears he was holding in check. . . . Alongside this espousal of μετριοπάθεια in human affairs is a quite different attitude towards God; there can be no question of proportionality where one of the terms is infinite.[43]

Augustine advocates restraint of emotional states in response to human matters but exhibits and endorses unbridled mournful behavioral expression concerning one's relationship to the divine. How are we to make sense of this paradox?

Here is what I propose. Anguish before God (the new, abstract phenomenological object to be investigated genealogically) is fomented via powerful feelings (*quales*) which were initially expressed and condoned (following Nietzsche) in socially accepted behaviors (e.g., grieving and weeping for the loss of a child, mother, or close friend). However, there were constraints to these behavioral expressions of grief—what Greek and Latin authors called moderation (μετριοπάθεια, *moderatio*). The behaviors associated with these emotions (weeping, groaning, and in some cases, ululation (*Eiulatus*), as viewed in the case of Augustine, are then exaggerated, causing the *quale* itself to become intensified. Augustine's para-linguistic behaviors (e.g., groaning "wherein the sound of my voice appeared choked with

weeping") are appraised and endorsed; indeed, they are found to be commendable and justifiable because the phenomenological object of anguish for Augustine is himself. He feels abject shame before the all-judging gaze of God. It is his entire self (*tota sui*), that is on trial. Every one of Augustine's past actions, along with the intentions behind said actions, is observed and judged by an almighty Creator who is deemed perfect in every conceivable way. Augustine's emotional reaction to what he perceives as the rebellious, disrespectful sinful nature of his youth bears witness and endorses his "feeling" of conversion. Given Augustine's narrative, what Carrette calls relations of meaning (along with the cathartic ecstasy of the Bishop's affective response to his guilt), there is only one adequate reaction to Augustine's full recognition regarding his defiant and wicked ways. "I shall go into my bedroom," Augustine evinces, "and sing love songs to you groaning with groans beyond telling."[44] As Augustine swings back and forth from chastising himself before God the Hangman and rejoicing before God the Redeemer, these clashing, powerful emotions serve to excavate Augustine's sense of, and attachment to, the deep self.

Augustine's conversion to Christianity can neither be explained nor explained away by political, social, or disciplinary forces alone. Augustine's transformation is not a *metamorphosis* (μεταμόρφωσις) but a *converso*, a turn of direction towards God Himself. It is an about-face that is accomplished only through spiritual anguish. Carrette's argument regarding the limits of genealogy—at least as understood and practiced by Foucault—is correct. Augustine's *Confessions* mark a rupture with Neo-Platonic and Stoic practices of self-transformation. Evidence for this conclusion is found when comparing the *Confessions* to Marcus Aurelius's *Mediations*. Foucault's "functional definition" of spirituality to explain Christian subjectivization fails.

Or so it would appear. Spirituality is not the *sui generis* category, as Carrette claims. We can perform a genealogical tracing of both the idea and the feelings one obtains when engaged in spiritual practices (prayer, confession, etc.) by supplementing Foucault's "functional definition" of the term. I demonstrate that Foucault's project is sound if complemented with an affective approach to reading texts. This affective approach first repurposes Nietzsche's technique of tracing words denoting value. I analyzed the *Confessions* looking for language, which referred to the practice of grieving. I then fused this technique with the critical methodological principle of genealogy, namely, to separate the act of punishment from its interpretation. In that regard, I demonstrate, through my four-fold affective analytics, how Augustine's conversion story remains grounded in older behavioral practices of expressing grief that were intensified and re-interpreted to new ends, namely oneself. The channel between ancient Greek transformative practices and Christian spiritual conversion is through affective analysis. I call this new genealogical method "affective genealogy."

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Notes

1. Carrette, *Foucault and Religion*, 136.
2. Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," section VI.
3. Genealogy as Foucault puts it in "Nietzsche, Genealogy History" is a vulgar "science" always searching for the *pudenda origo* (literally the origin of genitals) of some concept, behavior or feeling. See Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 77.
4. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, GM III:12, 489.
5. Also see Foucault's 1973–1974 Lectures from Le College De France contained in *Psychiatric Power*.
6. This is an allusion to Nietzsche's criticism of the English psychologists in *On the Genealogy of Morals* who, according to Nietzsche, would prefer to gaze haphazardly into the blue rather than do genuine historical research.
7. I realize this statement may lead to a self-referential paradox in that the claim that all ideas are contingent and only perspectivally true seems to be a contradiction in terms since the idea that all ideas are contingent and perspectivally true is itself either absolutely true or mere opinion. In brief, this is the problem of Nietzschean perspectivism. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to tackle this problem here.
8. See Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, preface, sec. 7, 457: "For cheerfulness—or in my own language gay science—is a reward: the reward of a long, brave, industrious, and subterranean seriousness, of which to be sure not everyone is capable."
9. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 156.
10. "Kant defines *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment) in an almost entirely negative way, as an *Ausgang*, an "exit" a "way out." Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," 34.
11. Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" "This philosophical ethos may be characterized as a limit-attitude. . . . Criticism indeed consists of analyzing and reflecting upon limits" (45).
12. The question of how one may think of ethics as aesthetics is posed by Foucault in one of his last interviews. He says: "What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals and life. . . . But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art?" Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of a Work in Progress," 340–72, 350. Although not fully worked out by Foucault, due to his untimely death in 1984, an important aspect of this aesthetics of existence is the "will to experiment" with our limit-attitudes with the purpose of "going beyond them." Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" (50).
13. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, GM II:13, 515.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*. See especially Part III sections 1 and 2: "Docile Bodies and the Means of Correct Training."
17. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 151.
18. I wrote "naturalistic justification" but did so with hesitation. There has been an important book by Christoph Cox entitled *Nietzsche, Naturalism and Interpretation* and I want to be clear that I do not think Cox's understanding of naturalism should

apply to Nietzsche. Although I think Cox's book is headed in the right direction, I think he is fundamentally mistaken. Secondly, naturalism is usually understood to mean either a reductive Scientism or Materialism. See Philip Pettit's article "Naturalism," 296–97. I wish to say, at the outset, that if genealogy is construed in these terms it is necessarily reductive and furthermore that such an interpretation of genealogy reduces it to an *Ursprung* (origin) philosophy—something which both Foucault and Nietzsche wished to avoid. Rather, what I develop as will be seen, is a naturalistic field genealogy: one that incorporates the body as object but leaves room for linguistic understanding and emotional meaning.

19. Foucault, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, 147.
20. Ibid., 148.
21. Ibid.
22. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 25–26.
23. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 83.
24. Foucault, "The Return of Morality," 251.
25. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 102.
26. Vintges, "Endorsing Practices of Freedom," 278.
27. Foucault, "Fantasia in the Library (1967)."
28. Carrette, *Foucault and Religion*, 122.
29. Ibid., 111.
30. Carrette, "Rupture and Transformation," 62–63.
31. Ibid., 52.
32. Foucault, "The Ethic of the Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom," 14.
33. Carrette," Rupture and Transformation," 62.
34. Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, Book VIII, Chapter 12, 28–29.
35. See Lazarus's article "From Appraisal," 125–31.
36. Nicols, "On the Genealogy of Norms," 234–55.
37. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, GM I:4, 463.
38. Ibid., 6, 467.
39. Ibid., 5, 467.
40. Ibid., 6, 467–68.
41. Burton, *Language in the Confessions of Augustine*, 162.
42. Ibid., 151.
43. Ibid., 163–64.
44. Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, Book XII Chapter 16, 23.

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