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Self-care and total care: the twofold return of care in twentieth-century thought

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ABSTRACT

The paper studies two fundamentally different forms in which the concept of care makes its comeback in twentieth-century thought. We make use of a distinction made by Peter Sloterdijk, who argues that the ancient and medieval 'ascetic' ideal of self-enhancement through practice has re-emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly in the form of a rehabilitation of the Hellenistic notion of self-care (*epimeleia heautou*) in Michel Foucault's late ethics. Sloterdijk contrasts this return of self-care with Martin Heidegger's concept of being-in-the-world as 'total care' (*Sorge*), an utterly 'secularized' understanding of the human being as irreducibly world-embedded that rejects the classical ascetic ideal of world-secession. We examine further the historical roots and emergence of these contrasting contemporary reappropriations of care in the Western tradition of thought and show them to be rooted in two different ontologies and ethics of the self as either world-secluded or world-immersed, autonomous or constitutively relational. The historical point of divergence of these two approaches to care, we argue, can be found in the Christian transformation of Hellenistic ethics.

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Sloterdijk: self-care vs. total care

'If one had to summarize the main difference between the modern and ancient worlds,' writes Peter Sloterdijk in *You Must Change Your Life*,

> it would have to be the following: the modern era is the one that brought about the greatest mobilization of human powers for the sake of work and production, while all those life forms in which the utmost mobilization took place in the name of practice and perfection are ancient.[1]

While, for Sloterdijk, modernity is defined by the channeling of human energies into productive activity and its different outcomes – works, products, or profits – antiquity, by contrast, is defined by an emphasis on activities that develop and enhance the subject performing a practice or an exercise. The focus on habit acquired through repetitive practice is as old as the Western philosophical tradition: it can already be found in Heraclitus' dictum *ēthos anthrōpō daimōn*, in a rough translation, '[one's] habitual disposition is an allocating power for the human being.'[2] For Sloterdijk, the Aristotelian-

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scholastic ideal of the contemplative life (*vita contemplativa*), regarded as superior to the life of worldly action and work (*vita activa*)[3], was fundamentally a *vita performativa*, an 'ascetic' and 'gymnastic' life of self-enhancement and withdrawal from the world through performative exercise. Since this ideal persisted, in its Christian form, throughout the Middle Ages, the medieval period must be regarded essentially as a continuation of antiquity[4]. What is commonly – and misguidedly, according to Sloterdijk – called 'religion' by the moderns really consists of different 'spiritual systems of exercise [*Übungssysteme*] … more and less capable and worthy of propagation.'[5] A defining feature of all such ascetic regimens, both in the East and the West, is 'ethical secessionism': a quest for withdrawal from the world, for the 'immunization' of the exercising self against external vicissitudes and contingencies[6].

Modernity, for Sloterdijk, thus only begins with the devaluation of ascetic practices by the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation and with the new apotheosis of the *vita activa* as a productive engagement with the world – a process described in similar terms by Hannah Arendt as the rise of the *homo faber*, the maker of lasting works[7] – and with the concomitant emergence of modern civil society, the increasing biopolitical government of human populations, and the cult of artistic creation. The process of secularization that characterizes modernity is first and foremost a 're-secularization of the ascetically withdrawn subject,' a 'reconciliation of humans and the world after an era of radical alienation.' The 'exercises of the moderns' are no longer aimed at world-withdrawal but rather at self-realization in the world, at the cultivation of one's personality[8].

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, Sloterdijk sees a 'late' or 'athletic renaissance': a rediscovery of the ancient spirit of practice and exercise in the form of a new, despiritualized and somatic asceticism, represented by the revival of the Olympic Games and by sports as a modern mass phenomenon[9]. Other symptoms of this new 'ascetic' or 'anthropotechnic' turn include the emergence of the modernist conception of art as a self-referential, autonomous practice, the new therapeutic techniques introduced by Freudian psychoanalysis, as well as the Soviet attempt to transform work into a kind of social exercise of self-realization. On the philosophical level, the modern ascetic turn is first and foremost represented by Friedrich Nietzsche, whom Sloterdijk credits with the establishment of a 'general immunology,' a general system theory of the different ways in which human beings establish different discursive orders as different 'immune systems' designed to differentiate and individuate the 'own,' one's selfhood, and to shield it from its vulnerability to the foreign – to others, to the world, to death[10].

Another key thinker of modern asceticism is Michel Foucault, whose attempt, in his late work, to revive the ancient notion of 'self-care' (*epimeleia heautou, souci de soi*) signals, for Sloterdijk, the transformation of the psychotherapeutic ideologies of the twentieth century into 'a generalized practice consciousness from the sources of ancient philosophy and modern artistic and bodily praxis.'[11] Sloterdijk sees the ancient ideal of self-care as hinging on a struggle to subdue and bring into subjective control a double-headed 'foreign ruler' within one's self: the impulsive power of affects and the inertial power of sedimented habits[12]. This presupposes precisely a prior recession or withdrawal from the flowing river of worldly and social matters into a world-insulated self-reflective position – into what Sloterdijk calls 'shore subjectivity' (*Ufer-Subjektivität*)[13]. *Suum tantum curare*, caring for what is one's own, was the 'salvific formula for the era of self-

discovery in retreat from the world' in ancient and medieval philosophical and religious asceticism; it is also the motto of Sloterdijk's ascetic notion of withdrawal from 'the complex of shared situations one calls "life" or "the world"'.[14]

However, Sloterdijk goes on to note, the twentieth century also produced a decisive and influential philosophical counterforce to this new Nietzschean and Foucauldian asceticism: the fundamental ontology of Martin Heidegger. The implications of Heidegger's concept of 'total' care (*Sorge*) as the basic structure of Dasein's being-in-the-world are diametrically opposed to those of the Foucauldian ethics of care for oneself. By dismantling the traditional privilege of the contemplative, speculative, or theoretical attitude and by deconstructing all modern notions of an encapsulated, world-detached subject, Heidegger effectively undermines the possibility of the 'shore subjectivity' that Sloterdijk sees as the fundamental presupposition of self-care. Heideggerian care is a 'concession of humans to the world that they cannot seal themselves off against its infiltration'[15] but are rather always already 'thrown' into the world, always finding themselves in a factical situation and orienting themselves toward the concrete existential possibilities offered by that situation. In this sense, a human being is always already 'outside' or 'beyond' any substantial 'interior' self that would simply coincide with itself. The discovery of care as the total dynamic of world-embedded Dasein deals a 'decisive blow to the mere possibility of an existence capable of world-flight,' one that 'turned the clock of philosophical reflection back more than two and a half millenia' by effectively negating the plausibility of the spiritual secessionism that had formed the core of Western philosophical and 'religious' asceticism since the Presocratics[16].

In Sloterdijk's rendering, twentieth-century philosophy thus rehabilitated the concept of care in two different and profoundly contrasting ways: as the Foucauldian Neo-Stoic self-care, which is part of the modern anthropotechnical reawakening of the exercising consciousness underway since Nietzsche, and as the Heideggerian total care, which marks the climax of modern secularization in the sense of human reintegration with worldly concerns. While the former represents a late renaissance of the classical asceticism that was largely lost by early modernity, the latter seeks to radically reinvent philosophy in the late modern context in terms of situatedness and world-surrender.

Acknowledging the polemic character of Sloterdijk's distinction and the fact that Sloterdijk neither provides us with systematic in-depth readings of Foucault or Heidegger nor focuses on the concept of care or its historical background, his articulation is still in many ways insightful and illuminating. We will here accept its main outline as a heuristic tool for understanding the role of care in contemporary thought. In what follows, we will attempt to develop the distinction further by taking a closer look at the contrast between the two broad types of care and elucidating their differences and interconnections in the light of conceptual history. Through an inquiry into their historical roots, we will try to understand their opposition as a central tension determining philosophical approaches to care in the history of Western thought[17]. We will first look at the role of self-care in Hellenistic, especially Stoic, philosophy and the transformation and decline of its status in Christian and modern thought; Foucault's studies on the history of self-care will be particularly helpful here. We then show that the Christian devaluation of care into a 'worldly' concern for temporal matters, and the further development of this 'secularization' of care in post-Reformation Protestant thought,

provides the intellectual genealogy for the Heideggerian concept of world-oriented 'total' care as the core dynamic of human temporal life.

Self-care in classical antiquity

In texts of classical antiquity, two central senses of 'care' can be distinguished. There is an active and positive sense of 'care for, concern for, attention to' for which the Greek terms are *epimeleia* and *meletē*, rooted in the verb *meletaō*, 'to practice, to train, to exercise'; the roughly corresponding Latin term is *cura*[18]. For care in the more passive and negative sense of 'worry, trouble, distress, anxiety,' the terms are *phrontis*, preferred by the Stoics, and *merimna*, prominent in Christian texts and most often translated into Latin as *sollicitudo*[19].

Foucault, who became captivated by the theme of self-care in his last Collège de France lectures from the early 1980s, argues that a classical tradition of an active self-care (*epimeleia heautou*), 'to which the historiography of philosophy has not attached much importance hitherto … permeates all Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman philosophy, as well as Christian spirituality, up to the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.'[20] In antiquity, according to Foucault's thesis, the fundamental philosophical question concerning the modes and conditions of an access to truth is never separate from *spirituality* in the sense of the 'search, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth.'[21] Foucault discovers the starting point of this classical tradition in the figure of Socrates who, in Plato's *Apology*, urges his fellow citizens to care for their souls (*epimeleisthai tēs psychēs*), and, in the *First Alcibiades*, discusses, with the notoriously dissolute aspiring politician Alcibiades, self-care (*epimeleisthai heautou*) consisting in self-knowledge (the Delphic maxim: *gnōthi seauton*) as the prerequisite for virtue and public life[22]. Among Plato's followers in the Academy, the *First Alcibiades* was typically considered the best initiation into Platonic philosophy since it instructs us on the correct initial focus of our attention – ourselves[23]. However, it has in modern times been challenged as spurious by Friedrich Schleiermacher and some later scholars[24].

It was the *First Alcibiades*' 'therapeutic' and 'spiritual' understanding of philosophy, rather than the Aristotelian ideal of 'superhuman' and 'immortal' theoretical contemplation as the ethical culmination of philosophical life, that was taken up by the Hellenistic schools in what Foucault describes as the 'golden age of the culture of the self.'[25] While in the *First Alcibiades*, the question of self-care is primarily instrumental, self-care being seen as a preparatory means for complementing the deficient education of a young man in order to qualify him for public life, Foucault stresses that in the Hellenistic period, self-care becomes an end in itself, an active process of self-formation and self-development to be practiced throughout one's life and especially in one's mature years. Maintaining a caring relationship to one's self becomes a fundamental life-project in its own right[26]. For the Epicurean school, philosophizing (*philosophein*) was equivalent to seeking the 'health of the soul' (*to kata psychēn hygiainon*) and to practicing that which brings about happiness (*meletan ta poiounta tēn eudaimonian*); it is never too early or too late in life for this philosophical activity[27]. Among the later Stoics, Foucault cites Musonius Rufus (first century CE), the teacher of Epictetus, according to whom 'those who are intent on being preserved [*sōzesthai*] must constantly lead a life of attending to themselves

[*therapeuomenous*]'[28]; Epictetus himself, who notes that while other animals' needs are provided for by nature, humans are charged with caring (*epimeleia*) for themselves[29]; and Marcus Aurelius, who, in his *Meditations* (addressed 'to himself,' *Ta eis heauton*) urges himself to 'hasten, therefore, towards your aim and, having cast off empty hopes, help yourself, if you in any way care about yourself [*melei seautou*], as long as it is in your power.'[30]

Among the Stoic texts, the most extensive discussions of self-care can be found in Seneca's letters to his friend Lucilius. For Seneca, self-care has an absolute ethical priority because of natural self-interest: 'If I do everything for the sake of caring for myself [*curam mei*], caring for myself comes before everything else.'[31] Nature charges us with caring for ourselves (*cura nostri*), and self-interest only becomes a vice when it is overindulged[32]. Care of the soul (*cura animi*), for Seneca, consists first and foremost in its moral molding (*formare*) and reformation (*recorrigere*); since the soul, according to Stoic doctrine, consists of 'breath' (*pneuma, spiritus*), it is a naturally pliable entity, and even the most depraved soul can be rectified through attentive and diligent care[33]. Self-care also and equally consists in appropriate care for one's body (*cura corporis*)[34]. Perfection, consisting in the absence of mental disturbance and bodily pain, can be attributed to the one who 'takes care of both body and soul [*corpus animumque curantis*] and weaves that which is good for her [*bonum suum*] from both sources.'[35] While divinity is perfect by nature, the human being is perfected and attains the supreme human good only through care – that is, through her own active efforts at self-cultivation and self-perfection[36].

By way of a summary, Wilhelm Schmid has compiled a list of the principal aspects of classical philosophical self-care. The main forms of self-care were *self-receptive* (observing and acknowledging one's self); *self-reflective* (accounting for oneself and testing oneself); *self-productive* (constituting and reforming one's self); *therapeutic* (treating and healing the wounds and traumas inflicted upon one's soul from the outside in order to strengthen oneself); *ascetic* (training, exercising, and habituating oneself); *parrhesiastic* (freely speaking out and confessing the truth about oneself); *transformative* (developing and improving oneself towards excellence and perfection); *prospective* (preparing oneself for future challenges and preventing morbidities and misfortunes); *pedagogical* (guiding others to care for themselves as well by providing an example and model); and *political* (caring for oneself as a preparation for caring for others and governing)[37].

The Christian transformation and the modern decline of self-care

These main functions of philosophical self-care underwent a major upheaval with the rise of Neoplatonic metaphysics, with its emphatic metaphysical preference for supraindividual intellect and soul over materiality, embodiment, and individuation, and with the advent of Christianity. While the Church Fathers appropriated much of Hellenistic philosophy as their proximate intellectual and conceptual framework, and shared with the Stoics the pursuit of inner spiritual autonomy from the vicissitudes of the external world, their main ethical concern was no longer to constitute individual selves capable of attaining a tranquil and harmonious way of life in the here-and-now, but rather to reorient the Christian community toward salvation in the eternity of the hereafter. Self-care became primarily focused on the redemption of the spiritual self from spiritual death; this entailed, as Foucault points out, a renouncement of the embodied personal

self[38]. Worldly care in the active sense, *epimeleia* or *cura*, became increasingly assimilated to *merimna* or *sollicitudo*, passive, anxious concern and worry. The words of a sermon attributed to the fourth-century Athanasius of Alexandria reflect the Christian ascetic ideal: 'Contempt for the body, salvation of the soul; care [*epimeleia*] for the body, a snare for the soul . . . Keeping one's mind fixed to the above at all times brings forth the love of God; concern for one's [worldly and temporal] life [*merimna tou biou*] banishes the virtues.'[39]

Merimna tou biou, 'the concerns and worries of this life,' is a specifically Christian catchword with a background in Jesus' famous wisdom saying 'look at the birds in the sky,' found in the Sermon on the Mount, instructing Jesus' followers to entrust their daily worries to God and to concentrate on the existential discovery of God's kingdom: 'Therefore do not be concerned [*mē merimnēsēte*] about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be its own concern. For each day, its own evil is enough.'[40] Christians are advised by the author of 1 Peter to 'cast all your concerns [*pasan tēn merimnan*] upon him [God], as he cares [*melei*] for you.'[41] For Christian anthropology, *merimna tou biou, sollicitudo vitae*, becomes an idiomatic comprehensive term for an existential attachment to concernful planning that characterizes human temporal life and distinguishes it from that of non-human animals, but also conflicts with existential faith in divine providence. As Augustine notes with reference to the 'concern for the present world-age' (*merimna tou aiōnos toutou*) that, according to Matthew 13:22, prevents the divine *logos* from taking root and bearing fruit: 'For what is worse than concern for life [*sollicitudine vitae*] that does not allow one to attain life? What is more wretched than to lose life by caring for life [*curando vitam*]?'[42]

However, the Christian Fathers also retain a positive sense of self-care. A chapter of the fourth-century treatise *On Virginity* by Gregory of Nyssa, presenting celibacy as the starting point of the Christian ascetic life, is titled, 'That the beginning of care for the self [*heautou epimeleias*] is freedom from marriage.'[43] John Chrysostom, also in the fourth century, presents Christ as performing the essential task of a Hellenistic philosopher as a guide to spiritual self-care: 'Indeed . . . he is instructing [*paideuōn*] us, for the time that remains, that we need to take care of our souls [*tēs psyches epimeleisthai*].'[44] However, this is not a task merely for the individual: the communal care for souls (*epimeleia psychōn*) aiming at their future salvation, understood as 'pastoral' care for the 'flock of Christ' (*poimnē tou Christou*) as the good shepherd, becomes institutionalized into the office of the ecclesiastic ministry[45]. As both Foucault and Sloterdijk emphasize, this institutionalized and collective soteriological self-government builds upon, and greatly expands, the ascetic self-techniques of antiquity, particularly in the form of Christian monastic rules and rites of confession and penitence[46]. The collectivization and administrative institutionalization of the care for souls by the pastoral organization of the church were also, for Foucault, the first step towards modern biopolitical governmentality and the loss of individual autonomy inherent in classical self-care[47].

A decisive turn to modernity, for both Foucault and Sloterdijk, comes with the Reformation's distaste for ascetic and monastic practice as an attempt at 'justification through deeds.' World-secession, Luther emphasizes, must be understood purely in terms of spiritual attitude, not outward circumstance: 'Fleeing the world, therefore, does not mean abstaining from things, but it means abstaining from one's own intentions [*consiliis*].'[48] As Foucault puts it, the Christian ascetic principle that 'it is an *other* life

which leads to the other world … is radically challenged in Protestant ethics …. The formula of Protestantism is to lead the same life in order to arrive at the other world. It was at that point that Christianity became modern.'[49] Foucault also emphasizes the fact that the secularization of spiritual life in Reformation theology results in a 'formidable reinforcement of the pastorate,' an intensification in its spiritual forms as well as an extension of its hold on secular society as the temporal state takes over new pastoral functions[50].

Thus, as the Christian church and, later, the modern state takes charge of governing not only the souls but also the bodies and biological functions of their subjects, the individual autonomy inherent in classical self-care is externalized into the biopolitical 'policing' of public welfare. The ideals of self-care and world-secession thereby increasingly lose their relevance. Early modernity took a renewed interest in Hellenistic thought, and classically schooled authors such as Michel de Montaigne were aware of the Epicurean exhortation to shun public affairs and 'to have no other concern but for ourselves [*n'auoir soing que de nous*]'; Montaigne complains that he is surrounded by 'men who have little care [*soing*] of the culture of the soul [*culture de l'ame*].'[51] However, Montaigne himself exclaims that he would happily entrust the burden of 'caring for and governing' (*soing et gouuernement*) his affairs to an outsider, had he only someone he held in sufficient trust[52]. In an ideal case, a good and capable administrator would 'discharge us of all care of the government [*soing de gouuernment*].'[53] A similar, genuinely modern faith in state governance can be found, for example, in Montaigne's contemporary Justus Lipsius, the most important early modern Neo-Stoic, whose ethics of self-possession (*constantia*) culminates in the care (*cura*) of the virtuous prince for the virtue of his subjects[54].

Montaigne and Lipsius represent the shift from the ancient 'technologies of the self' focused on autonomous self-care to the modern 'political technology of individuals' focused on the 'reason of state.'[55] In the modern 'Cartesian moment,' Foucault argues, self-awareness and self-cognition, which in antiquity and medieval Christianity were primarily epiphenomena of self-care, take priority as the fundamental epistemological point of departure, and the theoretical human sciences begin emerging as increasingly efficient technologies for producing new subjectivities[56]. However, like Sloterdijk, Foucault detects in nineteenth-century thought a new effort to reconnect knowledge to spirituality as well as 'a difficult attempt … to reconstitute an ethics and an aesthetics of the self,' mentioning Max Stirner, Arthur Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Charles Baudelaire, dandyism, and anarchism[57]. It is abundantly clear that he situates his own interest, shared with Sloterdijk, in self-care and 'self-techniques' as practices that 'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state' – distinguished from power-techniques that 'determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination'[58] – in the context of this late modern revival of spiritual self-culture.

Total care: from Hyginus to Heidegger

The tradition culminating in what Sloterdijk characterizes as Heideggerian 'total care' – the notion of care as the very essence of human temporal life on earth – can be traced

back to an ostensibly rather unimportant text from pre-Christian antiquity. In fable 220 in the compilation *Fabulae*, believed to consist of notes abbreviating a more extensive anthology of classical myths compiled by the first-century CE Roman scholar Gaius Julius Hyginus[59], a personified Care (Cura), upon crossing a river, sees a lump of clay, molds it into a figure, and asks Jupiter to breathe life into it. However, Care, Jupiter, and Earth (Tellus) enter into a dispute concerning authorship: Which of them is entitled to give their name to the new creature? Saturn – the personification of time – is asked to adjudicate the dispute, and his ruling is as follows: Jupiter, the heavenly giver of life, is entitled to the departed spirit of the creature upon death; Earth, its material basis, is entitled to its body; but Care, who has shaped the creature, is entitled to hold the creature in her possession as long as it lives. As for the name, the creature is to be called *homo* since it was made out of *humus*, soil[60]. The fable is thought to be of Greek origin, even though it is not attested elsewhere; Manfred Hauser compares it to the elegies of Theognis of Megara (sixth century BCE) according to which 'worries [*phrontides*] with many-colored feathers took hold of human beings/wailing for life [*psychēs*] and livelihood.'[61] The human being is situated between sky and earth, between the spiritual and the material, and pulled in both directions; and in her temporal stay in that intermediate space, she is thoroughly possessed by care or concern. As Hans Blumenberg points out, the fable could be read as a Gnostic creation myth in which an inferior, narcissistic deity creates the human being into its own image[62].

This personified Care returns with the German Reformation, in the wake of Luther's reassertion of the Biblical and Augustinian renouncement of worldly care in the sense of *merimna* and *sollicitudo*: '[W]e live not in care [*cura*] but in the rejection of care [*reiectione curae*]'[63] – 'care [*sorge*] is contrary to God.'[64] The Meistersinger Hans Sachs, an ardent follower of Luther, in an anecdote titled 'The Useless Lady Care' ('Die unütz fraw Sorg,' 1537), describes Care (*Sorg*; 'called Cura in Latin') as an old witch, a bringer of anxiety, pain, and restlessness, who is, however, completely powerless over those who despise her. The story ends with a reminder of Christ's exhortation to have no care for tomorrow's concerns[65]. In another anecdote of Sachs, however, Lady Care appears as a personification of the Protestant virtue of industriousness and productivity and as the adversary of Idleness[66]. After Sachs, care, *Sorge*, became a recurring figure in German literature, particularly in the period of Weimar Classicism: Johann Gottfried Herder published an adaptation of Hyginus' fable under the title 'The Child of Care' ('Das Kind der Sorge,' 1787), and at the end of the second part of Goethe's *Faust* (1832), Faust is blinded by a personified Care, that is, by the relentless drive towards the future that governs the heart of the human being and prevents her from attaining precisely that which Faust is ultimately seeking – fulfillment in the present moment[67]. We find Lady Care once more in Hermann Sudermann's novel *Frau Sorge* (1887; translated into English as *Dame Care*), a naturalistic depiction of the harsh life of East Prussian peasants centered around the tale of a boy born in poverty, with only Care herself to act as his godmother.

The idea of care as an inescapable condition of the worldly life of toil and labor, a condition that can be transcended only through inner spiritual reorientation, is thus first and foremost modern, a fruit of the Protestant conception of temporal life as inescapably secular and profane. The acceptance of the total character of worldly care makes the kind of fulfillment that the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition sought in

contemplation – complete immersion into the present moment, into a completely self-sufficient now, a *nunc stans* – unattainable, since 'total' care is always caring for tomorrow, for the coming day, that is, irreducibly future-oriented. As the figure of Care points out to Faust regarding those in her grasp: 'Be it joy or be it sorrow,/Off he puts it till to-morrow,/All intent on what's to be,/Evermore unready he.'[68] Kierkegaard, the Lutheran thinker *par excellence*, captures this temporal essence of care in one his Christian discourses, 'The Cares of the Pagans' (1848): 'All earthly and worldly care [*bekymring*] is basically for the next day.' The human being becomes an individualized self as a compound of the temporal and the eternal, and it is insofar as he is temporal that 'the next day came into existence for him.' Faith, by contrast, strives to have the eternal 'entirely present with it today.'[69]

This 'Protestant' interpretation of care is the foundation for the temporal radicalization of care in Heidegger's fundamental ontology. After he discovers the Augustinian understanding of *curare* as 'the basic character of factical life' in a 1921 reading of Augustine's *Confessions*[70], care (*Sorge*) rapidly becomes a key term in the Heideggerian vocabulary; in a 1922 research plan for a major project focused on interpretations of Aristotle, Heidegger declares that '[t]he basic sense of the movement of factical life is *caring* [*Sorgen*] (*curare*).'[71] In *Being and Time* (1927), an entire section is dedicated to a reading of Hyginus' Cura fable as a 'preontological self-interpretation of Dasein,' with references to Seneca, Herder, and Goethe's *Faust*[72]. Dasein's primordial way of intentionally relating to the world is not theoretical contemplation, observation, or perception but rather 'taking care' (*Besorgen*) in the sense of practical, concernful dealings with things and matters in the context of some future-oriented project, or concernful attending (*Fürsorge*) to others, and this is rooted in the even more primordial fact that the being of Dasein as being-in-the-world *is* care (*Sorge*), that is, dynamic involvement in a temporally meaningful world-context[73]. As the most comprehensive term for Dasein's mode of being, care unifies the three fundamental aspects of being-in-the-world, namely, existentiality (*Existenzialität*; being ahead of oneself, projected towards one's possibilities), facticity (*Faktizität*; being always already situated within a specific world-context), and 'falling prey' (*Verfallen*; being involved with beings encountered within the world)[74]. This threefold unity of being-ahead, being-already, and being-involved is given a temporal interpretation in terms of the three 'ecstases' or dimensions of Dasein's temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*): futurity (*Zukunft*), the dimension of open possibilities that orients Dasein's projects; already-having-been (*Gewesenheit*), the factical historical and personal background out of which specific possibilities arise; and presentation (*Gegenwärtigen*), Dasein's ability to relate meaningfully to the situation at hand in terms of these open possibilities and their background[75]. These three dimensions belong together as inseparable aspects or vectors of a unified, dynamic, and primordially future-oriented process of temporal meaning-generation, 'temporalization' (*Zeitigung*), in which orientation to the finite possibilities offered by one's factical background gives Dasein meaningful access to beings encountered in the present.

> Temporality makes possible the unity of existence, facticity, and falling prey and thus constitutes primordially the wholeness of the structure of care. The factors of care are not pieced together cumulatively …. Temporality 'is' not … but rather *temporalizes* [*zeitigt*] itself[76].

One of the central teachings of *Being and Time* is to show that since Dasein's being as care – that is, as ecstatic temporality, as temporalization – is dynamic and processual, 'the self cannot be conceived either as a substance or as subject, but is rather grounded in existence.'[77] Heidegger argues that 'care does not need a foundation in a self,' but that, rather, 'the structure of care … includes the phenomenon of selfhood.'[78] Care is not the activity of a substantial self-subject; rather, the self, individual identity, is an after-effect of care, something that is constituted when one's existence is not primarily oriented to the present and scattered among the many things encountered in the present, but when one rather understands oneself as a multidimensional but unitary and cohesive temporal configuration of three temporal dimensions[79]. In other words, one's selfhood, one's singular identity, is an effect of a specific kind of temporally meaningful encounter with the world, not an 'interior' realm of autonomy into which one can retreat and which one can immunize against the vicissitudes of the 'external' world. This ultimately makes 'self-care' (*Selbstsorge*) a tautology or pleonasm: one's self cannot properly be an object of care, since it is nothing substantial but rather a dynamic constellation generated in and through care.

> The expression 'self-care' [*Selbstsorge*] … would be a tautology. Care cannot mean a special attitude toward the self, because the self is already characterized ontologically as being-ahead -of-itself; but in this determination the other two structural moments of care, already-being-in … and being-together-with, are *co-posited*.[80]

We should note that the rise of an influential 'ethics of care' in recent decades, closely associated with feminist thought and initially outlined by theorists such as Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings[81], has close affinities with the Heideggerian view of the self as constituted through care, through caring relations with the surrounding meaningful world and concern or solicitude for others (*Fürsorge*). Scholars such as Patricia Benner and Judith Wrubel[82] have found philosophical support for caring as a fundamental ethical principle – allegedly overlooked by the philosophical tradition because of its inherently 'feminine' character (an approach criticized by other feminist theorists as a form of essentialism[83]) – in the Heideggerian view of being-in-the-world as care. In this sense, the ethics of other-oriented care broadly belongs within the tradition of 'total care.'

Conclusion

At the root of the division, pointed out by Sloterdijk, between the contemporary 'ascetic revival' of an ancient ethics of autonomous self-constitution and self-improvement through exercise, particularly manifest in Foucault's rehabilitation of self-care, and the Heideggerian adoption of a radically world-immersed notion of being-in-the-world as care, we thus find two contrasting notions of selfhood. On the one hand, there is the Nietzschean and Foucauldian approach to the subject as primarily a subject to power, a product of power-relations and power-interests, and of discourses and concepts representing those relations and interest – a subject for whom, however, the Enlightenment ideal of empowerment, emancipation, and autonomy through an active self-configuration and self-constitution is still held out as a viable option. On the other hand, there is the Heideggerian 'postsubjective' notion of Dasein's selfhood as a non-substantial, dynamic, and processual constellation with an essentially passive and

receptive dimension of facticity and thrownness, of already finding oneself in the context of a given, historically constituted situation that determines and limits in advance one's specific, finite possibilities.

We have further seen that while the ethics of self-care grows out of a contemporary reappropriation of Hellenistic ethics, the ethics of total care can be considered an equally contemporary, secularized reappropriation of the Christian view of worldly life as care and concern, and of its radicalization and extension in post-Reformation Protestantism. In sum, therefore, while the competing ideals of self-care and total care are grounded in two competing ontologies of the self, they also represent a peculiar contemporary manifestation of the fundamental tension between classical antiquity and Christianity, between Athens and Jerusalem, that runs through the Western intellectual tradition.

Notes

1. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 329; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 211.
2. Heraclitus, 22 B 119; in Diels and Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*; Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 255–69; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 161–71.
3. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae.180–2.
4. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 330–1; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 212.
5. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 12, cf. 133–70; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 3, cf. 83–105. Translation modified.
6. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 338–78; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 217–42.
7. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 153–74, 207–12, 294–313.
8. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 691–5; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 436–9.
9. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 49–51; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 27–8.
10. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 13, 21–3, 52–68, 521–4, 712–3; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 3, 9–10, 29–39, 332–4, 451.
11. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 333; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 214.
12. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 300–1; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 192.
13. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 353–4; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 227.
14. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 350, 404–5, 508; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 225, 258–9, 324.
15. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 697; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 440.
16. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 695; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 439.
17. The Heideggerian and Foucauldian concepts of care have previously been compared by William McNeill (*The Time of Life*, 53–76), who, in contrast to the approach taken here, rather emphasizes their affinities, likening Foucault's care for the self to Heidegger's 'authentic' (*eigentlich*) existence. For brief overviews of the history of the concept of care, see Schmid, 'Selbstsorge'; Kranz, 'Sorge'; Reich, 'History of the Notion of Care.'
18. Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 81–2; and Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 84. Cf. Hauser, *Der römische Begriff cura*.
19. Contrary to what Heidegger maintains (*Sein und Zeit*, 199n1; *Being and Time*, 191n7), *merimna* is not found in the Stoics or in pre-Christian Hellenistic philosophy in general; *phrontis* is used instead. See Bultmann, '*Merimnaō ktl.*'
20. Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 4, 13; and Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 2, 11.

21. Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 16–8; and Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 15–7.
22. Plato, *Apology* 30a–b; and Plato, *First Alcibiades* 127e–9a; Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 10, 32–77, 400–1, 436–8, 475–6; Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 8, 31–79, 418–9, 454–7, 494–5; Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, *Vol. 2*, 1032, 1204, 1209, 1608–11, 1614–5; Foucault, *Subjectivity and Truth*, 294; Foucault, 'On the Genealogy of Ethics,' 342, 348; Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self,' 23–6, 30–2; Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, *Vol. 3*, 58–9; and Foucault, *Care of the Self*, 44–5.
23. Albinus, *Introductio in Platonem*, 5; in Hermann, *Platonis dialogi*, *Vol. 6*, 149. Cf. Schmid, 'Selbstsorge,' 528.
24. For Schleiermacher's challenge to the authenticity of the *First Alcibiades*, see Schleiermacher, *Platons Werke*, *Vol. 2.3*, 291–9; and Schleiermacher, *Introductions*, 328–36.
25. Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 32; and Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 30.
26. Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 79–103, 428–32; and Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 81–105, 447–50.
27. Epicurus' letter to Menoeceus, in Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 10.122; Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 84–5, 474; Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 87–8, 492–3; Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, *Vol. 2*, 1606–7; Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self,' 21; Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, *Vol. 3*, 60, 63; and Foucault, *Care of the Self*, 46, 48. See also Schmid, 'Selbstsorge,' 529.
28. Musonius Rufus, fr. 36, cited by Plutarch, *De cohibenda ira*, in *Moralia* 453D; Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 85–6, 475; Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 88, 494; Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, *Vol. 3*, 60; and Foucault, *Care of the Self*, 46.
29. Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.16.1–8; Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 188–9, 438–41; Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 196, 456–9; Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, *Vol. 3*, 61–2; and Foucault, *Care of the Self*, 47.
30. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 3.14; Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, *Vol. 3*, 61; and Foucault, *Care of the Self*, 46–7.
31. Seneca, *Epistulae* 121.17.
32. Ibid., 116.3.
33. Ibid., 50.6.
34. Ibid., 14.2, 49.12.
35. Ibid., 66.46; Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, *Vol. 3*, 60–1; and Foucault, *Care of the Self*, 46.
36. Seneca, *Epistulae* 124.14. Heidegger (*Sein und Zeit*, 199; *Being and Time*, 192) cites this passage as an elaboration of the 'ontic' understanding of care, that is, as an elaboration of care as an active attitude that is particularly characteristic of the human being.
37. Schmid, 'Selbstsorge,' 530.
38. Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 240, 246–8, 316–7; and Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 250, 257–8, 332–3. It should be noted that while Foucault sees self-renouncement as characteristic of Christianity, both Pierre Hadot and Sloterdijk criticize Foucault's attribution of an individualistic 'aesthetics of existence' to Hellenistic thought, arguing that both ancient and medieval ascetic regimes were fundamentally focused on assimilating one's self to the cosmos and to the divinity. See Hadot, *Exercises spirituels*, 229–33; and Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 206–13; Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 531; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 338.
39. Athanasius, 'Sermo pro iis qui saeculo renuntiarunt,' in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 28.1413. Cf. Schmid, 'Selbstsorge,' 530–1. The attribution of this sermon to Athanasius is considered spurious by Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, xv.
40. Matt. 6:25–34; Luke 12:22–31. Cf. Kranz, 'Sorge,' 1086.
41. 1 Pet. 5:7.
42. Augustine, 'Sermo 101,' in Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 38.607.
43. Gregory of Nyssa, *On Virginity* 13; Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 12; Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 10; Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, *Vol. 2*, 1535; and Foucault, *The Essential Works*, *Vol. 1*, 288.

44. John Chrysostom, *In Matthaeum (homiliae 1–90)*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 57.329; see also 57.223. Cf. Schmid, 'Selbstsorge,' 531.
45. John Chrysostom, *De sacerdotio* 4.1.
46. Foucault, *Du gouvernement des vivants*, 253–320; Foucault, *On the Government of the Living*, 258–325; Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, *Vol. 4*, 230–45; Foucault, *The Essential Works*, *Vol. 1*, 185–97; Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, *Vol. 2*, 1628–31; and Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self,' 44–8; Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 204–6, 210–6, 396–407; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 128–9, 132–6, 253–60. Cf. Schmid, 'Selbstsorge,' 531–2. For a study of the appropriation and transformation of concrete ancient spiritual practices by Christianity, see Rabbow, *Seelenführung*.
47. Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 44; Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 45; Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, *Vol. 2,* 1448; and Foucault, 'On the Genealogy of Ethics,' 370. On pastoral power as the origin of governmentality, see Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, 171–246; and Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 168–240.
48. Luther, 'Annotationes in Ecclesiasten' [1532], in *Werke*, *Vol. 20*, 37; and Luther, 'Notes on Ecclesiastes,' in *Luther's Works*, *Vol. 15,* 31. Translation modified. Cf. Hühn, 'Weltverachtung; Weltflucht,' 524.
49. Foucault, *Le courage de la verité*, 228; and Foucault, *The Courage of the Truth*, 247; cf. Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, 400, 460–1, 519–21; and Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 256, 294, 331–2.
50. Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, 152–3, 235–6; and Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 149, 229–31.
51. Montaigne, *Essais*, *Vol. 2*, 2.16–7, 444, 512; and Montaigne, *Essays*, *Vol. 3*, 302, 359. Foucault mentions Montaigne as a prominent example of the sixteenth-century 'attempt to reconstitute an aesthetics and an ethics of the self'; Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 240; and Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 251. Cf. Schmid, 'Selbstsorge,' 532.
52. Montaigne, *Essais*, *Vol. 3*, 3.9, 390; and Montaigne, *Essays*, *Vol. 5*, 81.
53. Montaigne, *Essais*, *Vol. 3*, 3.13, 616; and Montaigne, *Essays*, *Vol. 5*, 261.
54. Lipsius, *Politica* 2.8, 314–5. Cf. Schmid, 'Selbstsorge,' 532.
55. Cf. Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, *Vol. 2*, 1602–47; Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self'; and Foucault, 'The Political Technology of Individuals.'
56. Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 15–20, 28–32; Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 14–19, 26–30; Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, *Vol. 2*, 1607–8, 1632, 1646–7; Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self,' 22, 48–9; and Foucault, 'The Political Technology of Individuals,' 161–2.
57. Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, 29–30, 241; and Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Self*, 28, 251.
58. Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, *Vol 2*.,1604; and Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self,' 18.
59. See Rose, 'Prolegomena.'
60. Hyginus, *Fabulae* 220.
61. Theognis *Elegiae* 1.728–9; Hauser, *Der römische Begriff cura*, 83–4.
62. Blumenberg, *Die Sorge geht über den Fluß*, 197–200; and Blumenberg, *Care Crosses the River*, 139–41.
63. Luther, 'Vorlesung über Jesaja' [1528–30], in *Werke*, *Vol. 25*, 245. Cf. a different version of these lectures, Luther, *Works*, *Vol. 16*, 341–2.
64. Luther, 'In Genesin Mosi librum sanctissimum Declamationes' [1527], in *Werke*, *Vol. 24*, 116. Cf. Kranz, 'Sorge,' 1086.
65. Sachs, *Werke*, *Vol. 4*, 134–40. Cf. Hauser, *Der römische Begriff cura*, 84–5.
66. Sachs, *Werke*, *Vol. 17*, 315–8.
67. Herder, *Zerstreute Blätter*, *Vol. 3*, 7–9; Goethe, *Werke*, *Vol. 41*, 312–8; and Goethe, *Works*, *Vol. 8*, 123–8. On the role of care in *Faust*, see Burdach, 'Faust und die Sorge.' Cf. Hauser, *Der römische Begriff cura*, 85–7; Kranz, 'Sorge,' 1087.
68. *Sey es Wonne, sey es Plage,/Schiebt er's zu dem andern Tage,/Ist der Zukunft nur gewärtig,/ Und so wird er niemals fertig*. Goethe, *Werke*, *Vol. 41*, 316; and Goethe, *Works, Vol. 8*, 127.

69. Kierkegaard, *Writings*, *Vol. 17*, 71, 74; cf. Kranz, 'Sorge,' 1086–7.
70. Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, *Vol. 60*, 205–10; and Heidegger, *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 151–5.
71. Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, *Vol. 62*, 352; and Heidegger, *The Heidegger Reader*, 43.
72. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 196–200; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 189–93.
73. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 57, 121–4; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 57, 118–20.
74. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 191–6; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 184–9.
75. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 323–31; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 309–16.
76. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 328; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 313–4.
77. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 332; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 317.
78. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 323; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 308–9.
79. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 316–23; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 302–9.
80. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 193; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 186. Translation modified.
81. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*; Noddings, *Caring*. See also Held, *Feminist Morality; and Held, The Ethics of Care*; Held, *The Ethics of Care and Empathy*.
82. Benner and Wrubel, *The Primacy of Caring*. See also Paley, 'Heidegger and the Ethics of Care'; Elley-Brown and Pringle, '*Sorge*, Heideggerian Ethic of Care.'
83. Tronto, 'Beyond Gender Difference.'

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