

Counseling Youth

Counseling Youth
*Foucault, Power, and the Ethics of
Subjectivity*

Tina Besley

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

Foreword by

James Marshall



SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM / TAIPEI

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 90-77874-11-9

Published by: Sense Publishers,
P.O. Box 21858, 3001 AW
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
<http://www.sensepublishers.com>

Printed on acid-free paper

Counseling Youth: Foucault, Power and the Ethics of Subjectivity, by Tina Besley, was originally published in hard cover by Bergin & Garvey, an imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., Westport, CT. Copyright © 2002 by Tina Besley. Paperback edition by arrangement with Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

CONTENTS

<i>Preface to the paper edition</i>	vii
<i>Foreword by James Marshall</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Introduction</i>	xv
1 An introduction to Foucauldian analysis	1
2 Counseling and Foucault: Identifying the self	25
3 Psychologizing adolescence	63
4 Sociologizing youth	97
5 The moral constitution of youth	119
6 School counseling: The ethics of professional self-regulation	145
7 Foucault, narrative therapy, and school counseling	177
Notes	209
References and bibliography	213
Index	225

CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF THE SELF

The appeal of Michel Foucault has not diminished over time. If anything, the power of his analyses, his elucidation of classical texts, the attraction of his style and the fruitfulness of his approaches have grown and further increased his stature as one of the most original thinkers of the post-war years. In part, this increased appeal is due to Foucault's growing influence across the disciplines, and even if in aspects of his work such as the history of sexuality, scholars have improved upon his scholarship and readings of the texts of Antiquity, Foucault remains the philosopher-historian who drew us to look closely and in particular ways at the social archaeology of practices of the self that inaugurates and constitutes what he called "the culture of the self" that characterizes the Western tradition.

When I wrote *Counseling Youth* I was in a sense overpowered by Foucault, by his stunning historical insights, by the peculiar angles he addressed that enabled us to see the familiar in a fresh light, and by the unequalled philosophical comprehensiveness of his approach. I was enthralled by the usefulness of his work and the ways in which it could throw counselling both as a discipline and as a practice into new light, exposing its power relations, its subjugated knowledges, and its contribution to shaping the moral constitution of youth in the postmodern world. Foucault, I thought, not only provided us with a story of therapeutic culture but he detailed in overlapping narratives the significance of relations between subjectivity and truth that have taken a myriad of complex forms in the present. He also helped to reinsert ethics into political and social theory and demonstrated the range of analysis that might rejuvenate the study of the self. Perhaps, even more than this, for counsellors and for educators, he pioneered a set of new concepts and approaches that have enabled us to question the new dogma that has grown up around the 'reflective practitioner'.

In this book I was concerned to bring the originality and power of Foucault's analysis to counsellors and to provide an introduction to Foucault based on an historical acquaintance with the self as an institution, as a set of practices, that is, as a culture. I was also concerned to use Foucault to understand what I called the "psychologizing of adolescence" and the "sociologizing of youth" as a preparation for talking about the moral constitution of youth, the ethics of school counseling, and the promise of narrative therapy. I still hold to these ideas and their progression in the overall structure of the book. The ideas seem to me to be not only still valid but the basis of an overall problematic that will only grow in importance.

"Youth" is the group of our society that is the most radical politically speaking; that supports the seemingly unsupportable causes; that is the most experimental in all phases of living; that, to utter the biblical truism, have the power to transform the future. At the same time they are also, along with "children" in general, the

PREFACE

most expendable; the most harmed and mistreated of any group, systematically denied their rights, especially in the Third World but also at home. Counseling youth, therefore, has special responsibilities. Let me mention one in particular: let us not *speak* for youth. Part of the special responsibility of the counselor is to let youth speak for themselves. Indeed, to encourage it, to create opportunities for it to happen, to reward it and to guard this healing power of self-thought, self-expression, and self-narrative as part of the culture of the self.

Since writing this book now over five years ago more of the Foucault archive has come to light and I am particularly thinking of his lectures at the Collège de France, a course of twelve, two hour lectures a year that he gave as part of the responsibility of his Chair in the History of Systems of Thought. Beginning in 1970 Foucault gave these courses every year. The early ones are clearly recognizable in his published work: “La Volonté de savoir” (1970-71), “Théories et Institutions pénales” (1971-72), “La Société punitive” (1972-73), “Le Pouvoir psychiatrique” (1973-74), “Les Anormaux” (1974-75). The remaining eight courses focussed squarely on the problematic of the subject and the relation between subjectivity and truth: “It faut défendre la société” (1975-76), “Sécurité, Territoire, Population” (1977-78), “Naissance de la biopolitique” (1978-79), “Du gouvernement des vivants” (1979-80), “Subjectivité et Vérité” (1980-81), “L’Herméneutique du sujet” (1981-82), “Le Gouvernement de soi et des autres” (1982-83), “Le Gouvernement de soi et des autres: le courage de la vérité” (1983-84). Many of the courses have been published, (some as yet only in French) and a few remain to be edited and published. We are fortunate that the course described as *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (1981-82) has been translated into English recently (see Foucault, 2005). Some of the themes addressed by this material will be already familiar to Foucault scholars particularly from the third volume of *Historie de la sexualité, Le Souci de soi (The Care of the Self)*. But as Foucault himself says in the very first lecture:

I tried to get a historical reflection underway on the theme of the relations between subjectivity and truth. To study this problem I took as a privileged example ... the question of the regimen of sexual behaviour and pleasures in Antiquity. ... This year I would like to step back a bit from this precise example ... and extract from it the more general terms of the problem of “the subject and truth” (Foucault, 2005, p.2).

He goes on to expound the hermeneutics of the self, analysing its theoretical formulations and studying it in relation to a set of practices significant in classical and late Antiquity. Foucault uncovers and reconstructs “care of the self” both as a philosophical principle and a practice, and its connection with the better known theme of self-knowledge expressed in the Delphic invocation “know your self”. “Care of the self” became for Socrates an entrusted mission to teach youth how to take care of themselves (rather than their possessions) and to take care of their city-state (as an aspect of their citizenship). It was, Foucault says, a mission that Socrates performed without payment and out of “pure benevolence”. In this regard

we cannot forget that Socrates at seventy years old, perhaps the most famous teacher of all teachers, stood before a jury of his fellow Athenians excused of “corrupting youth” (and of “refusing to recognize the State gods”) and is condemned to death by being forced to drink hemlock. Socrates, the philosopher of the care of the self and the originator of a critical philosophy aimed at “the improvement of the soul”, is put to death by a majority of fellow Athenians administered by the city fathers. As Foucault indicates Socrates berates his accusers by telling them that they have devoted too much care to increasing their wealth, reputation and honor and not enough to caring for themselves, for their reason, truth, and constant improvement. What becomes of a city or society where citizens no longer care for themselves--a spiritual and philosophical activity--or no longer are concerned to teach youth to care for themselves? This question is painfully relevant in age of renewed fundamentalisms where even those who hold positions of authority over youth do not theorize their own power, have given up on their traditional responsibilities and either abuse their position or simply indoctrinate.

Care of the self becomes a therapeutic pedagogy that performs a critical function enabling one to get rid of (*unlearn*) bad habits and false opinions. It is a matter of instilling and developing courage so that the individual is equipped to struggle for themselves for the rest of their life. But most of all, as Foucault emphasizes in his Course Summary (p. 496) “this culture of the self has a curative and therapeutic function”. He goes on:

It is much closer to the medical model than to the pedagogical model. Of course, we should remember certain very ancient facts of Greek culture: the existence of a notion like *pathos*, which signifies the soul’s passion as well as the body’s illness; the extent of a metaphorical field that allows expressions like nursing, curing, amputating, scarifying, and purging to be applied to both the body and the soul. We should also remember the principle, familiar to the Epicureans, Cynics, and Stoics, that the role of philosophy is to cure diseases of the soul (Foucault, 2005. p. 496).

As Foucault also remarks the relation to the self, in Antiquity and after, relies on a relationship with a master, guide or mentor and that this relationship becomes increasingly independent of the love relationship. Care of the self increasingly becomes comprised of a set of practices and exercise designated by *askesis* (likened to the training of an athlete) and support by a multiplicity of social relations including schools, private counselors (especially in Rome), family, friendship and other kinds of relationships. In classical Greece, Foucault reminds us, one also sees the emergence of discourses concerning philosophical *askesis* that come to fruition at the intersection of relations between subjectivity and truth; that emanate in a series of techniques and method for getting to soul to turn on itself to discover its true nature. These techniques included the importance of different kinds of listening and writing, ways of taking stock of oneself and for memorizing what one has learned. This culture of the self then comprised a host of techniques

PREFACE

that enabled systematic self-reflection and self-action that constitutes a true hermeneutics of the self.

It is to these practices of the self that counseling owes its existence and it is through the examination of this critical ethos that youth counselors today might discover something about themselves.

I would like to take this opportunity briefly to thank Peter de Liefde of Sense Publishing for undertaking the publication of a paperback version of this book, and to my husband, Michael Peters, for his constant encouragement and support.

REFERENCE

- Foucault, M. (2005) *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*. Edited by Frederic Gros, translated by Graham Burchell. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Tina (A.C.) Besley
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
September, 2005

FOREWORD

Tina Besley's *Counseling Youth: Foucault, Power, and the Ethics of Subjectivity*, developed from her Ph.D. thesis (2000) at the University of Auckland, is an important book and for two main reasons. First, it is an original application of a Foucauldian perspective to counseling and education in particular, and how the notion of "youth"—the client of school counseling—was constituted. Second, it discusses how counseling constituted itself as a profession, as a disciplinary body. Besley discusses these two themes through a number of interrelated subthemes or aims. First, she considers philosophically from a Foucauldian perspective, the notion of the self, or identity, as it is to be found in counseling theories and practice. Second, she writes a critical and Foucauldian-enhanced, history of counseling in New Zealand, though she does relate this to other international developments, especially in the United States. Third, she discusses recent moves in counseling toward narrative therapy, based as it is, in part, upon a reading of Foucault. This is a book, therefore, that is rich in ideas and critical themes and will be invaluable to counselors everywhere, and more generally those interested in Foucault and his critiques of the human sciences.

I will elaborate on these two main themes only. A Foucauldian perspective enables Besley to problematize if not challenge a number of school counseling practices by placing them within the notion of the "psy-sciences" (Nikolas Rose's term), and the practices of school counseling within educational institutions or disciplinary blocks, as Foucault called them. After an introductory chapter on Foucault, Besley looks at the self and the counseling of the self and problematizes the notion of youth in chapters 3 to 5 by examining psychological notions of adolescence and sociological and moral notions of the proper constitution of the self, if such moral panics as occurred in New Zealand, and internationally, in the 1950s are to be avoided. There are interesting case studies in chapter 5 of the mental hygiene films that were developed in the United States and on the "Mazengarb Report" (an outcome of an undoubted moral panic) in New Zealand.

Besley looks at the development of counseling in New Zealand in chapter 6. This is well documented and is an important and original critical history in its own right. Her particular concern is, however, how counseling professionalized itself as a disciplinary body and the roles it plays in governing youth. She continues the Foucauldian theme into the final main chapter, where she looks at narrative therapy, as initially developed in the work of Michael White and David Epston. Narrative theory is poststructuralist-inspired and challenges liberal humanist notions of the self that are embedded in the psy-sciences. Essentially, White and Epston challenge the assumptions of the psy-sciences that therapy is a neutral activity. Their position is that therapy is inherently a political activity, and that it is inscribed by power relations. According to Besley, narrative theory in school counseling holds a substantial promise for the practice of school counseling. This takes her full circle, as a very experienced school counselor, to the inherent theme

FOREWORD

of improving such practices.

This is a book, then, rich in ideas, and it will be rewarding reading for counselors, social scientists, and students of the social sciences, education, and counseling.

James Marshall

University of Auckland Glasgow, November 2001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first debt is to my parents, Athlone and Malcolm Besley, who supported me unfailingly throughout various ventures and adventures in my lifetime.

This book is a much revised version of my Ph.D. thesis that began with my disappointment that most counseling literature focuses on skills and techniques. Much of this work is immensely valuable, but I was curious about the “big picture”—about young people, about why the “techne” of school counseling had emerged and where it was going.

I wish to acknowledge my Ph.D. supervisors, Professor James Marshall and Dr. Hans Everts from the School of Education, University of Auckland, for their support and encouragement. Their questions, comments, and combined expertise in different areas offered an important source of ideas and encouragement. James Marshall’s scholarship on Foucault, philosophy, and education and his reading of draft chapters of this book has been invaluable. Hans Everts offered his detailed knowledge of school counseling in New Zealand and his expertise and skills in counseling. Both men helped me to clarify my thoughts and to explore certain themes concerning power and knowledge that radically called into question school counseling and my own practice.

This book was built on my further reading, especially of Foucault and of recent writings in narrative therapy. It has been completed in my first year as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Glasgow, and in this respect I would like to thank Dr. Christine Forde, Head of Educational Studies, and Dr. Doret de Ruyter for their support. I also wish to thank the school counselors, principals, counselor educators, and those who have formerly held such positions, as well as members of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC), who have freely given their time, friendship, assistance, advice, comments, information, and collegial support. My thanks go to Cliff Edmeades, Principal of Rutherford College, the Rutherford College Board of Trustees, and my counseling colleague, Sue Tai-Luamanuvae, for their support when I was completing my Ph.D. while working full-time as a school counselor and Head of the Guidance Department at Rutherford College, Te Atatu Peninsula, Auckland.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge my husband, Michael Peters, Professor of Education at the University of Auckland and Research Professor at the University of Glasgow, for his wisdom, intellect, professionalism, encouragement, and sense of humor while I completed this book. He put up with my questions and with reviewing sections, and he offered advice that was invaluable. Without his support, I may have settled for an easier life.

INTRODUCTION

MY IDENTITY AS A SCHOOL COUNSELOR: A PROFESSIONAL NARRATIVE

The introduction to this book opens with my own “insertion into the text” in a narrative account of my own changing personal identity, which in adulthood became closely tied to my profession as a school counselor. But that professional identity has been only one of several different professional identities in my checkered career and is, to a certain extent, an expression of multiple facets of my “self” and identity that has developed or been constructed over the years. My narrative, therefore, involves some of the themes of the book. In part, it is a form of “confession” (as discussed in chapter 1)—that is, a *self-reflexive turn*, which I think is important and necessary for all school counselors—a process of professional self-reflection on how one becomes constituted as a counselor. This helps us to understand the nature of our own biases and the influences and effects of *power-knowledge* and how we construct our world view. I adopt the first-person mode as a narrative that provides a personal link to this author-as-child, growing up and experiencing adolescence in the 1950s and 1960s—the social context of mental hygiene films and the period crucial for the setting up of guidance counseling in New Zealand secondary schools (as elaborated in chapter 5). The intent is to provide something of a *counterpoint* that interweaves the themes of the book, where the personal narrative is a view from the bottom up, while the notions of the late French philosopher, Michel Foucault, provide an overarching perspective from the top.

My personal narrative or journey toward becoming a professional counselor dealing with youth in New Zealand secondary schools has forced me to reflect on my “self” and identity at a number of critical points in my life, hence my focus on the wider issues of counseling, self, and identity in chapter 2. Issues of self-disclosure, “confession,” subjectivity, power-knowledge, and truth-telling are central to counseling. A school counselor needs to be able to establish positive relationships with young people. Hence it became important for me to reflect upon my own family relationships and experiences of growing up in Christchurch, New Zealand, in the 1950s and 1960s. Unlike many of the young people I counseled, I was fortunate to grow up in a stable, nonviolent, two-parent family, where both parents worked. In an era when most women were homemakers, my mother worked not only because they needed the money, but also because both parents believed firmly in the notion of equality. Although I had a cousin eight years older than I who stayed with us a great deal and was like a big sister to me, I didn’t have

INTRODUCTION

to deal with a “real” sibling until my sister (whom I treated as my baby) was born when I was six years old. So I grew up largely as an “only child,” and like most people, I experienced various difficulties in growing up. I can remember feeling somewhat lonely, different, and alienated from my peers. I vividly recall—and barely forgave—the painful experiences from the nasty little girls who ridiculed and bullied me and left me out of games and friendship groups at primary school. They picked on me because mum, who was an expert seamstress, made pretty dresses for me in the latest nylon fabric. School uniform was optional, and to avoid being picked on, I begged to wear it. But “catch-22” struck. Because I was “correctly” dressed in uniform, I was often asked to run messages, and so many of my classmates had further reason to tease me. It didn’t entirely cower me, and I learned to negotiate around those girls, to be pleasant and friendly when they were all right and to ignore or avoid them when they were at their worst. The “sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me” maxim, which I thought was untrue, nevertheless came to the fore a few times. I learned to be tough (i.e., not cry), to hide my feelings, and to be strong in my sense of self, and that it was OK to be different, to be an individual and not just to follow the crowd.

From when I was two years old, mum worked at the ice rink, so it became my other “home,” and I became a national ice-skating champion. As a teenager I was seen as a bit of a “goodie goodie” and didn’t quite fit in. I was dismayed that the boys at the rink liked the faster, louder girls who wore lipstick and tighter and more fashionable clothes than I was allowed and that they wouldn’t skate with me because I was too good. They seemed to like the more helpless girls, and although I wasn’t going to play that game, once or twice I deliberately used hired skates instead of my own to pretend that I couldn’t skate very well. Although I tried to keep any sporting or academic success largely hidden, I began to learn the hidden curriculum about gender relations in terms of male egos and female success, the place of women, desirability and sexual bargaining, and the pain of being different and standing out from the crowd. This personal experience has shaped my work and understanding of youth and of the ways they negotiate their place and space in relationships and the world around them.

I attended a large newly established coeducational state high school of approximately 1,200 students, where I was shocked to be placed in the top class. My high school had no guidance counselor. There was one career advisor for the boys and another for the girls. My only contact with the career advisor was in my second-to-last year, when I was told that because I was in one of the top classes, I should go to the university and probably go into teaching. There was certainly no testing, nor discussion of career options. To be thus dismissed so readily provided an important lesson for me when I became a counselor. It made me keenly aware of a common assumption that needs challenging: that students in top classes don’t really need counselors, life skills, or guidance programs as much as other students do because they are smart enough to work things out for themselves. To a certain extent, such cursory treatment also reflects the attitude that it is “weak” to ask for

help, that considerable stigma is still attached to asking for help for emotional problems or mental illness.

The impact of social changes of the 1960s and 1970s, a traumatic marriage break-up, and the onset of rheumatoid arthritis threw all my values and principles into question once again. I was forced to reconsider my own identity, to face up to why certain things were happening, who I was, where I was I going, and what I wanted to do (or become)— all questions about my self and my identity. I spent four years as a secondary-school teacher but became totally disillusioned with the way schools dealt with students in the early 1970s. I left teaching to see the world—the big OE (overseas experience) that so many New Zealanders feel compelled to undertake because of the tyranny of distance. New Zealand seemed so far away from where it was all “happening,” and I desperately wanted to experience other places and cultures. I traveled the world when I worked for Air New Zealand for the next nine years, with over six as an international cabin attendant. Long night flights across the Pacific Ocean and our crew-drinks times (an unofficial debrief on arrival in a foreign location) all involved conversations where we “solved” the world’s and people’s relationship problems. On reflection it seems that there was as much learning about the self as there was learning about others. When Air New Zealand flight 901 crashed into Mount Erebus, Antarctica, in 1979, killing all 257 people on board, I was very affected. I had crewed on the previous week’s Antarctic flight and knew all of the crew who perished, including my cousin’s husband. The night after the crash I had to leave on a week-long trip—one of the hardest ever. We had to maintain an air of professional calm and dignity, reassuring passengers, welcoming them and smiling at them amidst our enormous sorrow. It took almost a week to cry, the shock had been so great, the questions so wanting, the “what ifs” when I, like other staff, had been so proud of our national airline, its safety and service. This was first-hand learning about trauma, loss, and grief, something that as a school counselor one deals with all too frequently. I learned how to put on a calm professional face and subsume my own feelings in serving the needs and fears of others, something that I would need as a counselor helping others through crises such as the suicide of students.

It took quite some time to establish my professional identity as a school counselor. In 1985 there was a suicidal crisis for a member of my extended family. A call-out was made to LifeLine (a voluntary counseling agency). The LifeLine crisis team showed that with support and counseling it was possible to have some breathing space so the crisis could pass and for life to continue, even if relationships and businesses failed. I was so grateful that my loved ones had been spared that I became a volunteer telephone counselor with LifeLine, Auckland, which used a person-centered counseling approach. This foray into counseling challenged and changed me personally, emotionally and intellectually. After a couple of years I left the business world and returned to secondary teaching and to my home city of Christchurch, where I joined the local branch of LifeLine and was trained in transactional analysis and Jungian approaches.

INTRODUCTION

Although I loved teaching geography, social studies, and English, I knew that I didn't want to be a classroom teacher. I much preferred to deal with students individually and in small groups and always put them into groups in class. As a result, I decided to become a school counselor, and in 1988 I started a Master of Education course in counseling at Canterbury University, Christchurch, New Zealand. This demanded another reexamination of "self" in T-group activities as part of the counseling course. I was rather shocked by this experience; I had never thought of myself as others in the group described me—Joan of Arc was going a bit too far—I'm certainly no sort of martyr! However, their perceptions and feedback brought me up short and made me a lot more self-reflective. The experience taught me to acknowledge my fears and not to be so closed off and self-contained. The person who suggested the U2 song, "I still don't know what I'm looking for," as a personal description was probably closest to the mark. I had come to understand that the self changes constantly and is shaped sometimes by deliberate work and sometimes unintentionally through a time of crisis.

The university counseling course emphasized brief solution-oriented therapy and so added to the Rogerian, transactional analysis, and Jungian approaches from my LifeLine training. In 1989 I attended a brief course in psychodrama, and I had my first brush with narrative therapy when I attended an evening course over six weeks at the Durham Centre, Christchurch, run by people who had been trained by Michael White at the Dulwich Centre in Adelaide. This was my introduction not only to Michael White and David Epston's narrative therapy (as discussed in chapter 7), but also to Foucault and to his concepts of the Panopticon and power-knowledge (see chapter 1). All these courses contributed to the development of my professional identity as a counselor at school and in the community, and ultimately to the transformation of my personal identity.

While attending university counselor education I was employed for four years as a guidance teacher—a position that consisted of 50 percent teaching and 50 percent counseling—which involved considerable role difficulties. When I shifted to Auckland in 1992, I became a full-time guidance counselor, and in 1993 I was appointed as head of the Guidance Department at Rutherford College, a coeducational, multiethnic high school with over 1,100 students. There I was in charge of two guidance teachers who counseled part-time. I held this position until mid-2000, when, following the completion of my Ph.D., I was appointed as a Research Fellow in the Faculty of Education at the University of Glasgow, Scotland.

The job description for a school guidance counselor is usually very extensive (see Besley, 2000), so to make it more manageable and to use our specialist counseling education, counselors at our school work primarily in personal counseling for students. Educational guidance and advice on option choices are assigned to deans at each year level. The transition department provides career advice and health education, which now includes many guidance programs in the new, compulsory Health and Physical Education Curriculum (Ministry of

Education, 1999b). Counseling has a largely hidden role in schools due to its private and confidential nature. I really don't know how students would even think of approaching a counselor they didn't vaguely know or had seen around the school. So, to become visible and known by the students and staff, I would frequently talk at assemblies, visit form times, do grounds duty, become involved in extracurricular activities, and sometimes teach health education (especially on sensitive topics like sexuality, abuse, and mental health). The strategy seems to have worked, because almost all of our work was from self-referrals.

I don't think a school counselor's job finishes at the school gates. I continued my personal commitment to our young people and to social justice beyond the school by involvement on several different committees in the local West Auckland (Waitakere) community, including the steering and then management committee for "at-risk" teenagers, truancy, and "Strengthening Families." I also believe that this forms an important part of the professional role of a school counselor in today's world. Committee work did not stop there. I joined the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) in 1990 and became actively involved in the Auckland branch of the committee, as secretary, coordinating the local school counselor network. I was also on the nationwide membership committee. My personal experiences and the knowledge gained through my involvement in NZAC not only helped to constitute my professional identity, but also contributed to my understanding of ethical practice, counselor effectiveness, accountability and professionalization. This experience underlies the discussion in chapter 6.

I undertook a Ph.D. thesis in my late forties. This certainly involved my professional interests, but it was also very much to do with my "self" and my "identity." I wanted to prove to myself that I had the ability to achieve the highest academic qualification possible, so this was done not as a specific career move, but mostly for personal satisfaction. It was an interaction of personal and professional identity, self, and subjectivities. It was from that thesis that this book has emerged. This "petit" narrative of my development as a school counselor may have finished with my move into academia, but as I now proceed to outline, this book involves different narratives throughout and deliberately starts and ends with "narrative."

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This book provides a set of historical narratives in the form of a "critical history" that reveals the layers that help to constitute the subject and shape identity, to look at what constitutes adolescence/youth and the conditions that have established the nature, limits, and realities of the school counseling profession. The story traces changes that have occurred over time, not in a linear fashion, but more in a Foucauldian manner, as elucidated in chapter 1. This book provides a critical account of school counseling through a Foucauldian-inspired investigation of the twin notions of "identity" and the "self," as these concepts apply to adolescence and youth—the subjects/clients of school counseling, on the one hand—and the

INTRODUCTION

counselor and his/her professional identity, on the other. The book is not an attack on counseling but a critique that serves to do what we expect our clients to do—to be self-reflective about our “self,” our relationships, our profession, and our practices. If we expect this of clients, then the very least that we can do is to apply it to ourselves as professionals and to our profession.

In the broadest terms, the book is a critical history of the human sciences and their constitution of the subject of school counseling: adolescence and youth. I see this work as necessary for developing a more self-reflexive form of counseling, aware of its own power/knowledge and the ways in which the human sciences, despite their sincere intent of helping and liberating, often inadvertently end by imposing one form of domination for another. A critical history “enables us to think against the present, in the sense of exploring its horizons and its conditions of possibility. Its aim is not to predetermine judgement, but to make judgement possible” (Rose, 1998: 18). It enables me to problematize what is thinkable, to contest assumptions, to examine, challenge, and disturb the status quo, revealing “the fragility of that which seems solid, the contingency of that which seems necessary, the mundane and quotidian roots of that which claims lofty nobility and disinterest” (Rose, 1998: 18). Without critical reflection and attention to power relations, school counseling could easily become smug, self-serving, and inward-looking, ultimately bypassing or suppressing the interests of clients. I have used a variety of different forms of analysis, including philosophical critique, critical history, a chronicle of events, the analysis of policies and processes, and forms of textual and narrative analysis. Therefore notions about youth and forms of professionalization and ethical self-regulation are scrutinized in the book. Foucault’s notions underpin the whole volume. Some of the more general notions—confession, problematizing, archaeology, genealogy, power, power-knowledge, Panoptican, gaze, and governmentality—are outlined in chapter 1. Others, such as technologies of domination and of the self, political rationality and morality, subjectivity, power, and ethics, are discussed within particular chapters.

In chapter 2, I discuss the relations between the concepts of “self” and “identity” in relation to counseling, and I provide a Foucauldian analysis of the self. Rather than any specific notion of identity or the self, I focus on a shift in meaning from the notion of self to the notion of identity in contemporary discourse. “Identity” enables me to talk in general terms about the identity of the profession of school counseling and of the identity of its clientele—“adolescence” or “youth,” as it has been variously defined. Moreover, identity is a complex notion with various formulations and is one of the guiding and most important concepts for contemporary accounts of counseling. It has been closely and intimately connected with the notion of “self” and of related notions of self-knowledge, self-direction, and self-development, including traditional liberal and humanist ideas of autonomy and responsibility for the self. Therefore, the notion of identity is caught up in the changing history of Western philosophy concerning the self and of what it means to be a human being. Our modern Western sense of identity, in turn, shapes our

philosophy, our language, and our relationships, often in ways that are not readily apparent. Under the influence of postmodernism, Western understandings of identity and self have shifted from metaphysical (or philosophical) views that seek to identify logically the self—attempts of self-definition (and possibly self-assertion)—as an essence or form, to notions of identity that are contingent or that rest upon descriptive criteria springing from a specific culture or an age. Foucault's work and that of a number of theorists who have developed his work, especially in relation to the critique of humanism and the autonomous, rational subject that is at the center of liberal education, is discussed.

Humanism is a general world view that positions mankind in terms of the underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes human nature, human inquiry, and the relationships of human beings to the natural world. Rather than being dependent on divine order on the one hand or simply part of the natural order on the other, under humanism, mankind is seen to have unique capacities and abilities that lead to studies of the individual in all forms and under all conditions. Humanism developed during the Renaissance and under Enlightenment thinkers and continues to dominate as the West's commonsense world view. Values often associated with liberal humanism include freedom, equality, tolerance, secularism, social and political reform, progress, pragmatism, scientism, and the perfectibility of human nature (see Audi, 1995).

Foucault's project concerned the mode by which human beings become subjects, and he indicated the ways in which this process takes place. He was, above all, concerned to *historicize questions of ontology*, treating the self as a contingent historical construction rather than an unchanging eternal essence or human nature, fixed once and for all. Foucault thought that self is a contingent matter shaped differently in different historical periods. Selves are "constructions" in this sense. My reading of the self and identity is based upon insights from Foucault's "care for the self," "technologies of the self," and the "ethics of self-formation." I also raise some criticisms against him. Notions of critical method, critical history or historical narratives, and narratology (i.e., structuralist approaches to narrative) are closely related to Foucault's *genealogy*, a form of critical history that he bases on Nietzsche.

In chapters 3 and 4, Foucault provides the inspiration for me to provide a *genealogy* of *how* the discourses of the human sciences of both psychology and sociology conceptualize and, respectively, "psychologize" adolescence and "sociologize" youth. Foucauldian approaches collapse the old binaries and provide "a new construct for comprehending the stubbornly different levels of explanation usually known as the "sociological" and the "psychological," and with a clue to . . . the secret of its operation" (Henriques et al., 1984: 52, cited in Middleton, 1998: 120). Following this line of thinking, I draw explicitly upon the work of the Foucauldian theorist Nikolas Rose. These critical genealogies then permit me, following Foucault, to critique the notions of the *humanistic subject* that underlie humanistic counseling, the *biomedical-genetic* model of the subject, and the

INTRODUCTION

psychiatric subject, based on drives and the repression of those drives.

Chapter 5, entitled “The Moral Constitution of Adolescence/Youth,” while not explicitly adopting a Foucauldian form of analysis, is inspired by him. It investigates how youth were morally constituted in the historical context when youth culture began to emerge—the time that saw the birth of guidance counseling in the U.S., British, and New Zealand secondary schools. This chapter aims to expose the power-knowledge constitution of adolescents and youth, especially through the historical study of notions of “mental hygiene” and the moral panics in 1950s New Zealand, with particular reference to a case study of the Mazengarb Report. The report sets out the dominant historical view (discourse/ narrative/story) of youth and its moral constitution, indicating the prevailing attitudes of adolescence as being a dangerous time. This was implicitly theorized at the time by reference to the moral category of “delinquency” and to sexual practices defined and influenced by the Church and focused particularly on female sexuality. The Mazengarb Report displayed the power relations involved in the control of the sexuality of adolescent behavior by the state and other national organizations, including, most noticeably, representatives of various religious denominations.

The next two chapters concern the other half of the counseling relationship—the counselor. Here I provide not only a history of the present but also a critical lens that focuses on ways of using Foucault’s work on *governmentality* in relation to the professionalization and ethical self-regulation of counseling in chapter 6 and a new form of counseling—narrative therapy—in chapter 7.

While it might be argued that there is no singular or one “identity” of school counseling but, rather, multiple identities, reflecting different approaches and different organizations, there have been historical transformations to school counseling brought about by deliberate policy changes. Neoliberal policies set out new demands for professional accountability and performance management that spring from the new managerialism. Partly in response to these, there has been an increased emphasis on the professionalization and accountability of counseling, interpreted in detailed ways by professional associations—for example, changes in membership criteria and in ethical practice that are at the heart of counselor professionalization. Chapter 6 picks up the Foucauldian theme of governmentality as a means of critically examining the professional counseling organization. The hegemony of the conservative and technocratic neoliberal environment, despite being powerful, has not been entirely crushing or monolithic, for, as Foucault points out, where there is power, there are the possibilities for resistance, struggle, alternatives, opposition, and creative ways of dealing with power relations (Foucault, 1977, 1980a,b, 1982).

The notion of “narrative” forms an underlying subtext and a major organizing concept throughout the book, not just in specific terms as a beginning and end that includes a number of elements. First, a personal or self-narrative of my own constitution as a counselor starts the book and also colors the other chapters. Second, there are narratives of self and identity. Narrative is linked to the concept

of identity, for it is through the imposition of meaning on our individual life histories that we constitute and shape our own multiple identities. Third, there are narratives of how the human sciences—psychology and sociology— have constituted young people: the social subjects, differently defined as “adolescents” and “youth,” who are the subjects of school counseling. Fourth, there is a historical narrative in relation to notions of the development of the personal and professional ethics of the school counselor. Finally, there is a study of narrative therapy with its Foucauldian basis as applied in school counseling and in general in schools.

The analysis of the concept of narrative reveals that it is an activity based on hindsight through which we construct and give meaning to the past. Historical narratives provide us with ways of structuring the past, a means by which we the *emplot* facts and events that form a chronicle in order to tell a story. One might argue that there is a reciprocal relation between narrative and facts in the sense that the “facts” constrain the historical narrative in some sense insofar as it purports to be a “truthful” story, but the narrative, once established in outline, also helps us to select the facts we consider relevant. Language affects not only how we frame our notions of the “self” and “identity,” but also how counselors deal with a client and their sense of meaning of the world in which they live.

Chapter 7, the last chapter of the book, outlines narrative therapy, a poststructuralist counseling modality that developed in Australasia in 1989. The chapter investigates Foucault in relation to the turn to narrative therapy, the philosophical foundations of narrative therapy, its critique of humanistic psychology, and the application of narrative therapy in school counseling in New Zealand. By highlighting a new counseling modality of the 1990s, this chapter links both backward and forward: back to chapter 2, with its overview of humanist–existential psychology and counseling theories, and forward to the future. So the book involves different narratives throughout and deliberately starts and ends with narrative.

CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO FOUCAULDIAN ANALYSIS

WHY USE FOUCAULT?

The first question that needs to be addressed in this book is: why use Foucault?

There are two reasons: one is personal, the other is academic, because Foucault sets up a framework of critique that enables me to challenge some taken-for-granted practices in school counseling, in how we see or think of the young people who are the clients of school counseling, and in how we are constituted as school counseling professionals. The personal reason is, of course, linked with professional and academic ones. As I point out in the Introduction, the first course in narrative therapy that I attended was in 1989. It provided my first contact with the name of Michel Foucault and a brief introduction to Foucault's use of the Panopticon and his understanding of power-knowledge. In time and with undertaking further study, my reading and understanding of Foucault was to expand considerably. Part of the difficulty was because, as Smart (1985: 18) points out, Foucault's work "is not easily assimilated into the concepts and fields of inquiry defined and delimited by the human sciences" and certainly not in areas with which I was familiar. The first of his books that I read was *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977). For some time, I found it easier to gain an overview of what Foucault was talking about by reading the work of some commentators on him and his interviews before returning to his texts and back again (see Foucault, 1989a,b,c,d,e,f; Nilson, 1998; Smart, 1985). Many of my fellow counselors have admitted to me that they, too, have found it hard to read Foucault; therefore, I thought that I would try to help people who are not familiar with his ideas by providing my own brief overview: hence this introductory chapter.

This book is not simply a citation that uses Foucauldian terms without explanation. It is not an explication or analysis of Foucault's philosophy, writings, or methodologies, nor an adaptation that applies his ideas to topics not investigated by him (Stone, 2001). Rather, it is a conceptualization, "a transfer of central ideas from Foucault separate from his historical methodologies to new arenas" (Stone, 2001: 2). It uses some of Foucault's ideas in relation to the history and formation of school counseling, counselors, and youth as their subjects, particularly as they pertain to notions of "self," "identity," and "subjectivity."

Michel Foucault was born in Poitiers, France, in 1926, into a petit-bourgeois family; he died from an AIDS-related illness in 1984. During his short lifetime Foucault's work became an emblem for his generation of postwar intellectuals for his creative, controversial, and original thinking on philosophical-historical-social

CHAPTER 1

ideas. Yet he did not propose any grand, global, utopian, or systematic solution to societal ills. His critique, however, opens up possibilities for us to sort out how we might see, understand, and in turn negotiate our subjectivity and the power relations in our world. He passed the entrance exam for the Sorbonne and attended the prestigious École Normale Supérieure, where he studied philosophy, taking his *licence de philosophie* in 1948. He changed direction, abandoning formal philosophical studies in favor of psychology, obtaining his *licence de psychologie* in 1951 and a diploma in psychopathology in 1952. During the 1950s he worked in a psychiatric hospital and overseas in French departments in Swedish, Polish, and German universities. Foucault decided to obtain a tenured position in a French university, but he required a doctorate. To obtain a doctorate at the Sorbonne required a principal thesis and a complementary thesis, as well as a report from an academic patron who also sat on his thesis jury, following which the thesis had to be published. For his doctorate, Foucault's complementary thesis was a translation of and introduction to Kant's (1798) *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* [*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*]; his studies on a history of madness, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* [translated as *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, 1965] formed his major thesis (Macey, 1993). Foucault's doctorate was finally achieved in 1961. His first chair was in 1964 as professor of philosophy at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. Then he moved to the University of Vincennes and in 1970 to the prestigious Collège de France, where he chose the title "Professor of the History of Systems of Thought" to make it clear that his work differed from the history of ideas, philosophy, or social history (Marshall, 1996; Smart, 1985). This potted biography is presented because Foucault states: "In a sense, I have always wanted my books to be fragments from an autobiography. My books have always been my personal problems with madness, with prisons, with sexuality," and "each of my works is a part of my own biography" (Foucault, 1981, cited in Macey, 1993: xii). In other words, the personal and the philosophical ideas of Foucault are inextricably entwined.

Little of Foucault's work was written explicitly about education or schools and none about school counseling, and he certainly does not offer "solutions" for issues in education or for school counseling. But, Foucault provides a devastating critique of the subtle and complex power relations that pervade educational institutions, which shape our identity, and which make us governable by masking the reality that our identities are being constituted. What he does provide is an alternative approach to social institutions and their accompanying practices which are themselves informed by the social sciences. (Marshall, 1996: 216)

By suggesting that the real "political" task facing our society is to criticize the working of institutions, especially those institutions that appear to be both neutral and independent, Foucault (1984a) highlights ways in which one can question the discourse of disciplines and institutions and their practices. It is this remark that helps to set the tone for this book. But, as is so often the case with Foucault, what makes him hard for many people to follow at first is his assigning wider and

somewhat different meanings to familiar words. He did not provide definitive concepts but presented his notions both in texts and in interviews, which were often used to clarify ideas he had already presented in his texts (Nilson, 1998). When speaking of the “political,” Foucault meant “political” not in the sense of party politics, but in the vastly wider sense of power relations—a notion that at one point in his development meant “power-knowledge” and pointed to the twin set of relations between government and self-government on the one hand, and government and the development of certain kinds of expert knowledge that permitted “government at a distance” through expert systems on the other.

This chapter introduces the Foucauldian notions that inform the various themes and analyses of this book: confession, problematizing of the present, archaeology, genealogy, power and power-knowledge, the Panopticon and the gaze, and governmentality. Other Foucauldian notions, such as his ideas on political rationality, morality, subjectivity, and ethics, are interwoven within sections of relevant chapters of the book (chapters 5 and 6). All of these have applications in understanding and analyzing youth and school counseling. Finally, chapter 7 points out how his ideas and poststructuralist challenge have been brought into the world of counseling via narrative therapy and can critique the dominance of structuralism/humanism that has pervaded counseling theories and practices.

Foucault’s ideas and work changed direction and emphasis during his lifetime, and his work does “not appear to fit into recognizable categories and does not employ reputable or even recognizable methodologies” (Marshall, 1996: 4). As a result many academics—historians, philosophers, and Marxists—find his work problematic and challenging. To a large extent, Foucault resists being pigeonholed into a particular academic discipline and being categorized and labeled. As Foucault himself says:

I think I have been situated in most of the squares on the political checkerboard, one after another and sometime simultaneously: as anarchist, leftist, ostentatious or disguised Marxist, nihilist, explicit or secret anti-Marxist, technocrat in the service of Gaullism, new liberal etc. . . . None of these descriptions is important by itself; taken together, on the other hand, they mean something. And I must admit that I rather like what they mean. (Foucault, 1984a: 383–389)

Despite his rejection of the notion of “general intellectual” (in favor of the “specific intellectual”) and of familiar political or disciplinary classifications, Foucault is generally considered to be a philosopher and social historian. Yet he did not write only for an academic audience; he also gave many interviews (Foucault, 1989a,b,c,d,e,f; Marshall, 1996; Smart, 1985). He was influenced by broad range of thinkers, most importantly philosophers in the German tradition, including the three “masters of suspicion”—Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud—together with Kant and Heidegger: Kant, to whom he returned at the end of his life, and Heidegger, who provided an important critique of humanism and phenomenology.

CHAPTER 1

In the French tradition he was influenced by philosophers who were his teachers, including Althusser, Bachelard, Canguilhem, and Cavailles on the philosophy and history of science. Hyppolite, Koyré, and Kojève provided readings on Hegel that formed an important aspect of Foucault's philosophical background. In addition, he was strongly influenced, perhaps negatively, by French thinkers in the phenomenological and existentialist traditions, including Bergson, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and de Beauvoir, especially on the temporality and finitude of existence of the subject and also the notion of embodied consciousness, although Foucault reacted strongly against the phenomenological subject. It should not be forgotten that Foucault also had important links with members of the avant-garde, including Bataille, who had links with surrealism and other art movements, and Blanchot. One can trace also, especially in the writing of history, the influence of Braudel and the Annales School, along with Veyne and Hadot. Finally, we cannot ignore the influence on Foucault of his contemporaries, above all Deleuze, but also Derrida, Serres, Lacan, Dumezil, and many others (Marshall, 1996; Olssen, 1999; Peters, 1996; Smart, 1985).

Foucault acknowledges Nietzsche's influence on his work in several interviews and in his essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1984c). But it was through the writings of Heidegger rather than of Nietzsche himself that he approached the latter, and Heidegger influenced his philosophical development (Olssen, 1999). The combination of Nietzsche's and Heidegger's thoughts helped Foucault to shape his work as a history by which human beings become subjects and to change from his early emphasis on the political subjugation of "docile bodies" to his later emphasis on individuals as self-determining beings who are continually in the process of constituting themselves as ethical subjects. He clarifies his aims thus:

My objective . . . has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects. . . . The first is the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of the sciences. . . . In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call "dividing practices." . . . Finally, I have sought to study—it is my current work—the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject. For example, I have chosen the domain of sexuality. . . . Thus it is not power, but the subject, that is the general theme of my research.

It is true that I became quite involved with the question of power. It soon appeared to me that, while the human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations that are very complex. (Foucault, 1982: 209)

However, apart from talking in interviews and in making general references to the people who influenced him within his writings, he almost invariably avoids following traditional academic citation and referencing practices. While some commentators are highly critical of this practice, it has the effect of freeing

Foucault up to range far and wide in his writings.

Various writers have divided up Foucault's work into different parts. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) point to four chronological stages: one influenced by Heidegger (e.g., *Madness and Civilization*), then an archaeological stage where Foucault flirts with structuralism (e.g., *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Things*), but, finding the archaeological notion to be limited, he moves to a Nietzschean-influenced genealogical stage (e.g., *Discipline and Punish*), and finally to ethical self-constitution and governmentality (e.g., *History of Sexuality*, Vols. II, III).

In his early work, Foucault displayed his professional interest in psychology and psychopathology in his writing about madness and psychiatry. Foucault's doctorate became the basis for *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1965). Foucault used approaches to phenomenology and existential psychiatry in this early work and an introduction entitled "Dream, Imagination and Existence" to the work of the Heideggerian psychotherapist, Ludwig Binswanger. In studying madness, Foucault maps the way the mad were not confined in any institution before 1600 but were wanderers; they became excluded persons by the middle of the seventeenth century, the position previously occupied by lepers. Prior to the eighteenth century madness was a legal issue, not a medical one. The figure of madness changes between the Renaissance and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (the *epistème* that Foucault calls the Classical Age), to become silent and to exist in antisocial figures (e.g., the debauched, dissipated, libertine, or the homosexual, or the magician). Strategies then change, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, with these people being confined in hospitals, workhouses, and prisons (the *Hôpital Général* was formed in 1656). The sorts of "dividing practices"—separating the normal and the pathological—foreshadowed themes that Foucault pursued in *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1973).

Until the nineteenth century, madness was a juridical matter rather than a medical matter, and the mad or insane were not judged to be ill. Therefore, Foucault argues that there is no basis for researching the antecedents of the treatment of the mentally ill in the either the history of psychiatry or the history of medicine. Historical discontinuities are revealed in how madness has been thought of at different times. In the Renaissance, madness emerged as a theme in literature and iconography because the mad person was seen as a source of truth, wisdom, and criticism of the existing political situation. Madness has its own form of reason was seen as a general characteristic of human beings where it was possible to hold both unreasonable reason and reasonable unreason. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the madness was reduced to "unreason," something shameful and to be hidden, and so it became silenced. *Folie* in French encompasses both the English "folly" and "madness," to include both criminal and insane behavior or "unreason." In the nineteenth century there was no great medical discovery that caused the alignment of psychiatry and asylums. Rather, a greater concern for individual rights had arisen in the wake of the French Revolution, and redefining

CHAPTER 1

madness as mental illness meant that medicine and psychiatry gradually moved into the asylum to treat the mentally ill. The asylum emerged in the eighteenth century as a specific site or institution for dealing with madness and became transformed into a space of therapeutic practices rather than a solely punitive institution. Medical knowledge and power replaced juridical power, so that madness became medicalized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Therefore, for Foucault, discontinuity between eras, or *epistèmes*, predominates in the history of madness.

Schools appear only indirectly in Foucault's work, being used to illustrate the notions of power-knowledge, techniques of domination, and disciplinary blocks and practices in his work on prisons in *Discipline and Punish* (1977). He comments more explicitly about schools in some of his interviews (e.g., Foucault, 1980a). Marshall (1996) suggests that because Foucault's critique of education was very limited and largely indirect, it needs to be constructed from what is implicit in his work. The critique that this book develops regarding education and school counseling involves the assumed neutrality of these institutions—institutions that seem unaware of their power-knowledge relationships.

Foucault's ideas and forms of analysis have inspired a significant body of work by many subsequent writers. Marshall (1996) and Peters and Marshall (1996) use his notions to examine the neoliberal environment's impact on education, as is discussed in chapter 5. In relation to psychology, counseling, and schools, Valerie Walkerdine's (1984, 1986) and Nikolas Rose's work are important for this book, because both have been inspired by the work of Michel Foucault and are particularly challenging of accepted notions (see chapter 2). Walkerdine uses Foucault as "archaeologist" to analyze ways in which Piagetian developmental psychological discourse has produced particular sets of parameters that have normalized the subject of the developing child as the object of scientific investigation. She argues that despite being inserted into a child-centered pedagogy, Piagetian notions have not had any liberating effect because they have prevented other objects from being the focus of scientific investigations. Piaget prevented alternative formulations of the individual from being made and created instead a hegemonic discourse. The object of the gaze has been on the "developing child," on how it "acquires" or "develops" certain traits. This has set up a circularity of argument where the structure sets up stages that are then represented as truth (Walkerdine, 1984, 1986).

Nikolas Rose (1989, 1998) provides a critical history of the relationship between psychology, what he called the "psy" sciences, and notions of the self and society. Counseling, evolving out of various strands of psychology, in his view would be considered a "psy" science. How the "psy" sciences of the twentieth century have conceived of and positioned youth displays complex notions of self, the other and issues of governance (chapter 2). Rose said that he used Foucault's work because his writings are attempts to explore the "games of truth and error through which being is historically constituted as experience; that is as something that can and must be thought" (Foucault, 1985: 6–7). By experience here, Foucault does not

AN INTRODUCTION TO FOUCAULDIAN ANALYSIS

refer to something primordial that precedes thought, but to “the correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture” (p. 3), and it is in something like this sense that I use the term in this book. I explore aspects of regimes of knowledge through which human beings have come to recognize themselves as certain kinds of creature, the strategies of regulation and tactics of action to which these regimes of knowledge have been connected, and the correlative relations that human beings have established with themselves, in taking themselves as subjects. In doing so, I hope to contribute to the type of work that Foucault described as an analysis of “the problematizations through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought-and the practices on the basis of which these problematizations are formed.” (Rose, 1998: 11, citing Foucault, 1985: 11)

From this perspective the history of the “psy” disciplines is “intrinsically linked to the history of government.” This is not “politics,” but the Foucauldian sense of government, which “is part of the history of the ways in which human beings have regulated others and have regulated themselves in the light of certain games of truth. But on the other hand, this regulatory role of psy is linked, I suggest, to questions of the organization and reorganization of political power that have been quite central to shaping our contemporary experience” (Rose, 1998: 11).

CONFESSION

Foucault criticizes psychoanalysis as “the aggravated Christian compulsion to confess” (Nilson, 1998: 7), in turn supporting Thomas Szasz’s claims in *The Manufacture of Madness* (1973) that the therapeutic state has replaced the theological state (Foucault, 1989e). From such a viewpoint, the psychotherapist or counselor could be considered akin to the priest in a secular society. Certainly, in the use of listening techniques and in the uncovering of self, there is an element of similarity, but there is considerable difference in the elements of advice, admonition, and punishment that are involved in the religious forms of confession that are certainly no part of counseling.

Contemporary notions of “confession” are derived not simply from the influence of the Catholic Church and its use of strategies for confessing one’s sins, but from ancient, pre-Christian philosophical notions. While “confession” means “acknowledging,” it involves a declaration and disclosure, acknowledgment, or admission of a crime, fault, or weakness. The acknowledgment is partly about making oneself known by disclosing the private feelings or opinions that form part of one’s identity. In its religious form, confession involves the verbal acknowledgment of one’s sins to another. One is duty-bound to perform this confession as repentance in the hope of absolution.

In the literary sense, confession also contains elements of identifying the self in a deliberate self-conscious attempt to explain and express oneself to an audience within which the individual exists and seeks confirmation. Confession, then, is both a communicative and an expressive act, a narrative in which we (re)create

CHAPTER 1

ourselves by creating our own narrative, reworking the past, in public, or at least in dialogue with another. Foucault in *The Use of Pleasure* (1985: 29) talks of technologies of the self as “models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for deciphering the self by oneself, for the transformation one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object.” It seems that when the subject is confessing and creating its “self,” it feels compelled to tell the truth about itself. Counseling is a practice predicated on the assumption that the client is telling the truth about his/her self.

In the religious milieu, Foucault (1980a,b) points out that the concept of confession originated in Catholicism as the principal technology for managing the sexual lives of believers. Notions of a wide range of sins mostly equated with sexual morality. But the procedures of confession have altered considerably over time. Until the Council of Trent in the mid-sixteenth century, when a new series of procedures for the training and purifying of Church personnel emerged, confession in the Church was an annual event, so the confession and surveillance of sexuality was quite limited (Foucault, 1980b). After the Reformation, confession changed profoundly to involve not just one’s acts but also one’s thoughts. Then in the eighteenth century Foucault suggested that there was “a very sharp falling away, not in pressure and injunctions to confess, but in the refinement of techniques of confession” (Foucault, 1980b: 215). This point in time saw “brutal medical techniques emerging, which consist in simply demanding that the subject tells his or her story, or narrate it in writing” (p. 215).

Foucault defined his sense of confession [*aveu*] as “all those procedures by which the subject is incited to produce a discourse of truth about his sexuality which is capable of having effects on the subject himself” (pp. 215–216). As confession became secularized, a range of techniques emerged in pedagogy, medicine, psychiatry, and literature, with a high point being psychoanalysis or Freud’s “talking cure.” Since Freud, the secular form of confession could be argued as having been “scientized” through new techniques of normalization and individualization that include clinical codifications, personal examinations, case-study techniques, the general documentation and collection of personal data, the proliferation of interpretive schemas, and the development of a whole host of therapeutic techniques for “normalization.” In turn, these “oblige” us to be free as self-inspection and new forms of self-regulation replace the confessional. As Rose (1989: 240) commented, this new form of confession was an affirmation of our self and our identity:

Western man, Michel Foucault argued, has become a confessing animal. The truthful rendering into speech of who one is, to one’s parents, one’s teachers, one’s doctor, one’s lover, and oneself, is installed at the heart of contemporary procedures of individualization. In confessing, one is subjectified by another, for one confesses in the actual or imagined presence of a figure who prescribes the form of the confession, the words and rituals through which it should be made, who appreciates, judges, consoles, or understands. But in confessing, one also constitutes oneself. In the act of speaking, through the obligation to produce words

AN INTRODUCTION TO FOUCAULDIAN ANALYSIS

that are true to an inner reality, through the self-examination that precedes and accompanies speech, one becomes a subject for oneself. Confession, then, is the diagram of a certain form of subjectification that binds us to others at the very moment we affirm our identity. (Rose, 1989: 240)

This confession involves a type of “discipline” that “entails training in the minute arts of self-scrutiny, self-evaluation, and self-regulation, ranging from the control of the body, speech, and movement in school, through the mental drill inculcated in school and university, to the Puritan practices of self-inspection and obedience to divine reason” (Rose, 1989: 222). While confession is autobiographical, compelling us to narratively recreate ourselves, it is also about assigning truth-seeking meaning to our lives. One can be assisted in this through therapeutic endeavors such as counseling.

PROBLEMATIZING

Foucault’s *oeuvre* examined the present by “problematizing” it—that is, by posing questions about the present, then going back to the past in a form of critical history that he first describes as an “archaeology” and later, somewhat differently, as a “genealogy.” In commenting on perceived changes in his work over time, Foucault said:

One has perhaps changed perspectives, one has turned the problem around, but it’s always the same problem: that is, the relations between the subject, the truth and the constitution of experience. I have sought to analyze how fields like madness, sexuality and delinquency could enter into a certain play of the truth, and how on the other hand, through this insertion of human practice and behavior into the play of truth, the subject is himself effected. That was the problem of the history of madness, and of sexuality. (Foucault, 1989c: 310)

By “production of truth,” Foucault states, “I mean not the production of true utterances, but the establishment of domains in which the practice of true and false can be made at once ordered and pertinent” (Foucault, 1991: 79). He uses “*problematization*” as a form of methodology to pose questions about the where, how, and by whom of social life and its institutions. For example, the ways in which behavior was constituted was characterized by the language of adjustment and maladjustment in the mid-twentieth century, with youth culture being initially described in terms of deviance and delinquency. The notion of adjustment had become normalized and was largely unchallenged at this point, until various researchers problematized youth discourse differently (see chapters 3, 4, and 5). In one of his last essays, Foucault acknowledges that despite the “truth” taking a very different form in his last two books, *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. II, 1985; Vol. III, 1990) that all his works since *Madness and Civilization* (1965) have the notion of problematization in common (Foucault, 1989a). Foucault elaborates:

Problematization doesn’t mean the representation of a preexistent object, nor

CHAPTER 1

the creation through discourse of an object that doesn't exist. It's the set of discursive or nondiscursive practices that makes something enter into the play of the true and false, and constitutes it as an object for thought (whether under the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc.). (Foucault, 1989b: 296)

ARCHAEOLOGY

In his earlier works on madness and the human sciences, especially *The Order of Things* (1970) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault uses the term “*archaeology*.” This is a form of historical analysis of discourse or systems of thought that describes the *archive* in terms of “expressibility, conservation, memory, reactivation and appropriation”—in other words:

what may be spoken of in discourse; what statements survive, disappear, get reused, repressed or censored; which terms are recognized as valid, questionable, invalid; what relations exist between “the system of present statements” and those off the past, or between the discourses of “native” and foreign cultures; and what individuals, groups, or classes have access to particular kinds of discourse. (Smart, 1985: 48)

In *The Order of Things* Foucault proposes an archaeology of the human sciences based upon discovering the laws, regularities, and rules of the formation of systems of thought that emerged in the nineteenth century. Foucault's “archaeological” method focuses on the conditions under which a subject is constituted as a possible object of knowledge, and he provides the following rationale:

I do not wish to deny the validity of intellectual biographies, or the possibility of a history of theories, concepts, or themes. It is simply that I wonder whether such descriptions are themselves enough, whether they do justice to the immense density of discourse, whether there do not exist, outside their customary boundaries, systems of regularities that have a decisive role in the history of the sciences. (Foucault, 1970: 385).

This reflects a “concern to establish thresholds, ruptures, and transformations” in order to confront them “with the true work of historians, which is to reveal continuities” (Foucault, 1972: 204). Later on, in an interview with J. J. Brochier, Foucault reflects on and discusses his use of the term “archaeology”:

I first used the word somewhat blindly, in order to designate a form of analysis that wouldn't at all be a history (in the sense that one recounts the history of inventions or of ideas) and that wouldn't be an epistemology either, that is to say, the internal analysis of the structure of a science. This other thing I have

called therefore, “archaeology.” And then retrospectively, it seemed to me that chance has not been too bad a guide: after all, this word “archaeology” can almost mean—and I hope I will be forgiven for this—description of the *archive*. I mean by archive the set (*l'ensemble*) of discourses actually pronounced; and this set of discourses is envisaged not only as a set of events which would have taken place once and for all and which would remain in abeyance, in the limbo or purgatory of history, but also as a set that continues to function, to be transformed through history, and to provide the possibility of appearing in other discourses. (Foucault, 1989g: 45)

In this interview, Foucault further elaborates about archaeology as not studying the beginning in the sense of the first origin, of a foundation starting from which the rest would be possible. . . . It's always the relative beginnings that I'm searching for, more the institutionalizations or the transformations than the foundings or foundations. And then I'm equally bothered by the idea of excavations. What I'm looking for are not relations that are secret, hidden, more silent or deeper than the consciousness of men. I try on the contrary to define the relations on the very surface of the discourse; I attempt to make visible what is invisible only because it's too much on the surface of things. (Foucault, 1989g: 46)

Archaeology is about a type of digging down empirically through layers to uncover structures. Foucault provides a lengthy definition of *epistème* (1972: 190), which, he says, is not “a form of knowledge,” but “the totality of relations . . . between the sciences when one analyzes them at the level of discursive regularities.” An *epistème* is “a world view,” “a slice of history common to all branches of knowledge,” “a general stage of reason,” “a structure of thought,” “the total set of relations that unite the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences and formalized systems,” and the way the transitions between the various stages in the progress of a science operate. Foucault identifies the Renaissance, the classical age (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), and the modern age as three *epistèmes* or systems of thought each with its distinctive structure.

Foucault's archaeology aims to show that both continuities and discontinuities are formed from the same set of discursive practices. It differs from the type of history of ideas that uses models of consciousness, creation, or evolution to explain changes and differences; and instead, it attempts to establish what the system of transformations is that shapes change in the human sciences.

Although archaeology was supplanted by “genealogy” in Foucault's later work, it retained a presence, especially as a method of analyzing local discourses. In fact in his essay, “What is Enlightenment?” he states that his historical work combines archaeology as a “method” and genealogy as a “design” (Foucault, 1984d).

GENEALOGY

In the 1970s Foucault moved away from archaeology and *epistèmes* to notions of genealogy, bio-power, and how this produces certain kinds of “subjects,” and also to notions of governmentality in his later work (e.g., *Discipline and Punish*, 1977;

CHAPTER 1

The History of Sexuality, 1980a, 1985, 1990). Rather than a break, this change constitutes a shift in emphasis to social practices, institutions, regimes of power, and technologies of the self rather than the more quasistrukturalist orientation that emphasized discourses and discontinuity and the rules that govern the formation of discourses. Foucault's essays "Two Lectures" (1980c), "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1984c), and "What Is Enlightenment?" (1984d) provide some understanding about his notion of genealogy, but no pat definition.

"Genealogy" was a term introduced and used in a particular philosophical way by Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Genealogy of Morals* ([1887] 1956). Foucault was clearly influenced by this and other works by Nietzsche (Macey, 1993; Nilson, 1998; Smart, 1985). In a Foucauldian sense, genealogy is a history of the present. A genealogical analysis begins by posing a question in the present—problematizing the present—and how a problem is expressed in the current situation. Then its genealogy is worked out by moving backward in a process of descent.

In analyzing history, Foucault uses the Nietzschean notions of "descent" and "emergence" rather than evolution or a process of development. The analysis of descent involves a move backward in time to reveal the many events, struggles, complexity, fragility, contingency, and discontinuities that exist behind historical beginnings. Emergence is not seen as "a culmination of events, or as the end of a process of development but rather as a particular momentary manifestation of the 'hazardous play of dominations' . . . as transitory 'episodes in a series of subjugations,' or embodiments of dynamic relationships of struggle" (Smart, 1985: 57). Genealogy is about problematizing the present and historicizing or reevaluating the past in the light of current concerns. As a history that is concerned with the present moment, genealogy intervenes in the present moment.

What genealogy provides is the "history of an answer—the original, specific, and singular answer of thought—to a certain situation" (Foucault, 1985: 116). In other words, genealogy seeks to explain present-day cultural phenomena and problems by looking to the past and analyzing how it was derived and constituted historically. It not only looks at who we are at present but also opens up possibilities of what might be and from where we might start to be different in the present. It forms a critical ontology of our selves. For Foucault, living in one's own time involved the ethical constitution of self through a critical reflexiveness about the culture and forces that operated to constitute it.

Foucault's genealogy is radically different from traditional historical analysis. First, genealogy does not seek points of origin, timeless and taken-for-granted universal "truths" about life, evidence of human progress, or constants in order to find a stable understanding of events. Genealogy challenges the humanist model of consciousness as one that is unified and fully transparent to itself and linear in the sense that it stores memories in the same way as a novel progresses a plot. It also challenges the progressivist agendas of the Enlightenment by emphasizing dispersion, disparity, and difference.

Genealogy shifts "to the interface between nondiscursive and discursive

practices” and “uncovers the eternal play of dominations, the domain of violence, subjugations and struggle” (Smart, 1985: 47, 59). Furthermore, the focus is on events, on their distinctive characteristics and manifestations, not as a product of destiny, regulative mechanisms or the intention of a constitutive subject, but as the effect of haphazard conflicts, chance and error, of relations of power and their unintended consequences struggle. Third, the objects of genealogical analysis are not, as in the case of traditional history, “the noblest periods, the highest forms, the most abstract ideas, the purest individualities” but neglected, “lower” or more common forms of existence and knowledge (e.g. of the body, sexuality). Finally genealogy introduces a mode of historical analysis which affirms the perspectivity of knowledge, a conception of which is in good part already implicit in Foucault’s identification of the limits of archaeological knowledge. (Smart, 1985: 59)

Foucault developed a Nietzschean viewpoint, considering genealogy as an “antiscience” in that “it does not produce truths and certainties, but is a strategy of resistance” with results that do not confer identity nor a uniform theory (Nilson, 1998: 73); instead, they disturb and alert us to the dangers of science. If what was thought to be evident or obvious is shown to not be so, then genealogy challenges what we have assumed to be the natural and necessary in understanding ourselves. By examining discontinuities, breaches, contradictions, errors, and incongruencies in accepted forms of historical meaning, genealogy challenges the form of history that promotes notions of continuity and progress. In this way genealogy is “a diagnostic method that is not seeking history’s inherent soul, but studying its body of development” (Nilson, 1998: 114). It does not look at history as a means of glorifying or being horrified by the past, but as a means of shedding light on the here and now. It develops generalizations by delving into and comparing different aspects of the past.

Foucault’s shift from archaeology to genealogy is exemplified in *Discipline and Punish* (1977). This text focuses on the *will to knowledge* that reflects both discursive and nondiscursive (i.e., institutional) practices and the complex relations among power, knowledge, and the body. Foucault points out that the body is an object or site of certain disciplinary technologies of power. He provides a genealogy of forms that range from torture in the opening account of Damien to other forms of punishment that echo Nietzsche’s list in the *Genealogy of Morals* (1956), to discipline, the prison, and the development of the modern penal institution.

Foucault sets out three areas in his discussion of discipline: “docile bodies,” “the means of correct training,” and “panopticism.” He argues that the disciplines became general formulas of domination in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as evidenced in a multiplicity of often minor processes at different locations that eventually coalesced into a general method. Disciplinary techniques “were at work in secondary education at a very early date, later in primary schools; they slowly invested the space of the hospital; and, in a few decades, they restructured the military organization” (Foucault, 1977: 138). One form of disciplinary techniques involves spatial distributions. The monastic model of

CHAPTER 1

enclosure and partitioning becoming an educational model, a form of “machine” that enabled supervision at the same time as it prevented dangerous communication between inmates.

The organization of a serial space was one of the great technical mutations of elementary education that made it possible to supersede the traditional apprenticeship system where the student spends a few minutes with the master while the rest of the group remains idle. By assigning individual places it made possible the supervision of each individual and the simultaneous work of all. It organized a new economy of the time of apprenticeship. It made the education space function like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding. (Foucault, 1977: 147)

Other disciplinary technologies involve “the control of activities” of bodies by means such as the timetable and exercises and that discipline creates out of the bodies it controls four types of individuality, or rather an individuality that is endowed with four characteristics; it is cellular (by play of spatial distribution), it is organic (by the coding of activities), it is genetic (by the accumulation of time), it is combinatory (by the composition of forces). And, in doing so, it operates four great techniques; it draws up tables; it prescribes movements; it imposes exercises; lastly, in order to obtain the combination of forces, it arranges “tactics.” (Foucault, 1977: 167)

The means of correct training is discussed in terms of “hierarchical observation,” normalizing judgment, and the examination where “the school building was to be a mechanism for training . . . a ‘pedagogical machine’” (Foucault, 1977: 172). The examination “transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power,” introduced “individuality into the field of documentation,” and “surrounded by all its documentary techniques, . . . [made] each individual a ‘case’” (Foucault, 1977: 187 ff.).

Foucault, therefore, provides an account of “disciplinary pedagogies” and discusses the way in which discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space, involving several techniques such as enclosure, partitioning, functional sites, and ranking (see Foucault, 1977: 141–149). In talking about “distribution,” “economy,” “architecture,” “archaeology,” the “machine,” and the Panopticon (which is outlined later in this chapter), Foucault is, in effect, discussing a spatializing of power (Peters, 2001a). So, in Foucault’s genealogy, the body becomes both an object of knowledge and a site where power is exercised.

In being a history of the present, Foucault’s genealogy acknowledges Nietzsche’s perspectival notion of knowledge. A writer’s own perspective on an issue at hand needs to be acknowledged, so history is “a deliberate appraisal, affirmation, or negation” that examines the past in order to intervene in the present and “prescribe the best antidote” (Foucault, 1984c: 90). Foucault’s genealogy enables him to critique the human sciences more explicitly, especially in their hierarchies of knowledge based on scientificity. Foucault calls on “the insurrection of subjugated knowledges” that oppose “the tyranny of globalising discourses” to “establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge

tactically today” (Foucault, 1980c: 81, 83). He suggests that there are two classes of “subjugated knowledges”: one constitutes previously established, erudite knowledges that have been buried, hidden, disguised, masked, removed, or written out by revisionist histories; another involves local, popular, or indigenous knowledges that are marginalized or denied space to perform adequately. These knowledges are lowly ranked, being considered inadequate for the accepted standards of knowledge and science. In recovering these knowledges, we can rediscover the history of struggle and conflict and challenge the “effects of the centralizing powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse within a society such as ours” (Foucault, 1980c: 84). These subjugated knowledges might be disciplinary networks of power or the arts of existence or the practices of sexuality in the ancient world. It is these subjugated knowledges that narrative therapy seeks to harness in developing alternative narratives that challenge the dominant stories in peoples lives (see chapter 7).

POWER AND POWER-KNOWLEDGE

Discipline and Punish (Foucault, 1977) is concerned with the operation of technologies of power and their relations to the emergence of knowledge in the form of new discourses, based around modes of objectification through which human beings become subjects. It is a theme that Foucault develops further in his work on the history of sexuality. Foucault asks:

Why has sexuality been so widely discussed and what has been said about it? What were the effects of power generated by what was said? What are the links between these discourses, these effects of power, and the pleasures that were invested by them? What knowledge was formed as a result of this linkage? (Foucault, 1980a: 11)

It is in the course of his inquiries into sexuality and the proliferation of associated discourses that Foucault coins the term “bio-power,” considered as a kind of anatomo-politics of the human body and control of the population at large.

For Foucault, “power” as a concept is quite different from the liberal or Marxist sense of coercion, domination, and oppression. As he says: “power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization” (Foucault, 1980a: 92). For him, the notion of power is productive, positive, and strategic. It is not a possession or property of a person or class, state or ruler; it is not conceptualized as a structure or institution but, rather, as a strategy or a complex strategic situation that is dispersed in a “multiplicity of force relations” (Foucault, 1980a: 97). Where there is power, Foucault maintains, there is also resistance, and often it is the case that these resistances are plural— that is, they cannot be reduced to a single point of rebellion.

Foucault is interested in the question, “How is power exercised?” In answering,

CHAPTER 1

Foucault tried to move beyond the discourse of right and truth that had dominated and legitimated the notion of sovereign power since the Middle Ages. Once Foucault's notion of power is understood, it readily becomes clear that it has huge application to analyzing the "psy" sciences in the way that Rose (1989, 1998) develops in his project. It also points to an appropriate—methodologically speaking—way of analyzing counseling. One could argue that counseling is a paradigm example of the "analytics of power" in Foucault's sense, as we can clearly tell from the description of Foucault's methodology for analyzing power.

Smart (1985) suggests that in a methodological sense, Foucault's analysis provides five "precautions" concerning the form, level, effect, direction, and knowledge "effect" of power:

First, analysis is to address not centralized and legitimate forms of power but techniques which have become embodied in local, regional, material institutions. Second, analysis should concern itself with the exercise or practice of power, its field of application and its effects, and not with questions of possession or conscious intention. Analysis needs to be focused upon the way in which things "work at the level of ongoing subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours, etc.". . . Instead of concentrating attention on the motivation or interests of groups, classes or individuals in the exercise of domination analysis is to be directed at the various complex processes through which subjects are constituted as effects of objectifying powers. Third, power is not a commodity or a possession of an individual, a group or a class, rather it circulated through the social body, "functions in the form of a chain," and is exercised through a net-like organization in which all are caught. (Smart, 1985: 78–79) Fourth, Smart argues that Foucault analyzes power not at the conventional macroinstitutional level but, rather, at the microlevel exhibited in the particular histories, techniques and tactics of power. Smart (1985: 79) remarks that only by paying close attention to the "microphysics of power . . . literally to how power functions, only then will it be possible to see how at a precise conjunctural moment particular mechanisms of power become economically advantageous and politically useful." The final methodological element focuses on the relations between knowledge and power. As Smart comments, for Foucault, historically, mechanisms of power developed through the formation and accumulation of knowledge, including its methods of observation, its techniques of registration and report, its procedures for investigation and research, its apparatuses of control and reform, and, more recently, its ethics. Thus, the analysis of power in Foucault's hands is directed away "from the juridical-political theory of sovereign power and analysis of the state, to a consideration of the material techniques of power and domination which began to emerge in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (Smart, 1985: 80). This new form of power—disciplinary power—used through systems of surveillance in the prison, the factory, and the school, operated materially on the body of the subject to minimize expenditure and maximize returns. As Smart (1985) argues, disciplinary power is intimately tied up with the emergence of the

human sciences in industrial capitalist societies.

The French words *savoir* and *connaissance* are both translated into English as “knowledge,” but in the French *connaissance* refers to the body of knowledge of a particular discipline, whereas *savoir* refers to the totality of knowledge existing at any one time (Foucault, 1972: 15, 185). For Foucault, “knowledge,” in terms of its two meanings as expressed in the French *savoir* and *connaissance*, is about how uncovering depth knowledge [*savoir*] enables the surface knowledge [*connaissance*] of a particular discourse to emerge (Hacking, 1981). On the Foucauldian view, knowledge in the human sciences is not a disinterested, neutral, objective, or value-free phenomenon; it is “inextricably entwined with relations of power” and “advances in knowledge are associated with advances and developments in the exercise of power” (Smart, 1985: 64). As Foucault states: “power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another: that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault, 1977: 27).

In other words, “a site where power is exercised is also a place at which knowledge is produced” (Smart, 1985: 64); hence in a Foucauldian sense, power has tended to become known as *power-knowledge*:

These “power-knowledge relations” are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations. In short it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge. (Foucault, 1977: 27–28)

In one of his last essays, “The Subject and Power” (1982), Foucault outlines the five points involved in the analysis of power relations:

1. The system of differentiations which permits one to act upon the actions of others
2. The types of objectives
3. The means of bringing power relations into being
4. Forms of institutionalisation
5. The degrees of rationalisation. (Foucault, 1982: 223)

THE PANOPTICAN AND THE GAZE

It was in relation to power and discipline in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) that Foucault used the notion of the *gaze* and the *Panoptican*. The Panoptican was an architectural form proposed by Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century as an

CHAPTER 1

efficient form of surveillance for use in military camps, schools, monasteries, or prisons. The Panopticon operates by permitting the relentless and continual observation of inmates at the periphery by officials at the center, without them ever being seen. The model features a circular building (that could be of several levels), divided into rooms, with a courtyard in the center (or buildings around a courtyard). The rooms were to be only one room wide, with only a small rear window to allow back-lighting, but large openings onto the courtyard, which included an observation tower to house the guards or those in control. To prevent contact between the occupants, there was to be no connection or window between the rooms. The structure enabled the guards to have an uninterrupted view and perpetual observation or gaze of the activities in each space. The design made the guards invisible to the occupants, who were never sure when the gaze was upon them and so had to assume that they were subject to it at any time. The spaces or cells of the occupant were: “like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. In short, it reverses the principle of the dungeon” (Foucault, 1977: 200).

But the guards in the Panopticon are not immune from the gaze. They are subject to visits by many people who may be supervisors, or may report what they find, and who may arrive at any time. This has the effect of putting the guards under ongoing evaluation by persons who are invisible or unknown to them.

The Panopticon was designed not only to be a very efficient system of surveillance, but also to be a very economic one that minimized the amount and hence the cost of supervision. The major effect of the Panopticon is “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1977: 201). But the panoptic arrangement also provides the opportunity for classifying, measuring, comparing, differentiating, qualifying, and judging the occupants according to norms set by the organization, and it enables the occupants to be thought of as individual cases. According to the norms, individuals could become subject to training or correction. In this manner the ever-present objectifying gaze has a normalizing effect. The file that was set up to write down the details about the individual “enabled individuals to be ‘captured and fixed in writing’ and facilitated the gathering of statistics and the setting of norms—that is, the construction of unitary and global knowledges about persons” (White and Epston, 1990: 70) and became a further mechanism of social control.

The Panopticon presents a *space* that is transparent, exemplary, and utopian. It is where, on the one hand, social control is achieved through the operation of an automatic and anonymous form of power and, on the other, where the disciplinary technologies of power, domination, and the objectification of the human subject produce new knowledges that enable the human sciences to develop. Foucault argues that the idea and techniques of the Panopticon became central to the rise both of capitalism and of the human science disciplines.

If the economic take-off of the West began with the techniques that made possible

the accumulation of capital, it might perhaps be said that the methods for administering the accumulation of men made possible a political take-off in relation to the traditional, ritual, costly, violent forms of power, which soon fell into disuse and were superseded by a subtle, calculated technology of subjection. In fact the two processes—the accumulation of men and the accumulation of capital—cannot be separated. (Foucault, 1977: 220–221)

Disciplinary technologies were applied in institutions outside the penal system. In schools their application permitted the creation forms of control that could be exercised upon children and youth in order to render their bodies both docile and productive. Foucault's thought is significant in providing theoretical and methodological means to study education and school counseling as fields of the emergent human sciences, focusing on power-knowledge relations and conditions under which subjects are constituted objects of knowledge.

GOVERNMENTALITY

Rose (1998) argues that the development of “psy” disciplines was intrinsically linked to the history of government, not just politics, but in the broader sense of what Foucault termed “governmentality,” a neologism for “governmental rationality” (Foucault, 1991). Governmentality became a focal theme in a series of lectures as part of Foucault's later philosophy, where he problematized notions of security, population, and government (Gordon, 1991).

Foucault's “disciplinary power” gave way, in his later work, especially in *The History of Sexuality* Vol. III (1990), to forms of power implicit in the formation of the subject and its relations to the will to truth. Such a view was part of Foucault's notion of governmentality which, he suggested, implied: “The relationship of the self to itself, and . . . [covers] the range of practices that constitute, define, organize and instrumentalize the strategies which individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other. I believe that the concept of governmentality makes it possible to bring out the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others—which constitutes the very stuff [*matière*] of ethics” (cited in Rabinow, 1997: xvii).

From this point onwards, Foucault addresses the issue of power in terms of ethics, and he returns to the Stoics to entertain the notion of the “care of the self,” which has priority over and develops earlier than “care for others” and is discussed in chapter 2. Foucault moves “back to the subject,” to the ethics of self-formation considered as an ascetic practice. He argues that “work” done on the self is not to be understood in terms of traditional left-wing models of liberation but, rather, as (Kantian) *practices of freedom*, for there is no essential, hidden, or true self, that is “concealed, alienated, or imprisoned in and by mechanisms of repression” that is in need of liberation (Foucault, 1997: 283). Instead there is only a *hermeneutics of the self*, a set of practices of self-interpretation. Foucault emphasizes that freedom is the ontological condition for ethics.

These twin conceptions of power—the early disciplinary account and the later form of ethical self-constitution—provide exemplary, if unusual, modes of analysis

CHAPTER 1

that are relevant and suitable for analyzing counseling. The first, disciplinary form is applicable to the history of the emergence of counseling in New Zealand schools, as a set of techniques and, therefore, a form of disciplinary power that developed in association with psychology. Perhaps, more interestingly, the second form of governmentality allows us to understand counseling both in its recent developments under neoliberalism (with demands for accountability and professionalization) and as part of the Western tradition—a set of practices and techniques inserted into schools—devoted to assisting students to “take care of the self,” requiring both knowledge of oneself and freedom as an ontological condition of ethics (chapter 6).

Foucault’s early work, *Discipline and Punish* (1977), suggests that understanding the operation of a range of social and economic institutions in society—the prison, the factory, and the school—could be understood by techniques of power that were a form of “power-knowledge” that observed, monitored, shaped, and controlled the behavior of individuals within these institutions. In discussing his research, Foucault states clearly that he was not aiming to analyze “institutions,” “theories,” or “ideology” per se, regardless of the part that these may play. Instead, he aimed to analyze a regime of “practices”—that is, the “places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken for granted meet and interconnect,” and which have “their own specific regularities, logic, strategy, self-evidence, and reason” (Foucault, 1991: 75). He wanted to find out the conditions that made practices acceptable at a given moment.

While Foucault’s work resulted in considerable acclaim, according to Gordon (1991), it also attracted much criticism. Gordon summarized three points of objection to Foucault’s work: First, Marxists contended that Foucault’s “attentiveness to the specifics of power relations and the detailed texture of the particular techniques and practices failed to address or shed light on the global issues of politics, namely the relation between society and the state” (Gordon, 1991: 4). Second, by challenging current notions of the self, of autonomy, and of agency, Foucault represented “society as a network of omnipresent relations of subjugating power that seemed to preclude the possibility of meaningful individual freedom” (Gordon, 1991: 4). Foucault’s notion of freedom is discussed in chapter 2 of this book, using the points he makes in later essays and interviews on the self, ethics, and power. Third, Foucault was criticized for presenting a “‘political philosophy of nihilistic despair’ that was exemplified in his bleak account of the effects of humanitarian penal reformism” (Gordon, 1991: 4). Foucault discusses a change in the tenor and focus of his work in various interviews, such as those published in *Foucault Live* (1989) and *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (1991); he eventually poses his work on “governmentality” in answer to some of the criticism.

Although he pays particular attention to the historical political domain of government, especially to ancient Greek and early Christian times, to early modern European states, to liberalism and neoliberalism, Foucault defines the term

“government” in a broad manner. In Foucault’s broad sense, “government” means “the conduct of conduct” or “a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons”: “Government as an activity could concern the relation between self and self, private interpersonal relations involving some form of control or guidance, relations within social institutions and communities and, finally, relations concerned with the exercise of political sovereignty” (Gordon, 1991: 2–3).

In outlining three aspects of “governmentality,” Foucault implicitly criticizes the contemporary tendency to overvalue the problem of the state, its history, development, power, and abuses, and to reduce it to a unity or singularity based upon functionality, such as its productive forces. He was interested in the question of *how* power was exercised, and so by a history of “governmentality” Foucault means three things:

1. The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.
2. The tendency which over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence over all forms (sovereignty, discipline, etc.) of this type of power which may be termed government, resulting, on the one hand, in the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses, and, on the other, in the development of a whole complex of *savoirs*.
3. The process, or rather the result of the process, through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages, transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gradually becomes “governmentalized.” (Foucault, 1991: 102–103)

In Foucault’s view, “governmentality” means the complex of calculations, programs, policies, strategies, reflections, and tactics that shape the conduct of individuals, “the conduct of conduct” for acting upon the actions of others in order to achieve certain ends. Those ends are “not just to control, subdue, discipline, normalize, or reform them, but also to make them more intelligent, wise, happy, virtuous, healthy, productive, docile, enterprising, fulfilled, self-esteeming, empowered, or whatever” (Rose, 1998: 12). Governmentality is about control not simply in its negative sense but also in its positive sense, in its contribution to the security of society. The governing of others is conducted by a large array of authorities, be they political, economic, military, police, educational, theological, medical, welfare, and so on, with the general purpose of avoiding negatives and ills such as crime, mental illness, ignorance, and poverty while promoting what was considered desirable by society— health, wealth, and happiness. Thus modern Western societies are characterized by a form of security that is an interdependence of the political, the governmental, and the social.

CHAPTER 1

Foucault develops his notion of governmentality from a historical analysis of the “art of government” in Europe. He considers that an explosion of interest in the “art of government” in the sixteenth century was motivated by four diverse questions. These were about the government of oneself or one’s personal conduct; the government of souls and lives or pastoral conduct; the government of children, which subsequently involved pedagogy and their education; and the government of the state by its prince or ruler. Foucault poses questions about the *how* of government: “how to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor” (Foucault, 1991: 87). Self-government is connected with morality, governing the family is related to economy, and ruling the state to politics. In the sixteenth-century context, Foucault suggests that such questions highlighted the general problematic of government as the intersection of two competing movements: a tendency toward state centralization and a logic of dispersion and religious dissidence.

Foucault believes that the introduction of economy into political practice was the essential issue in establishing the art of government. The introduction of economy and governing the family became imperative to the state as the art of government became established in sixteenth-century Europe. Foucault espouses Rousseau’s notions of “political economy,” pointing out that economy involved “the correct manner of managing goods and wealth within the family,” and, in turn, “wise government of the family [was] for the common welfare of all” (Foucault, 1991: 92). But since this required a form of control and surveillance over the subjects, over the wealth and behavior of all, good government also came to involve notions of “policing” and “policy.” Added to this was the “knowledge of the state . . . its different elements, dimensions and factors of power, questions which were termed precisely ‘statistics’” (p. 96), meaning the science of the state. Foucault maintains that the art of government crystallized for the first time in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries around the notion of “reason of state” [*raison d’état*] that in effect challenged the “divine right of kings” to rule: “the state is governed according to rational principles which are intrinsic to it and which cannot be derived solely from natural or divine laws or the principles of wisdom and prudence; the state, like nature, has its own proper form of government, albeit of a different sort” (Foucault, 1991: 97).

Therefore, according to Foucault, from the sixteenth century on, the art of government came to involve administration, policing, statistics, and sovereignty. Once however, the notion of “population” emerged in the eighteenth century, Foucault argues that it displaced the family as central to the art of government, and recentered the notion of economy. Statistics reveal details about the domain of population—rates of birth, disease, death, labor, wealth—that show and quantify how “population has specific economic effects” (p. 99). Family “disappears as a model of government, except for a certain number of residual themes of a religious or moral nature” and becomes simply an element or segment internal to population, albeit “a fundamental instrument of its government” (p. 99). Foucault believes that

this fundamental shift of the mid-eighteenth century, where “the family becomes an instrument rather than a model: the privileged instrument for the government of the population and not the chimerical model of good government” (p. 100), enabled population to become the ultimate end of government. It was this that enabled the purpose of government to be concentrated no longer on enhancing the power and wealth of the sovereign, but on the welfare of its population, to embark overtly or indirectly on large-scale campaigns involving vaccinations, marriage, and employment, and improving the population’s health, wealth, and mortality rate. It was this context that enabled the psy sciences to evolve.

In elaborating the notion of governmentality, Foucault concentrates on understanding government in its pluralized forms, its complexity, and its techniques in the question of *how* power is exercised. Our present is characterized by the “governmentalization” of the state. Using Foucault’s theories, we come to understand the rationality of government in both permitting and requiring the practice of freedom of its subjects. This is where the relations between government and self-government, public and private domains, coincide and coalesce, which only becomes possible at the point where “policing” and “administration” stops and the freedom of the subject becomes a resource for, rather than a hindrance to, government.

Rose (1998) contends that in liberal democracies, governing others has always been linked to subjects who are constituted as being “free” to practice liberty and responsibility simultaneously in governing the self. Analyses in terms of governmentality then involve problematization, critique, and contestability about these practices of governance of the self and of others. The issue of governmentality in relation to school counseling, its clients and institutional policy, therefore forms one of the themes for this book that is discussed in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2

COUNSELING AND FOUCAULT: IDENTIFYING THE SELF

INTRODUCTION: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

I know that I exist; the question is, what is this “I” that I know?
(Descartes, [1642] 1986)

The soul, so far as we can conceive it, is nothing but a system or train of different perceptions. (Hume, [1739] 1977)

The critical function of philosophy derives from the Socratic injunction “Take care of yourself,” in other words, “Make freedom your foundation, through mastery of yourself.” (Foucault, 1997a: 301)

A self . . . is . . . an abstraction . . . [a] Center of Narrative Gravity.
(Dennett, 1991)

While not attempting to be a complete philosophical treatise on the “self” and “identity,” this chapter summarizes some important historical philosophical notions in taking up Taylor’s (1985) suggestion that we cannot “see the full complexity and richness of modern identity . . . unless we see how the modern understanding of the self developed out of earlier pictures of human identity” (Taylor, 1985: x). Questions about the self and identity and changes in how they have been theorized are by no means a twentieth-century phenomenon. There are two main ways in which Western philosophy has conceived of the self. One is derived from Plato and was subsequently adopted by forms of Christianity; the other arose out of Rousseau and a contemporary form of philosophy, phenomenology, existentialism, and pragmatism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is clearly evident in the writings of Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, and contemporary French philosophy—e.g., Sartre, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, and Derrida—on the one hand, and in the pragmatist writings of William James, Dewey, Mead, and Rorty, on the other.

The Platonic view based on the implacable distinction between the world of appearances and the world of reality holds that the self is a fixed essence—the “psyche” or “soul”—a form that temporarily locates itself in the body. According to this view the soul is the eternal form of the self that on the death and decay of the body returns to the fixed circle of souls. This self, once born, is “dis”-covered

CHAPTER 2

or uncovered as one learns through life. Plato, wedded to the doctrine of *anamnesis*, suggests that all learning is simply a form of recollection. Education, then, becomes the means by which, through a judicious series of questions, the learner is taught to remember or recollect what (s)he already knows. Descartes's mind/body split might also be said to follow a similar line of thinking in that the *cogito* or the "thinking self" is privileged with regard to the body: it is that which can guarantee us certainty in knowledge and, indeed, makes knowledge possible (Descartes, [1642] 1986). Descartes's notion is briefly examined in the second section.

In general, this privileging of the mind or intellect over the body, which dominated the Western tradition and has been sustained and reiterated in modern philosophy beginning with Descartes, has also been responsible for shaping approaches to education. In the liberal tradition, education meant an education of the mind rather than an education of the body. In line with this overall approach to education, many theories informing counseling have tended to embrace similar ideas.

Many counseling therapies are conducted through the "rational" means of language or conversation. Clients are assisted to produce a "talking cure" (in Freud's sense), to reveal the truth about their self and their identity in what might be seen as a confessional mode in a modern secular society (see Foucault, 1980a,b). This form of confession has already been outlined in chapter 1. Most forms of counseling that draw upon the model of the "dialogue," the "autobiography," the "confession," the "structured conversation," and even the "argument" tend to accept the mind/body split and to privilege the mind over the body. Rational emotive therapy is a particularly clear exemplar of this. Even modalities such as gestalt, existential counseling, psychodrama, some pastoral counseling, transactional analysis, and body therapies, while they may use body-oriented and physical techniques, still involve some processing of what has occurred through forms of dialogue, conversation, and confession in enabling the individual to gain an understanding of the self and one's relationship to the problem or issue of concern. Hence the mind or intellect gains a sense of knowing or understanding and makes meaning for the person. These forms of counseling attempt to take seriously the way in which the *cogito* or the cognitive has been privileged. The extent to which the counteremphasis on the body or "passions" is opposed to the intellect as a conscious product of philosophical understanding is questionable.

The phenomenological view of self starts from the premise that the world of appearance is all that is. There is no other reality, and, given this fleeting and temporal existence, the self is viewed as something that *becomes*—that is, it comes into existence and goes out of existence: existence is fundamentally temporal. Martin Heidegger makes this his thesis in the now famous *Being and Time* (1993). The same point is given a different expression by Jean-Paul Sartre (1948: 26), who, in his *Existentialism and Humanism*, suggests that what all existentialisms have in common is the fact that "they believe *existence* comes before *essence*." As he says,

“Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself” (Sartre, 1948: 28). That simple statement emphasizing the temporality of humankind—its *becoming*—is a powerful thought that has motivated postwar philosophy, be it in its pragmatic guise, focusing upon the pure contingency of existence, or be it in its existentialist or phenomenological guise. What follows from this is a reevaluation of the mind/body, appearance/reality dualisms and a reconsideration of both the body and our freedom. In his later work, Sartre (1966) points out that, if existence is prior to essence, the first moral effect of existentialism means that “man” is responsible for what he is, both individually and collectively. Existentialist and phenomenological theories informing counseling (as mentioned below) accordingly place great emphasis on the idea of freedom to choose and individual autonomy and responsibility: in particular, the way we become who we are through the choices that we make.

The notion of identity is one that has been challenged in the latter part of the twentieth century by postmodern and poststructuralist theorists. While there are many postmodern positions, a central theme, with different inflections, is that *the self is fundamentally social*. This notion has been adopted by many people; it has antecedents in Christian notions expressed in the words of the metaphysical poet John Donne that “no man is an island unto himself.” Both sociology and Marxist thought have made the notion of the social self fundamental. Discourses of the “postmodern self” tend to revolve around a cluster of questions: what is the extent or the limits of the self; what is the relationship between the inner and the outer, between the mind and the body, or between the public and the private self? Is such a differentiation even possible? Is the self unified or fragmented, singular or plural? What is the relationship between the concepts of self and of identity? These questions are, in large measure, the subject matter for this chapter, where I provide some account of the self and of identity and attempt to sort out the conceptual relations between them. I provide an introduction to the notion of self that has proved popular with counselors and has, implicitly, underwritten counseling theory and practice. I also provide an argument and brief review of the shift from the notion of the self to that of identity that characterizes much contemporary theorizing, and I investigate Michel Foucault’s influential work, in particular his notion of “care of the self.”

“SELF,” “IDENTITY,” AND COUNSELING

In recent times, particularly since the 1980s, there has been a shift in how some theorists—philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, therapists, and counselors—have conceived the self. In the early part of the twentieth century—as, for example, reflected in Freudian tripartite notions of id, ego, superego and similar variants by neo-Freudian theorists—the self had been seen as having different components: an inner and an outer self, with the latter two concepts of ego and superego incorporating elements of the social dimension. With an emphasis being placed on

CHAPTER 2

the inner as being the “real” or “true” self, it became important to discover this inner being or unconscious part—a task that often created deep ontological anxiety. Such anxiety might be seen as culminating in the postwar baby-boomers, who are sometimes portrayed negatively in the popular media as overly a self-centered “me-generation,” “navel-gazers” forming what Christopher Lasch (1979) calls in the book of the same name, a “culture of narcissism.” Furthermore, neo-liberal political environments at the end of the twentieth century focus on self responsibility rather than state responsibility in managing one’s life.

Contemporary philosophers, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953), have challenged earlier ideas about the self and emphasized how our thinking depends on language. When the self is seen as part of a public language game and language is formed in our interactions with our everyday world, then, as Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein both argue, the idea of self as a inner sanctum or a set of inner processes that are private to the individual becomes unintelligible or meaningless. A consequence of this line of thinking might be to believe that human beings are much “lighter,” so to speak, as portrayed, for example, by Milan Kundera (1984) in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Under this description, people no longer have the “heavy” load of “finding themselves,” or of revealing their true inner core. Rose (1989) argues that it has been psychological discourse that has enabled and taught people ways of constituting or “inventing” themselves. I would argue that there has been a distinct move away from forms of counseling and therapy that investigate the self and its inner being for the sake of itself, to forms of counseling that focus more on the everyday realities and problems that people present (such as sexual abuse, violence, anger, drug and alcohol abuse, family relationships, depression, suicidality, and phobias), aiming to help them cope with these. This is not to say that the “deep work” on finding the self is necessarily any better or more workable than other forms, but that as times have changed and as people’s needs have changed, so the forms of therapy have tended to change. There has been a refocus on the importance of the language used in counseling, so that it is seen not just as a form of “talking cure” (in the Freudian sense) but as having become “technologies of language”—talking, writing, and reading the self, as used in narrative therapy.

In the counseling literature in the English-speaking world, the two notions self and identity are central to theory and practice, yet the conceptual relationships between these two terms have not always been carefully mapped or explored. As elsewhere, they are often used interchangeably without explanation or due regard to their conceptual differences. The two terms also seem to exist in quite separate literatures and in different social science disciplines. The notion of self figures strongly in key psychological discourses—both measurement-oriented and humanistic—focusing on the related family of terms that include “self-determination,” “self-disclosure,” “self-concept,” “self-esteem,” “self-assertion” and “self-reporting.” Identity seems to figure alternatively and more recently in sociologically oriented literatures focusing upon identity formation and “identity politics” related particularly to race, gender, and sexuality. Furthermore, in recent

innovations in counseling based on narrative therapy, the notion of identity becomes “subjectivities” as the preferred terminology (Drewery and Winslade, 1997: 39).

These separate discourses—self and identity—which are still prevalent and indicate major lines of practice and research both in psychological and in counseling theory, also point to contemporary shifts in meanings of these terms. In particular, one might argue that the notion of self underlying early counseling practice was more of an essentialist one that allowed for stages of growth or development and assumed a stable core personality or essence of being, whereas the recent sociologically inflected discourses, drawing on structuralist and poststructuralist innovations, tend to adopt constructionist approaches to render identity and even self as social constructions. These have been reflected in counseling in two different therapies (Drewery and Monk, 1994): “constructivist therapy” (Niemeyer, 1993) and the “constructionist”-influenced “narrative therapy” that is discussed in chapter 7.

In Western philosophy, the notion of the sameness of the self stemmed from qualities described by two seventeenth-century philosophers: John Locke, in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* ([1690] 1964), and René Descartes, in his treatise, *Meditations* ([1642] 1986). For Descartes, the self (or the ego or I) became certain of its existence through its own acts of cognition, which became the epistemological foundational reassurance against an ambiguous and deceptive world. *Cogito ergo sum*, translated as “I think, therefore I am,” represents Descartes’s subjectivist attempt to find an inviolable and indubitable starting point or foundation to all knowledge, on the basis that if there is not a certain class of privileged proposition immune to doubt, then knowledge is impossible. Descartes found this privileged class of propositions in the “primitive” reflection on the *subjectum*. The foundational proposition immune to doubt for Descartes was part of what has been called the *cogito* argument. But the *cogito* argument remained valid only if the self remained the same or identical. In Descartes’s time, *cogito* or “thought” had a far wider meaning than it does today, and it included all mental acts and data such as will, feeling, judgment, and perception; it is often translated as “consciousness,” with clear implications favoring rationality. Descartes brought to prominence the notion that the mind conceives, first of all, itself by itself. The self, thus, became the subject, in the dual sense of being subjected to the conditions of the world and, simultaneously, being the agent of knowing and doing in that world. The belief in this subject became an *a priori* presupposition for the possibility of knowing the world. In other words, the “knowing I”—the *cogito* reflecting on its own existence—became the basis or foundation not only for knowledge but also for acting and doing, and, hence, morality and politics. Descartes’s mind–body dualism maintained that the mind and the body have different essences because of their different spatiality. The essence of the physical (body) involves space but because minds have no such extension in space they cannot be considered physical substances. By contrast, their essence is to think.

Descartes’s model of consciousness and the mind/body split it assumed and

CHAPTER 2

perpetuated really represented a watershed in the history of the philosophy of the self. Descartes's conception has been enormously influential. We might even say that his view of the self—a picture of the cognitive self that epistemologically underwrote all other human activity, including morality—became established as the prevalent view for modern philosophy and the culture of modernity. The mind–body problem has resulted in different stands in modern philosophy that have considerable impact on many different psychology and counseling theories: epiphenomenalism—that physical states cause mental states; parallelism—that the mental and physical realms run in parallel; monism—the rejection of the Cartesian dualism; materialism and “central state materialism”—according to which mental states are considered to be contingently identical with brain states; and functionalism—characterized by cognitive psychology and connectionism research.

Descartes is still referred to by various contemporary philosophers, for instance Noam Chomsky (a modern Cartesian), who in his early work embraced an essentialist “universal grammar,” or Ludwig Wittgenstein and Michel Foucault, who use Descartes as a point of departure or reaction to a “picture that held us captive.” Michel Foucault, for example, in analyzing how a given form of knowledge was possible, rejected the way phenomenology and existentialism held *a priori* theories of the subject stemming from Descartes. He tried to show that what constituted the subject revolved around “games of truth” and practices of power and what he termed “technologies of the self,” comprising disciplinarity or technologies of domination and “governmentality.” Foucault's notions of the self is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

The notion of identity in psychological discourse has undergone a paradigm shift in the late twentieth century, especially with the advent of “social constructionism” and the development of discursive psychology (see, e.g., Nightingale and Cromby, 1999). Developed from seventeenth-century philosophical notions of John Locke (1964) about the individuated subject in terms of “sameness” through time, be it for an organism, animal, or person, identity originally meant “sameness,” as in “self-sameness”—that is the sense of an identity that is continuous through time. Identity was what made a human being a person, a rational, autonomous individual, and it was understood as a set of basic personality features acquired mostly during childhood. Once integrated, particularly in adolescence, the basic personality, it was held, became largely fixed and stable. A “personality” that was inconsistent or fragmented or not integrated into a single unity was regarded as a disordered or disturbed one, or even as a psychologically or mentally ill one. It was a self that comprised nonsameness; hence it became a nonidentity, and as such it often had to be controlled, or even locked up in mental institutions. Such “disorders” of the self were often classified in terms of the paradigm notion of “schizophrenia” or the “split self,” the incidence of which is considered to have increased in the “postmodern condition” (Lasch, 1979, 1984), not only in terms of the incidence of instability problems having to do with the “core” self, but also with changes in the kind of presenting problem. Lasch (1984) argues that we are no longer concerned

so much with anxiety disorders or problems of an otherwise stable self, but, rather, with problems of self that reportedly involve a fragmentation of the core—the so-called “minimal self.” These are considered serious clinical problems, to be dealt with in the setting of mental health institutions. In other words, the problem of the fragmentation of the “core” self has become medicalized, to be clinically treated and often hospitalized.

In Wittgenstein and Foucault the self is considered a form (or concept); it is not an individuated substance, as it is in traditional metaphysics (Descartes, Locke). A form is a logical place holder, to be filled out with detail, description, qualities, and qualifications. The self is a conceptual form that can be filled in in a number of ways: male, female, heterosexual, bisexual, Maori, Pakeha, young, old, employed, disabled, victimized, abused, happy, positive, honest, and so on. Once individuals have been individuated, one can talk about identity. “Individuation” is a concept in logic that distinguishes one individual from another. Identity and “individuation,” in the philosophical discourse following Descartes and on through the twentieth century, tend to be two concepts that are run together. They have been thought to be logically necessary criteria for identifying a thing or a person. Ludwig Wittgenstein argues that this is not the case (see Peters and Marshall, 1999; Strawson, 1997), so the criteria of identity are not absolute and can be filled by various descriptions at various times. This means that these criteria, and the notion of identity itself, are historicist; they are context-dependent or contingent criteria—that is, not absolutely and necessarily binding. So identity rests upon such culturally variable criteria as gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, “age group” (such as “adolescent” and “youth”), and, as Foucault suggests, corporeality.

“Corporeality” means inhabiting a body, being embodied—the self inhabits a body. This criterion of corporeality has a history, at least in French philosophy, stretching back to phenomenology, Nietzsche, and existentialism, and is strongly developed by Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (see O’Loughlin, 1997). Nietzsche rehabilitates a notion of “embodied reason” by talking about the body in ways that challenge the mind/body dualism of Cartesian philosophy (see Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 1961, Part I). The body occupies a spatial-temporal location that fixes the subject in time and in the process breaks down Cartesian universalist assumptions of individuality, pure rationality, and self-interest. Peters (2002) argues that Nietzsche’s embodied form of reason is deeper than a superficial rationality. For Nietzsche it is true reason because it has the power to govern our passions and to regulate ourselves. Nietzsche does not believe in biological determinism. Rather, he suggests that the passions become an instrument of a *restored* and embodied form of reason that can regulate the passions and redirect reason to focus on the self (or humankind) as a *work* that can be shaped. Postwar French philosophy calls on Nietzschean ideas to bring forward knowledges of the self that have been subjugated by emphasizing the corporeality of the enfolded, embodied, and engendered subject (Peters, 2002). Furthermore, the metanarrative¹ of the autonomous self and the seemingly obvious assumptions of the Cartesian-Kantian subject—autonomy, rationality, and self-

CHAPTER 2

transparency—have been challenged by Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and other scholars. They have sought to develop notions of embodied and engendered reason and subjectivity that disputes the mind/body dualism of the Cartesian heritage. This notion of corporeality has moved some forms of contemporary investigation, especially by poststructuralists, away from studies of the self per se to concentrate on bodies and how they are controlled, inscribed, and stylized. Poststructuralist thinkers have built on the insights of structuralist thinkers to emphasize the temporality, finitude, and corporeality of the human subject in all its sociocultural and historical complexity.

The concern for the self and the application of these descriptive criteria of identity indicate the way in which diverse and significant strands of contemporary philosophical thought on the self, including phenomenology, existentialism, and poststructuralist philosophy, might be characterized as a series of increasing historical specifications of the subject. These involve a shift from alternative formulations of the concept or logical form of the self, that attempt to define its essence, to accounts that increasingly specify the subject in terms of contingent identity criteria, focusing upon the finitude, the temporality, the corporeality of the gendered, embodied, “racialized” individual. This shift in thinking has very strong implications for the ways in which school-aged children have been specified, categorized, and theorized as the subjects of education and of counseling. If we accept the shift from *the essence of self* to *descriptive criteria of a contingent identity*, then we can see that it has important implications for definitions of the descriptions of “adolescence” and “youth” as they have operated in the counseling and psychological literatures.

In psychology, “individuation” is an important process that is linked with identity, involving the development of the personality through the separation of the baby and child from the mother and father. In this sense it is important for the establishment of identity because it bespeaks difference and uniqueness, at least in the sense that an entity or being occupies a particular time and space that cannot be taken up by another being (conjoint twins being the exception). Identity is how one recognizes and identifies that one is different from the other. It is identity that provides a nonstatic way of describing the being that is described by the self and by others. The self is an essential, conceptual, grammatical form, while identity provides the sociohistorical contingent description. In people with no clear sense of identity, as in those who develop dementia or Alzheimer’s disease, so that the memory and brain function are impaired, the sense of self and identity begins to collapse, and they eventually deteriorate into what is considered a vegetative state. At this point they may be functioning physically, but they no longer have a sense of self or an identity and are usually institutionalized as no longer being able to function. So self and identity can be seen to be vital for what is considered a fully functioning human being.

In anthropological discourse, the notions of identity and self tend to be approached separately. Conceptualization of the Western self, mostly characterized as autonomous and egocentric, is generally taken as the norm, with the concepts of

self of the traditional subjects of anthropology, the non-Western subjects, defined through the negation of these Western norms and characteristics. Anthropological conceptualizations of identity about non-Western selves tend to focus on elements shared with others rather than on the characteristics of individuality and so divert attention from actual individuals and selves. In addition to any culture-specific attributes, the self is held to be endowed with reflexivity and agency.

In social anthropology, identity has been used mostly in the sense of “ethnic identity,” not just self-sameness, but sameness of the self with others, a consciousness of shared characteristics encompassed in a common language, history, and culture that contributes to the constitution of the group’s identity. These notions tend to be complementary rather than contradictory, since the group to which a person belongs constitutes an important part of the sociocultural environment in which and through which personal identity is formed. Erik H. Erikson expanded the notion of identity to combine the two: “The term ‘identity’ expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself [self-sameness] and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential characteristics with others” (Erikson, 1980: 109).

Foucault analyzed the self or “subject,” not as the source and foundation of knowledge, but, rather, as itself a product or effect of networks of power and discourse (Foucault, 1977,a,b,c, 1980). Contemporary discourses of social science influenced by poststructuralist thought tend no longer to talk about identity in the singular, defined by sameness and unity; instead they refer to difference and plurality (see Derrida, 1982; Lyotard, 1988). Difference points to the contrasting aspects of identity and emphasizes the implicit condition of plurality. Identity is a combination of a number of social pluralities: family, class, ethnicity, gender, culture, nationality, and age. In addition, the plurality of intersecting lines comprising identity is now more often than not conceived as a set of life-style choices or even “political” choices that one makes at the personal level about appearance, sexuality, and group inclusiveness. The emphasis on difference has called into question conventional assumptions of both a shared homogenous cultural identity and a unified personal or individual identity. Psychology has only recently turned its attention to the contradictory notion of multiple identities (see Gergen, 1991; Melucci, 1997; Rosenberg, 1997). The self is now depicted as fragmented and minimal (Jameson, 1984; Lasch, 1984), fluid, and many-sided, as in Lifton’s (1993) “protean self,” or comprising multiplicities, as in Gergen’s (1991) “saturated self.” In anthropology, discourses about the self and identity have mostly been treated separately, although an increased attention to the social and cultural contexts of plural identities may lead to a better understanding of both concepts (Sökefeld, 1999).

Many poststructuralist feminist theorists, such as Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, argue that Western philosophy and culture is deeply *phallo-logocentered*. They criticize Platonism, a tradition that posits universal and gender-neutral abstractions but secretly supports the patriarchal hegemony by associating females with the sensuous, nature, emotion, and irrationality. Irigaray argues that despite

CHAPTER 2

claims of universality and neutrality, everything, including the subject, has always used the masculine form, “*man*” (Irigaray, 1993). Historically, in the human sciences, the body has been associated with the feminine, the female, or woman, and in turn denigrated as weak, immoral, unclean, or decaying. Kristeva was influential for bringing the body back into discourses in the human sciences, particularly the importance of the maternal body (and the preoedipal) in the constitution of subjectivity and the notion of abjection. Kristeva’s notion of a subject-in-process is seen by many feminists as a useful alternative to traditional notions of an autonomous unified (masculine) subject.

In poststructuralist feminist discourse, when the self is considered, it is the corporeal self that is usually invoked. Judith Butler (1990) maintains that identity and associated questions, such as “who am I?” and “what am I like?” are an illusion. She sees the self as an unstable discursive node and sexed/gendered identity as merely a “corporeal style” that is a form of performance that imitates and repeats the enactment of ubiquitous norms. She considers that psychodynamic accounts of the self, including those of Kristeva and Nancy Chodorow, mask the performative nature of the self and collaborate in the cultural conspiracy that maintains the illusion that one has an emotionally anchored interior identity that is derived from the biology of one’s genitalia. Such accounts conceal the ways in which normalizing regimes deploy power to enforce the performative routines that construct both “natural” sexed/ gendered bodies and debased, “unnatural” bodies. The arbitrariness of the constraints that are being imposed is obscured, and resistance is deflected. So Butler wants to “question the categories of biological sex, polarized gender, and determinate sexuality that serve as markers of personal identity, to treat the construction of identity as a site of political contestation, and to embrace the subversive potential of unorthodox performances and parodic identities” (Peters, 2002). Such various feminist notions of self and identity inform feminist counselors and feminist counseling theories.

POSTMODERNISM AND POSTSTRUCTURALISM: NEW APPROACHES TO THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY

This section looks at contemporary discourses in postmodernism and poststructuralism and how these relate to approaches to the notions of the self and of identity. Although Foucault (1989a, 1989f) was very clear on several occasions that he did not consider himself a “postmodernist” nor a “structuralist,” it is within the overall context of these movements, but particularly the poststructuralist movement, that one can gain an understanding of the work of both Foucault and Rose.

Douglas Kellner (1992) suggests that notions of identity have passed through three stages of transition, from premodern, to modern, to post-modern identity. These eras are not so much indicative of calendar time, but of a predominant way of thinking and style of existence, somewhat akin to Foucault’s *epistèmes*. Kellner

suggests that identity is considered to be a nonissue and unquestionable for premodern communities, since one's thought, behavior, and place have been restricted and largely predetermined within communities that have a world view based on traditional myths and kinship systems that ascribe roles. Identity was, therefore, seen as being stable and based on ascribed roles and clearly defined relationships to others in the premodern community. Premodern or traditional societies often have no notion that matches the Western "individual," and findings from comparative anthropology suggest that identity is status- and role-oriented and often determined by birth into hierarchical relations.

The Enlightenment (or age of reason), which began in Europe in the seventeenth century, is considered to be the beginning of modernity, and it was during this age that Kellner suggests that identity was first brought into focus as an issue. Modernity involves the rejection of the past and of traditional restrictions in favor of progress toward human emancipation and moral perfection. Traditional rural feudal or subsistence societies based on ascribed roles gave way to newly urbanized societies, where people entered into new relationships outside kith and kin, especially in relation to work. For the first time the notion of identity became fluid and more dependent on roles other than ascribed ones. Dress, manners, residence and neighborhood, education, and many other factors, including those of class, gender, and race, helped to determine one's identity.

The ideals of modernity—rationality, progress, optimism, the search for universal or absolute knowledge in science, society, politics—in an important sense was seen to rest upon gaining knowledge of the *true self*; it was considered the foundation for all other knowledge. Modern identity, in posing questions about the self, raised the possibility that perhaps there was something lying behind the public persona—a real, true, or innate self. Such questioning or skepticism also expanded the possibilities of what we might become. In questioning the self, Sigmund Freud developed his theory of psychoanalysis, which saw this "true self" being based in unconscious instincts of the bourgeois family. Sociology developed and focused on the interactions of the individual and society, with many sociologists arguing that the family and the school provide the network of social interactions that helps to form a permanent "core" identity that is developed in childhood and adolescence. The emerging notions of modern identity introduced a new self-consciousness and initiated a persistent questioning: Who am I? What can I become? What should I be doing with my life? What is my true vocation? While it became more possible to determine one's identity rather than be restricted by traditional roles imposed from birth, it also increased anxiety about personal identity.

Postmodernity is the subject of considerable debate. For some theorists it is seen as a complete epistemological, aesthetic, and ethical break with modernity, which, it is alleged, has declined or exhausted itself. Post-modern philosophy has seriously challenged notions of universality, rationality, instrumentalism, and utility that characterize modernity; it has punctured the ethnocentrism and eurocentrism that these notions engendered. Postmodern philosophy is often considered to be a

CHAPTER 2

negative, pessimistic, nihilistic movement, in opposition to the Enlightenment and one that supports irrationality. Other theorists see postmodernity as an extension of modernity and a form of postindustrial society. There is no one date or point of separation between the two eras, nor is there any one definition of “postmodernity” and “postmodernism,” but the late twentieth century, after the Second World War, seems to be a markedly different place from what it was before this time. While postmodernism seems to have social, economic, technological, and cultural components, there is no definitive essence of the postmodern. Postmodernism provides a flexible, critical way of thinking about the world and our relationship to it, rather than the uncovering of particular “facts,” “truths,” and “qualities” of our world. Postmodernity, in contrast to modernity, emphasizes a flexible shifting notion of identity that is very much the product of a network of shifting relationships (see Kvale, 1992). Postmodern philosophy is, above all, a challenge to foundational accounts of the self that are anchored in God, Reason, or Truth.

Structuralism and, particularly, poststructuralism form much of the philosophical basis of postmodernism. Postmodernist thought has been strongly influenced by how language has been perceived by structuralist and poststructuralist theorists. Structuralist thought centers on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Three main structuralist notions are that meaning only occurs in relation to structure, that language provides the clearest demonstration of the structural and relational aspects of meaning, and that language enables us to give meaning to the world, to organize and construct it and ourselves.

Poststructuralism developed initially in France in the 1960s, from the work of Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Giles Deleuze, and Jean Baudrillard (Peters, 1996). It draws from a variety of sources to provide a specific philosophical position, strongly informed by the work of Nietzsche and Heidegger, against the social scientific pretensions of structuralism in “a reappraisal of the culture of the Enlightenment and its notion of universal reason” (Peters, 1996: 1). Nietzsche is pivotal for poststructuralism in many different ways—his linguistic ability, his genealogical inquiries, wherein he cultivates a form of historical narrative, his critique of truth, his conception of “will to power,” his biological emphases, and, especially, his critique of the Cartesian–Kantian subject and his substitution of genealogy for ontology.

Peters (1999) argues that the theoretical development of French structuralism during the late 1950s and 1960s led to an institutionalization of a transdisciplinary “megaparadigm” where the semiotic and linguistic analysis of society, economy, and culture became central to the scientific analysis of sociocultural life in diverse disciplines such as anthropology, literary criticism, psychoanalysis, Marxism, history, aesthetic theory, and studies of popular culture. Structuralism helped to integrate the humanities and the social sciences, but it did so in an overly optimistic and scientific (science as an ideology) conception. While poststructuralism shares structuralism’s radical questioning of the problematic of the humanist subject, it challenges the way that structuralism’s scientism and totalizing assumptions had been elevated to the status of a universally valid theory for understanding language,

thought, society, culture, economy, and, indeed, all aspects of the human enterprise (Peters, 1999).

Poststructuralism can be defined in terms of both its affinities and continuities on the one hand and its theoretical innovations and differences with structuralism on the other (Peters, 1999). The affinities center on the critique of the humanist (Cartesian–Kantian) subject as rational, autonomous, and self-transparent. Poststructuralism also shares with structuralism a theoretical understanding of language and culture as linguistic and symbolic systems. The two related movements share a belief in unconscious processes and in hidden structures or sociohistorical forces that constrain and govern our behavior. Finally, they share a common intellectual inheritance and tradition based upon Saussure, Jacobson, the Russian formalists, Freud, Marx, and others. Poststructuralism inherits three broad ideas from structuralism: first, that language is a system that cannot point outside itself (meaning that it is not dependent upon correspondence with “reality” or with the world); second, that language *produces* rather than reflects meaning; and third, that language is not a product of individual intentionality of individual meaning-making—that is, individuals are born into a language and a culture and does not create it for themselves. Poststructuralism opens up texts to “free up” meaning by challenging the dogma that a text’s meaning is dependent upon an author’s intention. In the poststructuralist view the meaning of texts is never final: they have multiple meanings and are open to the active interpretation of the reader. Structuralism, in contrast, saw language as a closed system.

The importance of language and meaning to counseling, as exemplified by structuralist and poststructuralist modes of thought, is profound and has been largely unexplored by counselors. Language not only affects how we frame our notions of the self and identity, but also how a counselor deals with a client and their sense of meaning of the world in which they live.

Poststructuralism’s innovations revolve around the reintroduction of and renewed interest in history, especially as it involves the “becoming” of the subject, where genealogical narratives replace questions of ontology or essence. Poststructuralism offers a challenge to the scientism of structuralism in the human sciences, an antifoundationalism in epistemology, and a new emphasis upon “perspectivism” in interpretation (that there is no one textual “truth,” texts are open, instead, to multiple interpretation). Poststructuralism challenges the rationalism and realism that underlie structuralism’s faith in scientific method, in progress, and in discerning and identifying universal structures of *all* cultures and the human mind. In other words, it is suspicious of metanarratives, transcendental arguments, and final vocabularies. These views involve the rediscovery of Nietzsche’s critique of truth and his emphasis upon interpretation and differential relations of power, and also Heidegger’s influential interpretation of Nietzsche. More recently, poststructuralism has developed a political critique of Enlightenment values, particularly of the way modern liberal democracies construct political identity on the basis of a series of binary oppositions (e.g., we/them, citizen/noncitizen, responsible/irresponsible, legitimate/illegitimate) that

CHAPTER 2

exclude “others” or some groups of people. In this sense poststructuralism can be seen as a deepening of democracy. Perhaps most importantly, poststructuralism explores the notion of “difference” (from Nietzsche and Saussure, and developed by Derrida and Lyotard), which serve as a motif not only for recognizing the dynamics of self and other, but also contemporary applications in multiculturalism and immigration. Poststructuralism invokes new analyses of power, particularly Foucault’s “analytics of power” and the notion of “power/knowledge,” both of which differ from accounts in liberal and Marxist theory, where power is seen as only repressive (see Peters, 1996, 1999).

It is the core assumptions about an essential human nature—its uniqueness and individuality—that are challenged by both structuralism and poststructuralism. A poststructuralist critique of humanism (as in narrative therapy, as discussed in chapter 7) does not attempt to uncover some preexisting dormant knowledge in the mind or heart of the person, nor any “true,” “real,” “authentic” or “essential” self. It also challenges individualistic, expert-centered forms of professional knowledge that aim to liberate the “real” or “repressed” or “hidden” self. Traditional humanist assumptions about the subject in psychology and counseling usually position it as a stable, fixed, autonomous being, often characterized as fully transparent to itself and responsible for his or her actions. In contrast, the notion of identity in poststructuralism (and narrative therapy) tends to be replaced with the notion of “subjectivity,” which does not assume that people’s identities are primarily stable and singular, but, rather, that they change and are contradictory (Lifton, 1993; Gergen, 1990, 1991, 2001).

Postmodern identity has rejected the modernist notion of a timeless, deep, inner authentic essential self in favor of an identity that is constructed, constituted, antiessentialist, chosen, fragmented, and even disintegrated and without substance. It is, in an era of mass consumerism that has seen lifestyle choices displace authenticity, a self where image, appearance, and style are what matters. This is termed *aestheticism* or *stylization* of life. Identity is particularly influenced by the predominance of urban cultures and is established by what we buy or hanker for, so that goods become symbols or signs of individuality, difference, and solidarity. Postmodern identity, because it is constructed, is fluid and dynamic, with public expression not necessarily consistent with the private self.

Some theorists negate the idea of any inner self. Goffman (1969) examined the self in terms of how people react in social situations and suggested that different façades are presented in different settings, with the self being an effect of the façade. He suggested that the self has no specific organic location, that it is not individually owned but arises instead from interaction with other social beings. The constructed self is the product of tension between two ideas that are often reduced to the old argument of determinism versus free will. First, we are not born with substance; we become what we are through being acted on by a series of social factors—that is, we are constructed and determined by the social and the cultural. Second, we have a degree of choice and are free, to an extent, to construct our identities for ourselves. A different role, which equates with a different self, is

likely to be taken in a different social situation. There is no single essential self underneath the façade that is presented to the world, because the self is scattered over and by a complex of social forces.

In terms of the modernity/postmodernity, modernism/postmodernism debate, we might say for the purposes of this book that modernity is a humanism (see chapter 1) and that postmodern philosophy involves both an attack on the theoretical foundations of this humanism and a reevaluation of it, beginning with Nietzsche and continued, in their different ways, by Heidegger, Sartre, Derrida, and Foucault. For instance, Heidegger (1993), in his famous *Letter on Humanism* first published in 1946, questions the false and naïve anthropologism that has motivated humanism since its first formulation by Roman thought. In all its subsequent formulations, Heidegger laments, humanism never really questions its own metaphysical basis. While Heidegger's strategy is to rediscover primordial being in its pure state in the culture of the early Greeks—a strategy that seeks an uncorrupted form of the self, so to speak, in our ancient past—others, like Sartre, Derrida, and Foucault, have subsequently tried to bypass “essence” or being by historicizing questions of ontology.

In broad terms, the ideology of humanism centrally involves a stable, coherent, knowable, transparent self, who is deemed to be fully conscious, rational, autonomous, and universal. Heidegger and Sartre, among others, argue that it is this notion of self as unified and universal that underlies humanism and in its more robust forms seems to preclude all cultural and historical variation. Such a view relies upon the self as a source of knowledge—indeed, the inviolable foundations of knowledge for modern epistemology, starting with the philosophy of Descartes. Thus, the self knows itself and the world through reason, and this mode of knowing produced by the rational self is “objective knowledge” considered to amount to science—a form of knowledge that can produce truths about the world. Such objective knowledge is the basis for modernity's belief in progress and perfection, which can also provide scientific principles for human institutions, including education and learning. The old notion of ethics and politics as a practical form of reason falls away, to be replaced in the modern period by a new belief in science and the science of politics.

According to this humanist view, freedom is seen to consist of obedience to the laws conforming to the knowledge discovered by reason. In modernity science is the paradigm of all knowledge; it is considered both neutral and objective, and scientists who follow scientific methodology, motivated by the concerns of pure reason, are thought to pursue the Truth. Humanism as an ideology of modernity not only promotes this error-free and uncritical view of science, but also tends to assume, especially in the later twentieth century, that all knowledge is languagebased, that language as the mode of expression is also rational and transparent to the mind that formulates statements and propositions in the sciences. In this sense language is the medium for knowledge, and all knowledge is linguistically mediated; language reflects the world or is in some relation of correspondence with the world, such that the utterances or propositions that we

CHAPTER 2

devise are allegedly tested for their truth-value against states of affair in the world.

It is this view of humanism as one of the underlying ideologies of modernity that postmodern philosophy contests; it contests both the underlying view of the humanist subject as rational and universal and also the view of science and society built upon it. In this book I begin to examine counseling theory in terms of this debate. Its implications are enormous, for if the notion of the humanist subject is in error or up for reevaluation, then so is counseling's humanist construction of both the "client" and the "counselor."

COUNSELING THE "SELF"

Notions of the self and identity have been important themes for counseling since its inception, although many counseling theorists and practitioners have not always been sensitive to the philosophical or historical treatments of the self or how they inform different counseling theories. The guidance counseling profession often combines various strands, such as psychological testing, biological developmentalism, and philosophical and practitioner orientations, some of which have gained particular prominence and favored status at different times. But central to all are notions of what human nature is and curiosity about how and why people do what they do. These are sometimes split between essentialist and nonessentialist notions about the existence of an inner essence, soul, or spirit of the human being.

When counseling was introduced into schools in the 1960s in Britain, the United States, Canada, and New Zealand, it was mostly known as "guidance counseling." Guidance counseling combines two different and somewhat competing notions about the self: on the one hand, notions centered on "guidance," and on the other, notions centered on "counseling." The differentiation between the two has become more marked over time, especially since the 1980s, with the increased professionalization of counseling. Counseling has tended to become separate from guidance.

Counseling is very much concerned with "knowing" the self, but it is not necessarily expressed in these terms. This "knowing" is not just for the client; it is very much part of the requirements expected of the counselor as well. For the client, "knowing" the self forms part of their therapeutic work in the counseling process as part of creating meaning in their lives. For the counselor, learning about the self is part of a personal and professional identity that is established in counselor education courses. It does not stop there; it is expected to continue with ongoing professional development with supervision, so that the counselor maintains a high degree of personal reflectivity. Furthermore, although it is often not spelled out and, in fact, seems to be almost studiously ignored in an attempt to be inclusive and nonjudgmental, counseling is inherently a moral activity, not in the narrow prescriptive sense of laying out rules of behavior, but in its broader understanding concerning the promulgation of human values. It is all of these facets that the counselor needs to reflect on as part of "knowing" the self.

“Guidance” tends to be more directive than counseling because information, especially about careers or courses, remains a key component, but it is also concerned about the self (Brown, 1999; see chapter 6). Guidance has often drawn upon a liberal–humanist educational philosophy that traditionally believes in the importance of and respect for the “individual personality” and the notion that individuals can do things to improve themselves by making rational choices to develop the self and, thereby, also increase their fulfillment in life. Guidance philosophy seemed to view itself as “holistic,” focusing on the “whole” person—the child’s intellect, emotions, physique, socialization, vocational choices, and aesthetic, moral, and spiritual values (Jones, 1977; McGowan and Schmidt, 1962). The guidance movement, certainly in its early phase, as schools grew bigger and more impersonal in the era of mass education and of large classes, could be considered an attempt to provide the “personal touch” by treating students as “individuals” rather than as a mass.

One can detect and deconstruct the “liberal” philosophical assumptions about the nature of the self that are reflected in McGowan and Schmidt’s (1962) text of readings, which was widely used for guidance counselor education in the 1960s and 1970s. McGowan and Schmidt (1962) outline eleven principles of counseling, which were not only widely accepted by counselors in the 1960s but also explicitly or implicitly underlie most guidance and counseling texts and codes of ethics even today.

1. Recognition of the dignity and worth of the individual and his/her right to help in a time of need.
2. A client-centered approach is required, concerned with the optimum development of the whole person for individual and social ends.
3. It is a continuous, sequential and educative process and therefore an integral part of education, not just an adjunct.
4. Counsellors have a responsibility to society as well as to the individual.
5. One must respect a person’s right to accept or reject any help offered.
6. Guidance is about co-operation, not coercion.
7. It implies giving assistance to persons in making wise choices, plans, interpretations and adjustments in critical situations of life.
8. It demands a comprehensive study of the individual in his cultural setting by the use of every scientific technique available.
9. It should be entrusted only to those who are naturally endowed for the task and have the necessary training and experience.
10. The focus should be on helping the individual to realise his best self rather than on solving isolated problems of the individual, school or institution.
11. It must be under constant scientific evaluation in terms of its effectiveness. (McGowan and Schmidt, 1962: 95–96)

While the intense focus on the individual has been challenged in the later twentieth century by systems-oriented counseling, such clear statements at what were the formative stages of counselor education still have relevance today and are

CHAPTER 2

discussed in the paragraphs that follow. While this list may appear to be only a brief synopsis, the rationale it provides is important for portraying how guidance counseling was philosophically positioned in the 1960s. Unless there is critique that results in new sets of principles, notions such as this are likely to persist. Hence in the next few paragraphs, I unpack the list to uncover some of its inherent assumptions.

This list of principles shows how counseling theory was conceived to rest fundamentally upon a notion of the “individual,” which functions as a “primitive.” A primitive is not a description of an individual, but a philosophical presupposition beyond which we cannot go or an element that functions as an unquestioned premise of the argument. McGowan and Schmidt (1962) outline how the “individual” is the prime concept for counseling, is endowed with “rights,” and is perceived in humanistic terms to have “dignity” and “worth.” These assumptions are, in part, a product of Judeo-Christian culture and the cultural development of humanism through the Renaissance, where the values of “dignity,” “worth,” and “respect” for human beings was elevated to a philosophy. This was subsequently synthesized to become the basis for the European culture of human rights after the Second World War. The notion of the right to help and the expectation that one will offer it in a life-threatening situation, if there is no substantial risk to one’s own life, is derived from and extends ancient Jewish notions of *hayyav*, related to a personal duty to give assistance and portrayed in the parable of the good Samaritan.

What this brief analysis begins to reveal is the culture-boundedness and cultural specificity of this Western Euro-centered conception of the “individual” that has passed through various stages and reformulations.

Eugene Kamenka (1978) argues, for instance, that the notion of human rights and that of the “individual” on which it rests is a culturally specific product of Western civilization:

The concept of human rights is a historical product which evolves in Europe, out of foundations in Christianity, Stoicism and Roman law with its *ius gentium*, but which gains force and direction only with the contractual and pluralist nature of European feudalism, church struggles, the rise of Protestantism and of cities. It sees society as an association of individuals, as founded—logically or historically—on a contract between them, and it elevates the individual human person and his freedom and happiness to be the goal and end of all human association. In the vast majority of human societies, in time and space, until very recently such a view of human society would have been hotly contested; indeed, most cultures and languages would not have had the words in which to express it plausibly. (Kamenka, 1978: 6)

It is difficult for many people to put in brackets or stand outside their cultural beliefs and to problematize notions that are part of them, of their very constitution

and of their identity or the ways in which they have come to understand themselves. This is especially so for those who are closely entwined in the Western hegemony² Rose's (1989, 1998) argument shows how the dominance of psychological discourse in twentieth-century culture has informed notions of how we envisage and talk about the self and identity. Certainly, for counselors operating in multicultural and often postcolonial states (like the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), this requirement for problematizing the prevalent Western hegemony of beliefs and cultural assumptions concerning the "individual" and his or her constitution and rights is now becoming more and more critical. The hegemonic position is something that various minority groups frequently challenge.

The notions of "client-centeredness" and the "whole person" mentioned in the above list are more recent formulations in counseling, springing from Rogerian analysis and the human potential movement that developed in the United States in the mid- to late twentieth century. These notions have been interpreted positively, on the one hand, as forms of personal liberation, and negatively on the other, by some as being inherently manipulative, shaping the individual to fit into the system rather than the reverse (see Items 2 and 7) (see, for example, Illich, 1977; Foucault, 1973, 1990; Rose, 1989, 1998).

Counseling itself is seen as "educative"—that is, as part and parcel of the process of the "individual" learning about themselves, their relationships, and their world; it is defined as a "continuous" and "sequential" process. Yet these very terms are left undefined and seem to reflect an implicit understanding that counseling echoes the process of individual development defined as "stages of growth" in influential psychological texts by scholars such as Piaget and Havighurst.³ The assumption is that there is a normal cycle of development, which is invariant and is cross-culturally valid. Many theorists, including Walkerdine (1984, 1986), have seriously challenged this assumption. The idea of an educative element does, however, provide a clear theoretical justification for the place of guidance counseling within education, not just as some frill that could or should be located outside it.

There is some conceptual "slippage" in this list of principles. For instance, the notion of "individual" in Items 1 and 4 becomes "person" in Items 2 and 5, although it is clear that in philosophical terms these notions are not the same. "Person" is a more developed notion in the sense that it assumes the moral status of "personhood"—that is, an appropriate object of direct moral concern such as is involved in the ascription of rights. In his *Essay On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill's ([1854] 1961) view was that "personhood" and its associated freedoms were not available either to children or to madmen. No such considerations of rights apply to the notion of "individual." As another example, Item 5 describes the "individual" in terms of "person's rights"—in other words, modern rights discourse is appealed to, in order to define the person—a very contemporary notion, as can be seen from the comment by Kamenka above.

One might begin to trace the different strands that make up this composite list of

CHAPTER 2

principles as including Kantian talk of rights based upon ascriptions to “persons,” along with more recent American counseling discourses. While “clients” are “persons” who are ascribed certain “rights,” counselors are perceived as having certain “responsibilities”—a “responsibility to society as well as to the individual” (Item 4) though these “responsibilities” are left unspecified. Among the rights of a person/client is their right to “accept or reject help,” as mentioned above, and an implicit acceptance of “respect” for the individual’s autonomy and choice-making capacity. Counselors need therefore not only to be aware of the multiple layers of responsibility to the person and to society, they also need to be able to make ethically based decisions about which responsibility takes priority. This can pose ethical dilemmas that have no simple solutions but require considerable wisdom, experience, and often consultation with supervisors. After all, who decides the priority of responsibility, and on what basis?

Item 6 indicates the “guidance” side of the “guidance counselor” formulation: “Guidance is about co-operation, not coercion.” Yet this simple statement, with which most of us would agree, tends to minimize the ethical difficulties that face both the “client” in a school that he or she compulsorily attends, and the counselor, who is employed by the State or the school board, and who, like all teachers, is considered to be in *loco parentis*.⁴ This item implies that guidance counseling should be nondirective, but it does not spell this out. Under the term “guidance,” subtle forms of coercion and manipulation are very difficult to discern. Perhaps it is with this in mind that today school guidance counseling has tended to move away from the directive aspects that comprise “guidance”—educational and vocational testing and advice—to focus more on the nondirective, personal counseling aspects that are part of the more generic profession of “counseling” (certainly in New Zealand).

Guidance counseling, in the conception outlined in the principles above, is conceived as “giving assistance to persons in making wise choices . . . in critical situations of life.” This view certainly endorses a picture of the Kantian autonomous adult who is capable of self-directed activity and is able to exercise his or her choices responsibly, and of a child who might be developing such skills. The question of how a counselor might “give assistance,” apart from suggesting possible options, is left unexamined, and it is up to the counselor to decide on the basis of their theoretical orientation and professional skill. Just how directive that assistance might be is not spelled out. What is meant by “wise” and wise for whom is similarly left unstated, open, and ambiguous and hence is open to interpretation.

There is a focus on contextualizing counseling and possibly a concession to the scientific outlook in Item 8, where the individual is to be “studied” in “his [sic] cultural setting” This reflects on how the professional identity of counseling is expected to involve client-centeredness, inclusiveness, empathy, and understanding of others. Without these, one could scarcely be considered to be “counseling.” Item 9 refers to the necessary training and characteristics of counselors, in particular those who are “naturally endowed,” and seems to imply some essentialist theory of

the “counseling self” as distinct from other persons. To be suitable to be a counselor requires a combination of personal attitudes, enhanced by training. Personal attributes are not enough. This notion is still strongly endorsed by all the universities requiring certain personal attributes and aptitudes before one is selected for counseling courses.

The focus for counseling “should be on helping the individual to realize his [sic] best self rather than on solving isolated problems of the individual, school or institution” (Item 10). What “best self” means here can be both literal and metaphorical. It implies that each individual has either more than one self, or different sides to the one self, over which the individual—with some help—can choose. In other words, individuals have some agency in shaping their self or choosing which aspect or which self they wish to develop or display. Individuals may be thought of as having different sides to their self; people often express this metaphorically as “my good side” or “my dark side” in referring to and making judgments about their feelings and behavior. But if the individual literally has different selves, the implications are more serious, since this tends toward fragmentation of the self and mental illness associated with schizophrenia or multiple personality disorders. In this situation there is little element of choice about styling the self. The focus at this point in the early history of counseling was more on the individual than on the system in which the individual was located, which might be the group, the family, or the institution. In recent years, an overemphasis on individualizing notions has been seriously challenged with the development of contextualizing and systems theory as applied to counseling, particularly in dealing with family therapy and with people from ethnic minorities.

The final item reflects very current “scientific” understanding for the evaluation of the “success” of the process and its effectiveness, and it possibly also reflects the demand for professional and public accountability. While the type of “scientific” evaluation is not spelt out, counseling in its early days was closely linked with the positivistic type of evaluation involving pre- and posttesting that is common in psychology. The testing aspect has been somewhat discredited, especially in relation to intelligence testing, and has been largely dropped from the present-day counseling repertoire. Evaluation requires counselors to be reflective about their practice and about themselves in this process, hence it points to the need for supervision. It also implies remaining up-to-date with current research and methods through ongoing professional development. This is partly why the NZAC Code of Ethics has supervision and professional development requirements (see chapter 6 and www.nzac.org.nz/). One does not just learn to be a counselor in one training course, leaving it at that and thinking that one knows it all. After all, what is the point of “doing” counseling or using certain counseling methods if they do not work and make a positive difference in the lives of clients. This becomes part of the counselor’s duty to their profession and to society, as in Item 4.

I have spent some time unpacking and analyzing these eleven principles to demonstrate the state of counseling theory in the formative stages of counselor education as the profession was established in the 1960s. Counseling largely

CHAPTER 2

expects its clients to become self-reflective and hence it is only reasonable for the profession itself to be similarly reflective of its self, of its philosophy and its history. This analysis therefore supports the notion that counseling theorists and practitioners must become more aware of the philosophical and historical elements that have helped to shape their profession and their discourse.

MICHEL FOUCAULT: CARE OF THE SELF

Technologies of Domination

The earlier sections of this chapter have delved into a consideration of various conceptualizations of the self and of identity in different discourses—philosophical, psychological, anthropological, and feminist. These have been undertaken as a means of understanding key issues that are, I would argue, largely missing in the counseling literature. Although ethics is dealt with in some detail in counseling discourse, it tends to be in a somewhat instrumental manner around applications of ethical codes and how counselors practice rather than examining philosophical underpinnings and issues of ethical self-constitution (as discussed in chapter 6). This next section, then, looks in particular detail at Foucault's notions of the self, which not only provide quite a shift from earlier discourses on the self but also bring in notions of disciplinarity, governmentality, freedom, and ethics to understandings of the self.

In Foucault's body of work there are considered to be differences or breaks between his earlier work and his middle and later period. Foucault's earlier notions of the self conceived of individuals as "docile bodies" in the grip of disciplinary powers and technologies of domination. Foucault introduces notions of corporeality, politics, and power and its historico-social context into understandings of the self. In his later work he extends and more fully explains the idea of agency through technologies of the self and ethical self-constitution that overcomes some of the problematic political implications in his earlier work. By then Foucault sees individuals "as self-determining agents capable of challenging and resisting the structures of domination in modern society" (McNay, 1992: 4). The earlier and middle Foucault is considered to include *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. I (1980a). His later work includes *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality*, Vol. II (1985) and *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality*, Vol. III (1990). The notions of "technologies of the self" and "governmentality" appeared around 1978/79. In discussing his work late in his life, Foucault says:

My objective for more than twenty-five years has been to sketch out a history of the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry. Medicine, and penology. The main point is not to accept this knowledge at face value but to analyze these so-called sciences as very specific "truth games" related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves. (1988b: 17–18)

He sets out a typology of four interrelated “technologies,” each “a matrix of practical reason” and each permeated by “a certain type of domination” and implying some form of “training and modification of individuals”:

(1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, 1988b: 18)

It was the last two of these that Foucault analyzed. In “Truth, Power, Self: An Interview,” Foucault (1988a) points out that having worked through the following three questions in “Technologies of the Self” (Foucault, 1988b), he has returned to the first of these:

(1) What are the relations we have to truth through scientific knowledge, to those “truth games” which are so important on civilization and in which we are both subject and object? (2) What are the relationships we have to others through those strange strategies and power relationships? And (3) what are the strategies and relationships between truth, power, and self? (Foucault, 1988a: 15)

Foucault’s genealogical critique that questions the “subject” aims at revealing the contingent and historical conditions of existence. Foucault historicizes questions of ontology, substituting genealogical investigations of the subject for the philosophical attempt to define the essence of human nature. The first question is addressed in the second subsection of this chapter, “Technologies of the Self.”

Part of the answer to the second question is found in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), where the focus is on technologies of domination and disciplinarity and the way the self is produced by processes of objectification, classification, and normalization in the human sciences. Here Foucault describes situations where discipline creates the self with a form of individuality that comprises four characteristics (see chapter 1). Foucault uses “calculable” almost interchangeably with “normalized” in referring to individuals, in a way that “should be understood in terms of governance or controlling the outcomes of behavior” (Marshall, 1997: 38). For Foucault, both “technologies of domination” and “technologies of the self” produce effects that constitute the self. They define the individual and control his or her conduct (Marshall, 1997). These technologies are harnessed “to make the individual a significant element for the state” through the exercise of a form of power, which Foucault defined as governmentality, in becoming useful, docile, practical citizens. As Foucault notes, “what I have analyzed was always related to political action” In this case it “is concerned with social principles and institutions” (Foucault, 1988a: 14). “Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an

CHAPTER 2

aptitude, a capacity, which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection” (Foucault, 1977: 138).

The disciplinary rationality—the objectives, means, and effects—of the carceral system that Foucault analyzes used technologies of domination that established a new economy of power or a “political anatomy.” “Docile bodies” were created through a complex set of relations between power, knowledge, and the body. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) describes and analyzes a political system with the king’s body at its center. Foucault suggests that a new principle—the “body of society”—emerges in the nineteenth century. The social body is protected through a series of dividing practices involving the segregation of the sick, the quarantining of “degenerates,” the schooling of boys and girls, and the exclusion of delinquents. From the eighteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, the disciplinary regimes of schools, hospitals, barracks, and factories involved the “heavy, ponderous, meticulous and constant” investment of the body by power. By the 1960s industrial societies realized that they could exist with a much looser form of power over the body. Different societies need a different kind of body, and we should set aside the commonly held notion that power in our capitalist societies has denied the reality of the body in favor of the mind or consciousness. So, Foucault quite clearly conceives of an embodied self, person, or individual.

In his analysis of “disciplinary blocks,” Foucault (1977) identifies and substitutes the word “disciplines” for what are normally termed “professions” and “professionals” (doctors, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, teachers, warders, the military), thereby challenging the way they are usually perceived and unmasking them. Foucault plays with the duality in the notion of “discipline” as both a subject area and a method of social control as applied to education. In the “disciplines” there are three interconnected notions of power, which, Marshall (1997) suggests, cannot be dissociated: power relationships, as between partners who interact and modify each other’s actions; the power to modify, use, consume, or destroy things; and symbolic power.

Foucault’s notion of the way we become subjects—people with a particular view of ourselves—as being in the form of “disciplinary blocks,” which not only develop power-knowledge but also exercise this “according to knowledge which has itself been the product of the exercise of power” has immense implications for education (Marshall, 1997: 36). Marshall (1997: 37) provides an example of the interconnectedness of all three in schools, where “the adjustment of people’s abilities and resources, relationships of communication, and power relationships, form regulated systems.” The conditions required for such power to be exercised involve space, time, and capacities—for example, in the disciplinary block of a school it requires rooms, a timetable, and learning activities. Normal patterns of expectation become established via techniques such as exams, observation, placement, streaming, and remedial work, so that the knowledge that is gained through the exercise of power produces “normalized individuals.”

Foucault’s Nietzschean approach suspends the standard liberal normative

framework where notions of rights are grounded in the humanist conceptions of human nature. Power involves a plurality of incommensurable discursive regimes, each with its multiplicity of “micropractices,” which ultimately directs us to study the “politics” or power relations of everyday life and the way power is inscribed upon the self and body. Nietzsche inspired Foucault to analyze the modes by which human beings become subjects without privileging either power (as in Marxism) or desire (as in Freud).

Technologies of the Self

Foucault (1988b: 19) considers that he may have concentrated “too much on the technology of domination and power.” So, in his later works, he moves to technologies of the self: “the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself.” Foucault’s definition of technologies of the self has been provided in the previous section. In his work on sexuality Foucault does not present a sociological account of the history of morality, or sexual practices. Instead, he is concerned with problematizing how pleasure, desire, and sexuality, the regimes of power–knowledge–pleasure as components of the art of living or “an aesthetics of existence,” have become discourses that shape our construction of ourselves through the revelation of “truth” of our sexuality and of ourselves (Foucault, 1985: 12).

Volume I of *The History of Sexuality* (1980a) presents a change from technologies of domination. A common assumption of Western culture, that the body and its desires—its sexuality—reveal the truth about the self, is explored in this book. From this assumption it is then proposed that if one tells the “truth” about one’s sexuality, this deepest truth about the self will become apparent, and then one can live an authentic life that is in touch with one’s true self. Foucault (1988b: 16–17) says: “the association of prohibition and strong incitations to speak is a constant feature of our culture.” As a result his project became: “a history of the link between the obligation to tell the truth and the prohibitions against sexuality. I asked: How had the subject been compelled to decipher himself in regard to what was forbidden? It is a question of the relation between asceticism and truth” (Foucault, 1988b: 17).

The main technologies in *The History of Sexuality* (1980a) are the examination and the confessional or therapeutic situation, where the psyche or emotions are addressed when a priest or therapist exerts her or his expert knowledge to reinterpret and reconstruct what the client says. Various professionals in the psychosciences or helping professions (e.g., priests, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, counselors, etc.) are sought in order to help one to access this inner self or inner truth. They do this by administering certain “technologies” for speaking, listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said, such as examining one’s consciousness, the unconscious, and confessing one’s innermost

CHAPTER 2

thoughts, feelings, attitudes, desires, and motives about one's self and one's relationships with others (see chapter 1 on confession). However, in gaining this form of self-knowledge, one also becomes known to others involved in the therapeutic process. This can, in turn, control the self.

Foucault (1980a) argues that power operates through the discursive production of sexuality. He challenges the repressive hypothesis and how power operates through this. The incitement to talk about sexuality is closely related to notions of liberation from repression (see chapter 7 for a discussion of repressive hypothesis and liberation). In his historical analysis Foucault points out that Christianity has emphasized the importance of confession and of verbalized sexual matters. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries sex became a matter of "policing"; regulating sex through public discourses led to an emphasis on heterosexual monogamy and a scrutiny of "unnatural" forms of sexual behavior (e.g., masturbation, homosexuality). Sexual conduct was revealed and incorporated into discourse, with sexual prohibitions existing side-by-side with the development of scientific discourses about sexuality. The Victorians of the nineteenth century did not refuse to recognize sex, but they put in place an entire machinery for producing true discourses concerning it that aimed at formulating a uniform truth of sex. Discourse on sex became incorporated into medicine, psychiatry, criminal justice, and a series of social controls that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century: "which screened the sexuality of couples, parents and children, dangerous and endangered adolescents—undertaking to protect, separate and forewarn, signaling perils everywhere, awakening people's attention, calling for diagnoses, piling up reports, organizing therapies" (Foucault, 1980a: 30–31). The effect was that people became intensely aware of sex as a constant danger, "and this in turn created a further incentive to talk about it" (Foucault, 1980a: 31).

Some clinical and psychiatric examinations required the person to speak while an expert in both observation and interpretation determined whether or not the truth, or an underlying truth of which the person was unaware, had been spoken. Foucault (1980a) points to a shift from the medical model of healing, where a patient "confesses" the problem and inadvertently reveals the "truth" as part of the diagnostic clinical examination, to a therapeutic model, where both the confession and the examination are deliberately used for uncovering the truth about one's sexuality and one's self. In the process the therapy can create a new kind of pleasure: pleasure in telling the truth of pleasure. But speaking the truth is not only descriptive. In confession one is expected to tell the truth about oneself—a basic assumption that most counselors continue to make about their clients. Because language has a performative function, speaking the truth about oneself also makes, constitutes, or constructs forms of one's self. By these discursive means and through these technologies a human being turns him or herself into a subject.

Historically there have been two great procedures for producing the truth of sex. Many societies have an *ars erotica* [erotic art], whereby truth is drawn from pleasure itself. Western society, however, has *scientia sexualis*, procedures for telling the truth of sex, which are geared to a form of knowledge-power found in

confession. In confession, the agency of domination resides not in the person who speaks, but in the one who questions and listens. Sexual confession became constituted in scientific terms through “a clinical codification of the inducement to speak; the postulate of a general and diffuse causality; the principle of a latency intrinsic to sexuality; the method of interpretation; and the medicalization of the effects of confession” (see Foucault, 1980a: 59–70).

Foucault challenges the chronology of the techniques relating to sex in the fields of medicine, pedagogy, and demography and argues that they do not coincide with the hypothesis of a great repression of sexuality in the seventeenth century. Concerns about sexuality first occurred within the upper classes because of worries about their own class survival, which were expressed in terms of vigor, longevity, progeniture, and techniques for maximizing life through an affirmation of self. There was a steady growth of methods and procedures around sexuality that did not at first see the ruling classes limiting the pleasures of others, but successive shifts and transpositions extended sexuality from being just the concern of the bourgeoisie to involve other classes.

Over time, the mechanisms of power in relation to the body and the self have changed considerably in the West. The ancient right of the sovereign “to *take* life or *let* life was replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death” (Foucault, 1980a: 138). From the seventeenth century onward, two poles emerged over which power over life became organized: an “anatomy-politics of the human body” as a machine operated on by the power of the disciplines and a “bio-politics of the population” of regulatory power that control the body of the species (Foucault, 1980a: 139). From the eighteenth century on, the politics of sex combined “disciplinary techniques with regulative methods” that revolved around the themes of the descent of the species and collective welfare (Foucault, 1980a: 146). Discipline focused on four issues: “the sexualization of children” where a campaign against precocious sexuality was concerned about health of society, the race, and the species; “the hysterisation of women” that thoroughly medicalized their bodies and sex in the name of responsibility to the family and to society; the institution of birth control and the “psychiatrisation of perversions” (Foucault, 1980a: 146–147). These four issues formed specific mechanisms of power-knowledge that centered on sex, which became the focus of the individual “body” and the aggregated “population” of a state. The mechanisms of power became organized around the management of the body, sex, and life rather than death at the hands of a sovereign power (see Foucault, 1980a: 136–147): “bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes” (Foucault, 1980a: 140–141).

In *The History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure*, Vol. II (1985), Foucault points out that his study shifts to the “arts of existence,” which are those actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform

CHAPTER 2

themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria. These “arts of existence,” these “techniques of the self,” no doubt lost some of their importance and autonomy when they were assimilated into the exercise of priestly power in early Christianity, and later, into educative, medical, and psychological types of practices. (Foucault, 1985: 11)

In “Technologies of the Self” (1988b), Foucault’s emphasis shifts to “the hermeneutics of the self” in “(1) Greco-Roman philosophy in the first two centuries A.D. of the Roman Empire and (2) Christian spirituality and the monastic principles developed on the fourth and fifth centuries of the late Roman Empire” (Foucault, 1988b: 19). What Foucault argues is that the Delphic moral principle, “know yourself” [*gnothi sauton*], has become overemphasized and has now taken precedence over another ancient principle and set of practices that were “to take care of yourself,” or “to be concerned with oneself” [*epimelesthai sautou*] (Foucault, 1988b: 19). According to Foucault, care of the self formed one of the main rules for personal and social conduct and for the art of life in ancient Greek cities. The two principles were interconnected, and it was from this principle that the Delphic principle was brought into operation as a form of “technical advice, a rule to be observed for the consultation of the oracle” (Foucault, 1988b: 19). In modern-day Western culture the moral principles have been transformed, perhaps partly as a result of “Know thyself” being the principle that Plato privileged, which subsequently became hugely influential in philosophy. Foucault argues that “know yourself” is the fundamental austere principle nowadays, because we tend to view care of the self as immoral, as something narcissistic, selfish, and an escape from rules. Although there is no direct continuity from ancient to present times, Foucault’s genealogy of sexuality does indicate some continuities and some of the Ancient Greek roots of our sexual ethics. First, Christianity adopted and modified themes from ancient philosophy and made renouncing the self the condition for salvation, but “to know oneself was paradoxically the way to self-renunciation” (Foucault, 1988b: 22). Second, our secular tradition “respects external law as the basis for morality,” in contradiction to more internalized notion of morality associated with concern for the self. Echoing Nietzsche (in *Genealogy of Morals*, 1956), Foucault (1988b: 22) says: “Know thyself” has obscured “Take care of yourself” because our morality, a morality of asceticism, insists that the self is that which one can reject.” Furthermore, theoretical philosophy since Descartes has positioned “knowledge of the self (the thinking subject) . . . as the first step in the theory of knowledge” (Foucault, 1988b: 22). Foucault argued for the return of the ancient maxim of “care of the self” because since the Enlightenment the Delphic maxim became overriding and inextricably linked with constituting subjects who are able to be governed.

Peters (2001b) discusses truth-games that Foucault elaborated in a series of six lectures given at Berkeley in 1983, entitled “Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhesia.”⁵ In the classical Greek, the use of *parrhesia* and its

cognates exemplifies the changing practices of *truth-telling*. Foucault investigates the use of *parrhesia* in education to show that education was central to the “care of the self,” public life, and the crisis of democratic institutions. He states that his intention was “not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity” (65/66). He claims that truth-telling as a speech activity emerged with Socrates as a distinct set of philosophical problems that revolved around four questions: “who is able to tell the truth, about what, with what consequences, and with what relation to power.” Socrates pursued these in his confrontations with the Sophists in dialogues concerning politics, rhetoric, and ethics. These lectures reveal how Foucault thought that the “critical” tradition in Western that is “concerned with the importance of telling the truth, knowing who is able to tell the truth, knowing why we should tell the truth” begins precisely at the same time as an “analytics of truth” that characterizes contemporary analytic philosophy. Foucault says that he aligns himself with the former “critical” philosophical tradition rather than with the latter (65/66).

In this set of lectures Foucault utilizes Nietzschean genealogy to problematize the practices of *parrhesia* in classical Greek culture—a set of practices, culturally speaking, that are deep-seated for the West and take various forms. He demonstrates that these practices link truth-telling and education in ways that are still operative in shaping our contemporary subjectivities. They are therefore relevant in understanding the exercise of power and control in contemporary life.

A shift occurred in the classical Greek conception of *parrhesia* from a situation where someone demonstrated the courage to tell other people the truth to a different truth game, which focused on the self and the courage that people displayed in disclosing the truth about themselves. This new kind of truth game of the self requires “*askēsis*,” which is a form of practical training or exercise directed at the art of living [*techne tou biou*]. The Greek practice of *askēsis* differs significantly from the Christian counterpart of ascetic practices. In the Greek, the goal is establishing of a specific relationship to oneself—of self-possession, self-sovereignty, self-mastery. In the Christian, it is renunciation of the self. Thus Foucault continues the arguments he put up in “Technologies of the Self” (1988b) that Christian asceticism involves detachment from the world, whereas Greco-Roman moral practices are concerned with “endowing the individual with the preparation and the moral equipment that will permit him to fully confront the world in an ethical and rational manner” (55/66). The crucial difference in the ethical principle of self consists of ancient Greek *self-mastery* versus Christian *self-renunciation*.

Foucault had earlier elaborated on both the Greek (Platonic and Stoic) and Christian techniques. The Stoic techniques include, first, “letters to friends and disclosure of self,” second, the “examination of self and conscience, including a review of what was to be done, of what should have been done and a comparison of the two,” third, “*askēsis*, not a disclosure of the secret self but a remembering,” and, fourth, “the interpretation of dreams” (Foucault, 1988b: 34–38). He points out that this is “not renunciation but the progressive consideration of self, or mastery

CHAPTER 2

over oneself, obtained not through the renunciation of reality but through the acquisition and assimilation of truth . . . that is characterised by *paraskeuaz*” [to get prepared] (Foucault, 1988b: 35).

In fact, it transforms truth into a principle of action or *ethos*, or ethics of subjectivity, that involves two sets of exercise—the *meletē* (or *epimelēsthai*) or meditation, and the *gymnasia* or training of oneself. The *meletē* was a philosophical meditation that trained one’s *thoughts* about how one would respond to hypothetical situations. The *gymnasia* is a *physical* training experience that may involve physical privation, hardship, purification rituals, and sexual abstinence. Foucault (1988b) remarks that despite it being a popular practice, the Stoics were mostly critical and skeptical about the interpretation of dreams. It is interesting to note the reemergence of many of these practices of the self in the different psychotherapies the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and Foucault does a real service in pointing us to the philosophical and historical roots of some of these.

In his exploration of the main techniques of the self in early Christianity—a salvation-confessional religion—Foucault determines both continuities and discontinuities. Christianity links the notion of illumination with truth and disclosure of the self:

“an ensemble of truth obligations dealing with faith, books, dogma, and one dealing with truth, heart and soul. Access to truth cannot be conceived of without purity of soul. Purity of the soul is the consequence of self-knowledge and a condition of understanding the text; in Augustine: *Quis facit veritatem* to make truth in oneself, to get access to the light). (Foucault, 1988b: 40)

In early Christianity two main forms of disclosing self emerged: first, *exomologēsis*, then *exagoreusis*. Despite being very different—the former a dramatic form, the latter a verbalized one—what they have in common is that disclosing the self involves renouncing one’s self or will. Early on disclosure of self involved *exomologēsis* or “recognition of fact,” with public avowal of the truth of their faith as Christians and “a ritual of recognizing oneself as a sinner and penitent” (Foucault, 1988b: 41). Foucault, points out the paradox that “exposé is the heart of *exomologēsis* . . . it rubs out the sin and yet reveals the sinner” (Foucault, 1988b: 42). Penance became elaborated around notions of torture, martyrdom, and death, of renouncing self, identity, and life in preferring to die rather than compromising or abandoning one’s faith. Foucault points out that Christian penance involves the refusal or renunciation of self, so that “self-revelation is at the same time self-destruction” (Foucault, 1988b: 43). Whereas for the Stoics the “examination of self, judgement, and discipline” lead to “self-knowledge by superimposing truth about self through memory, that is, memorizing rules,” for Christians, “the penitent superimposes truth about self by violent rupture and dissociation.” Furthermore, “*exomologēsis* is not verbal. It is symbolic, ritual and theatrical” (Foucault, 1988b: 43).

Foucault asserts that later, in the fourth century, a different set of technologies for disclosing the self—*exagoreusis*—emerged in the form of verbalizing exercises or prayers that involve taking account of one’s daily actions in relation to rules (as

in Senecan self-examination). With monastic life, different confessional practices developed, based on the principles of obedience and contemplation, and confession developed a hermeneutic role in examining the self in relation to one's hidden inner thoughts and purity. Foucault concludes by emphasizing that the verbalization techniques of confession have been important in the development of the human sciences. They have been transposed and inserted into this different context, "in order to use them without renunciation of the self but to constitute, positively, a new self. To use these techniques without renouncing oneself constitutes a decisive break" (Foucault, 1988b: 49).

An Ethics of Self-formation

In Foucault's later works the emphasis on the self shifts further, so that one no longer needs the expertise of the priest or therapist, one is able to do it for oneself, to ethically constitute the self (McNay, 1992).

"The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom" is an interview that was conducted with Foucault in 1984—the year of his death—by H. Becker, R. Fornet-Betancourt, and A. Gomez-Müller. Foucault is initially questioned concerning the change in his thinking about the relationship between subjectivity and truth. Foucault explains how in his earlier thinking he had conceived of the relationship between the subject and "games of truth" in terms of either coercion practices (psychiatry or prison) or theoretical-scientific discourses (the analysis of wealth, of language, of living beings, especially in *The Order of Things*). In his later writings he breaks with this relationship, to emphasize games of truth not as a coercive practice, but, rather, as *an ascetic practice of self-formation*—"ascetic" in this context meaning an "exercise of self upon the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being" (Foucault, 1997a: 282).

"Work" completed by the self upon itself is an *ascetic* practice that is to be understood not in terms of more traditional left-wing *models of liberation*, but rather as (Kantian) *practices of freedom*. This is an essential distinction for Foucault because the notion of liberation suggests that there is a hidden self or inner nature or essence that has been "concealed, alienated, or imprisoned in and by mechanisms of repression" (Foucault, 1997a: 282). The process of liberation, according to this model, liberates the "true" self from its bondage or repression. By contrast, Foucault historicizes questions of ontology: there are no essences, only "becomings"—only a phenomenology or hermeneutics of the self—the forging of an identity through processes of self-formation. To Foucault, liberation is not enough, and the practices of freedom do not preclude liberation, but they enable individuals and society to define "admissible and acceptable forms of existence or political society" (Foucault, 1997a: 283).

Foucault describes the notion of *governmentality* as "the relationship of the self to the self" covering "the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organize,

CHAPTER 2

and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other” (Foucault, 1997a: 300). In this lecture he rejects Sartre’s idea that power is evil. He states instead: “Power is not evil. Power is games of strategy” (Foucault, 1997a: 298), and that the ways of avoiding the application of arbitrary, unnecessary, or abusive authority “must be framed in terms of rules of law, rational techniques of government and ethos, practices of the self and of freedom” (Foucault, 1997a: 299).

Foucault is drawing a contrast between two different models of self-interpretation: liberation and freedom. He suggests that the latter is broader than the former and historically necessary once a country or people have attained a degree of independence and set up political society. There may well be some translation difficulties between the French and English languages around notions of liberation and freedom. For example, a person in chains is not free, and although he or she may have some choices, these are severely limited by their lack of freedom. They have to be liberated or freed from their total domination in order to have the freedom to practice their own ethics. Freedom that equates with liberation is therefore a precondition of ethics, since ethics are the practices of the “free” person. In a particular example, Foucault uses questions of sexuality and suggests that the ethical problem of freedom in relation to sexuality is politically and philosophically more important than a simple insistence on liberating sexual desire. In other words, he wishes to understand freedom as the ontological condition for ethics, especially when freedom takes the form of a kind of informed reflection. This general understanding he begins to outline in terms of the ancient Greek imperative of “care for the self.”

Foucault’s discussion has strong and obvious relationships to counseling models, and it has clear applications to counseling in a school context. Here, the model of the self in relation to practices of freedom seems to promise a philosophical approach that offers counselors a model that is both historically accurate and ethically suitable to the way counselors have attempted to define their profession. Foucault’s account also offers a Kantian-like basis for ethics based upon the way in which choices we make under certain conditions create who we become. He also offers a very useful theory of power. Yet at the same time Foucault is not immune to criticism, and counselors, if they are to make use of Foucault’s work, must also be aware of his faults or limitations.

SOME CRITICISMS OF FOUCAULT

Three areas of criticism are dealt with in this section. First, I raise some of the feminist criticisms against Foucault’s work. It is clear that he does not entertain the possibility that he might display a bias against women; for instance, Foucault (1997a) twice refers to the husband as governing his wife and children in terms of power relations. This indicates that he can be criticized, therefore, for his conservative, patriarchal position, which does not in any way consider feminist

discourses already in existence (e.g., see McNay, 1992; Ramazanoglu, 1993).

Second, in his discussion of ancient Greek (Plato, Socrates, Xenophon) philosophical notions of “care of the self,” Foucault (1997a) does not seem to discuss the idea that “care of the self” involves “care for others,” or that “care for others” is an explicit ethic in itself. He states that “care for others” as an explicit notion in itself became an explicit ethic later on and should not be put before “care of the self” (see Foucault, 1984e, 1998b, 1997a). He accepts that the ancient Greek notion embodied in “care of the self” is an inclusive one that precludes the possibility of tyranny because a tyrant does not, by definition, take “care of the self,” since he does not take care of others. Foucault seems to display a remarkable naïveté about the goodness of human beings in depicting how “care of the self” involves a considerable generosity of spirit and benevolent relations for a ruler of others, be they one’s slave, wife, or children. Yet the argument that Foucault develops is so compressed that it needs some elaboration or teasing out to check out the major premises of what he does mean that is examined later in this section.

Third, there is a set of historical criticisms that revolves around Foucault’s scholarship concerning his “readings” or interpretations of the ancient Greeks and, particularly, his emphasis on “care of the self.” I deal with each of these criticisms or points in turn.

First, various feminist writers have emphasized that Foucault’s work provides a critique of gendered power relations and a challenge to biological essentialist constructions of “women,” “girls,” and “femaleness.” Yet, at the same time as offering a challenge to contemporary feminist theory, Foucault has also become the object of criticism (see, e.g., McNay, 1992; Ramazanoglu, 1993). Lois McNay (1992) argues that Foucault’s early emphasis on the body and his later emphasis on the self has provided conceptual frameworks for understanding the gendered self. Foucault’s analysis of power in relation to the body, McNay suggests, helps to explain women’s oppression. She argues that Foucault’s early work, with an emphasis on the body, tends to focus upon a docility and passiveness that robs the subject of any agency or autonomy. As such, this tends to be at odds with the aim of the feminist project of emancipatory politics, which is to recognize and rehabilitate the importance of women’s experience. His later work, including *The History of Sexuality*, particularly Volumes II and III (*The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*), McNay argues, overcomes these limitations of his early work, allowing for both self-determination or agency—or, more precisely, self-regulation or “ethical self-constitution”—and a notion of power that is not simply based upon repression, coercion, or domination. Foucault himself defended the “determinist” emphasis in *Discipline and Punish*, admitting that not enough was said about agency, so he redefined power to include agency (see Afterword in Rabinow, 1997). Foucault’s understanding of what he calls “technologies of self” serves to balance his earlier emphasis of technologies of domination.

While some criticisms can be made of Foucault’s early work from a feminist perspective, it is also clear that his notion of the “disciplinary society” has very strong implications for any critical understanding of school counseling, which in

CHAPTER 2

his terms, historically, might be considered a form of disciplinary apparatus of “schooling.” The feminist appreciation of Foucault’s later work tends to provide a gendered understanding of counseling and how important questions of female identity, subjectivity, and the institutional formation of the female subject have been (see Middleton, 1998).

On similar grounds to the feminist critique, concerns have been raised about Foucault’s work and its capacity to address questions about the construction of “racial” or ethnic identity, or even the question of cultural difference per se. Certainly, some anthropologists have raised criticisms against Foucault for his Eurocentrism and his apparent lack of theoretical attention to the question of cultural imperialism. Yet it is the use of Foucault’s work by the postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said (1978, 1993), Homi Bhabha (1990), and Gayatri Spivak (1999) that has enabled Foucauldian postcolonial accounts to be developed (see also Stoler, 1995).

The second area of criticism about “care of the self” can be better understood by elaborating the very compressed argument that forms Foucault’s position. Rabinow (1997) provides a useful summary of the steps in Foucault’s argument, and I present them here as a series of related premises in summary form:

- Premise 1:* “What is ethics, if not the practice of liberty, the considered practice of liberty (Foucault, 1997a). “Freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes” (ibid.).
- Premise 2:* In the western tradition, “taking care of oneself requires knowing oneself.” “To take care of the self is to equip oneself with these truths (p. 281); thus, as Rabinow (1997: xxv) points out quoting Foucault (1997a), “ethics is linked to the game of truth.”
- Premise 3:* Ethics is a practice or style of life, and the problem for Foucault is to give “liberty the form of an ethos” (Foucault, 1997a).
- Premise 4:* The subject “is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself” (Foucault, 1997a). As Rabinow (1997: xxvi) explains, “‘self’ is a reflexive pronoun, and has two meanings. *Auto* means ‘the same,’ but it also conveys the notion of identity. The latter meaning shifts the question from ‘What is the self?’ to ‘What is the foundation on which I shall find my identity?’”
- Premise 5:* So the emphasis shifts to the historical constitution of these forms and their relation to “games of truth.” “A game of truth is a set of procedures that lead to a certain result, which, on the basis of its principles and rules of procedures, may be considered valid or invalid.” “Why truth? . . . And why must the care of the self occur only through the concern for truth? [This is] *the* question for the West. How did it come about that all of Western culture began to revolve around this obligation of truth . . . ?” (Foucault, 1997a). Rabinow (1997: xxvi) comments that given these premises, one must conclude equally that “one escaped from a domination of truth” only by playing the game differently.

Premise 6: “the relationship between philosophy and politics is permanent and fundamental” (Foucault, 1997a).

Premise 7: Rabinow (1997: xxvi) remarks, “Philosophy, understood as a practice and a problem, is a vocation. The manner in which liberty is taken up by the philosopher is distinctive, differing in intensity and zeal from other free citizens.”

In Rabinow’s formulation of Foucault’s argument, it is clear that the overriding emphasis is on “care for the self,” and there is no explicit discussion about “care for others” or the possibility of inferring the latter from the former (see Foucault, 1984e). Perhaps this emphasis on the centrality of truth in relation to the self is to be developed only through the notion of “others” as an audience—intimate or public—that allows for the politics of confession and (auto)biography.

With regard to the third point, Arnold Davidson (1997) makes it clear that Foucault, especially in his later work, *The Care of the Self* (1990), drew heavily on Pierre Hadot’s work on “spiritual exercises.” Davidson suggests that Foucault owed Hadot an intellectual debt, especially with regard to what Foucault called “ethics” or the self’s relationship to itself or what might be called “ethical self-constitution.” He suggests that Foucault’s four main aspects of the self’s relationship to itself are an appropriation of Hadot’s fourfold framework for interpreting ancient thought:

the ethical substance, that part of oneself that is taken to be the relevant domain for ethical judgment; the mode of subjection, the way in which the individual established his relation to moral obligations and rules; the self-forming activity or ethical work that one performs on oneself in order to transform oneself into an ethical subject; and, finally, the telos, the mode of being at which one aims in behaving ethically. (Davidson, 1997: 200–201).

Hadot emphasized that in ancient schools of thought philosophy was considered to be a way of life, a quest for wisdom, a way of being, and, ultimately, a way of transforming the self. Spiritual exercises were pedagogy designed to teach its practitioners the philosophical life that had both a moral and an existential value. These exercises were aimed at nothing less than a transformation of one’s world view and one’s personality, involving all aspects of one’s being, including intellect, imagination, sensibility, and will. Hadot claimed that in the figure of Socrates we find a set of dialogical spiritual exercises that epitomized the Socratic injunction, “Know thyself!” and provided a model for a relationship of the self to itself that constituted the basis of all spiritual exercise. In this model, Hadot draws our attention to the primacy of the process one adopts to a problem rather than the solution. Hadot’s ([1987] 1995) major work, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*, shows how this set of dialogical relations of the self (with itself) is at the very center of a total transformation of one’s being (see Davidson, 1997). In a clear

CHAPTER 2

and important sense, Hadot's work provides school counseling with an ancient philosophical basis or model that is at once transformative, ethical, dialogic, and pedagogical. It is a model that could both complement and correct certain emphases in Foucault's later thinking about truth and subjectivity.

Hadot takes Foucault to task for the inaccuracies of his interpretation of Greco-Roman ethics as "an ethics of the pleasure one takes in oneself" (Hadot, [1987] 1995: 207). He criticizes Foucault for making too much of "pleasure" in relation to ancient Greek understanding of the self, truth, and subjectivity. We must ask: How far is Foucault's account historically astray? And to what extent do Foucault's possible historical errors of scholarship (according to Hadot) matter for the philosophical formulations and understandings based upon them? (This book does not seek to resolve these important questions.) Foucault's (1997b) essay, "Writing the Self," clearly draws on Hadot's groundbreaking work. This essay is part of what Foucault calls his studies of "arts of the self," which are designed to explore the "aesthetics of existence" and to inquire into the government of self and others that characterizes his later work. Foucault's essay analyzes a passage from Athanasius's *Vita Antoni*: "Here is one thing to observe to ensure that one does not sin. Let us each take note of and write down the actions and movements of our souls as though to make them mutually known to one another, and let us be sure that out of shame at being known, we will cease sinning and have nothing perverse in our hearts" (cited in Foucault, 1997b: 234).

Foucault notes that this "self-writing" . . . "offsets the dangers of solitude" and exposes our deeds to a possible gaze; at the same time the practice works on *thoughts* as well as actions, which brings it into line with the role of confession (in the early Christian literature). It permits, at the same time, a retrospective analysis of "the role of writing in the philosophical culture of the self just prior to Christianity: its close tie with apprenticeship; its applicability to movements of thought; its role as a test of truth" (1997b: 235).

One element that we might derive from Foucault and Hadot is the importance of "writing" and "reading" the self to counseling, alongside the more conventional conversational or dialogical forms that it takes. In other words, while acknowledging their current existence as counseling techniques, the emphasis in school counseling might be widened to reemphasize the forms of bibliotherapy, diaries, journal writing, personal narratives, autobiographies, biographies, together with the educative impulse of all forms of fiction, poetry, and drama or role play—both in film and television—that focus on the self.

This chapter began by providing some philosophical perspectives on the self and identity before turning to investigate these concepts in school counseling. It then examined new approaches to the concept of identity, exploring the ways in which structuralism and poststructuralism have rejected modernist notions of the essential or authentic self in favor of the notion of identities that are socially constructed, chosen, multiple, and fragmented. The chapter then went on to discuss the ways in which the notion of the humanist self has underwritten forms of counseling. Finally, the chapter introduced Michel Foucault's "care of the self," discussing in

turn “technologies of domination,” “technologies of the self,” and “an ethics of self-formation,” before raising some criticisms of Foucault. From a focus on philosophical understandings of the self and of identity, the book now moves to uncover how the terms “adolescence” and “youth” have been theorized in both psychological and sociological discourses in chapter 3 and chapter 4, respectively.