TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF

IN CURRENT AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Technologies of the Self in Current Autobiographical Practices

Foucault's 'technologies of the self' is a useful term for talking about autobiography where we see writers give meaning to their past experiences. His analyses of 'technologies of the self', along with other notions such as 'care of the self', 'renunciation of the self' and other terms, relate to the ways and practices individuals employed in forming 'truths' about their lives in Hellenistic and Imperial periods, with implications for current modes of self-relation and 'truth'-forming, and the particular ways in which 'power' and 'knowledge' incite subjects to articulate 'truths' about their lives. Psychotherapy urges one to talk about one's self and tell every detail with a promised 'truth' as a reward of this process. Foucault draws parallels between Christian ascetic practices and what the ancient Greeks called 'the care of the self'. The question this thesis explores is to what extent and in what ways do the technologies employed in the two works, *The Motion of Light in Water* by Samuel R. Delany and *My Father's House* by Sylvia Fraser, adhere to the principles upon which Christian technologies of the self concerning 'truth'-production are founded. This thesis argues that *My Father's House* is caught in a cycle of self-renunciation, akin to the mode in Christian ascetic conventions, whereas *The Motion of Light in Water*, while writing within certain textual, discursive and narrative conventions, at the same time subverts expectations of telos and unity, ironizing the conventions within which the author writes.

ÖZET

Günümüz Otobiyografi Uygulamalarında Benlik Teknolojileri

Foucault'nun 'benlik teknolojileri' kavramı yazarların geçmiş tecrübelerine anlam verdikleri otobiyografi yazım süreçleriyle ilgili değerlendirmeler yapma açısından kullanışlı bir ifadedir. 'Benlik teknolojileri' ile ilgili analizleri, 'benliğin bakımı', 'benliğin feragat edilmesi' ve diğer ifadelerle birlikte, Helenistik ve İmparatorluk dönemlerinde bireylerin hayatlarıyla ilgili 'doğru'lar oluşturma süreçleri üzerinde durup, günümüzdeki benlik ilişkisi ve 'doğru'lar oluşturma yöntemleriyle ve 'güç' ve 'bilgi'nin bireyleri hayatlarıyla ilgili 'doğru'ları ifade etmeye sevk etmesi arasında bağlantılar kurmaktadır. Psikoterapi, karşılığında ödül olarak nihai bir 'doğru' sözü vererek bireyi kendi ile ilgili konuşup her ayrıntıyı anlatmaya teşvik etmektedir. Foucault Hristiyanlık'taki münzevi pratiklerle eski Yunanlılar'ın 'benliğin bakımı' adını verdikleri yöntemler arasında paralellikler kurmaktadır. Bu tezin üzerinde durduğu soru, Samuel R. Delany'nin *The Motion of Light in Water* ve Sylvia Fraser'ın *My Father's House* adlı eserlerinin Hristiyanlık'taki 'doğru'lar oluşturmayla ilgili benlik teknolojilerinin temelini oluşturan prensiplerle ne ölçüde ve ne şekilde uyumluluk içerisinde olduğudur. Bu tez, *My Father's House*'un Hristiyanlık'taki münzevi geleneklerle benzerlik taşıyan bir 'benliğin feragat edilmesi' döngüsü içerisinde kaldığını, *The Motion of Light in Water'*ın ise, bir yandan bazı metinsel, söylemsel ve anlatısal gelenekler içinde yazarken, aynı zamanda erek ve bütünlük beklentilerini tersine çevirerek, yazarın metni yazdığı gelenekleri iğnelediğini savunmaktadır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on two autobiographical works whose characteristics represent two distinct strains in current autobiographical practices. We see two different modes of relationships with the self in these works. Truth-forming in these relationships is influenced by certain powers to which individuals willingly submit in the search for self-liberation and by giving meaning to their past experiences. Michel Foucault's notions such as technologies of the self, truth-making and the intrusion of power, as analyzed in his works, will constitute the theoretical grounds by the use of which the two works and the techniques of truth-making in them will be analyzed.

First, a brief outline of autobiography will be given and the two works will be situated within their relevant historical and formal contexts within current genres of autobiography. In the next sections Foucault's standing in current criticism will be provided and a following section will examine notions such as 'care of the self' and 'technologies of the self'. Next, *My Father's House* and *The Motion of Light in Water* will be analyzed in the context of the given Foucauldian perspectives as two distinct technologies of the self, with their own particular ways of retrospective truth-making. The last chapter will include a close reading of the two autobiographical works, situating them within the light of the theories and concepts delineated.

It is argued in this thesis that *My Father's House* and *The Motion of Light in Water* represent two distinct modes of autobiography, with distinct sets of practices and techniques that are peculiar to each: *My Father's House* relying on psychotherapeutic 'truth' and a teleological narrative with a promise of healing at the end and *The Motion*

of Light in Water being an open-ended narrative making an effort to abstain from claims to a unified self and from teleological orientations. This thesis looks at autobiography as a field with the potential for particular technologies of the self to be practiced. Foucault uses the word to discuss the ways in which certain practices, forms of thinking and cultural drives influence individuals in forming truths about their lives.

Finally, Judith Butler's theory of subjectivation will provide new fertile psychoanalytical grounds for utilizing Foucault in a more inclusive manner, in a way that will respond to feminist criticisms directed at him for relying solely on patriarchal homosexual male cultural practices. Additionally, Butler's formulations suggest the potential instrumentality of Foucault's work in filling in certain gaps in Foucault concerning the relationship between power and subjectivation. Moreover, the way Delany fits into this picture, by providing autobiographical technologies that speak of the relationship between writing, desire, memory and the self, will be delineated in the last part.

CHAPTER 2

AN OUTLINE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Autobiography, according to the Oxford Online Dictionary, is comprised of three words: *Autos*, *bios* and *graphia*, which correspond to 'self', 'human life' and 'writing' respectively. The word relates to a number of other terms such as narrative, memory, self-writing, consciousness, identity, construction, interpreting, forgetting, all of which play an important role in the production and reading of autobiographical accounts. Moreover, there are various historical periods, persons and genres relevant to these terms. All these together constitute the theoretical grounds and contexts for discussing autobiography and life-writing in general. Self-narratives are situated within the stories that surround lives. The writing of lives is always in progress and performed by those who live them as well as by others' stories that surround them simultaneously. This already-formed and ongoing narrative structure that occupies the background of our lives influences the way we tell our own stories. This structure creates a sense of direction and aim in our lives. Self-narration is an integral part of our experiences and pervades every aspect of our lives, creating a sense of direction and aim. This structure in which self-narrative experience is situated makes the constructedness of life-stories more apparent (Kerby, 1991, p. 8). However, these self-narratives are not so passively embedded within the culture. In fact, they influence the culture as much as the culture determines some of their basic characteristics (p. 8-9).

Recollection is essential to the process that takes place in the act of narration. It allows us to make an interpretation and to form a narrative structure after the events, out of the fragments that we gather from the memory. Interpretation is integral to

recollection as one puts together pieces from memory to form a present meaning (p. 44). We constantly strive to make sense of our identities and the narratives that surround these. Identities and the stories around them are subject to constant change and reformation. Language plays a key role in this, as conceptualizing of our self-conception is done with the use of language (p. 52). In this sense, narrative makes selves and society and always at the same time a work in progress. Kerby highlights that the role narratives play in shaping the webs of individual and social worlds of meaning is more easily observable in indigenous cultures, as their members are more integrated into the stories that constitute the basis for functioning within those societies. He states that in Western culture there is a "myopia" resulting from being embedded in narratives which results in not being able to notice them because of being almost too close and integrated to these narratives (p. 59). We often do not notice the influence they have on us.

While the history writer remains outside the account for the sake of objectivity, the autobiographical subject is at the core of the events he is recounting. Nevertheless, what the writer chooses to include in the work and what he / she leaves out show us his / her motives and his / her subjective dispositions. Statistics, dates, other verifiable information can be included and can be verified by looking at outside sources but the life-story being told and the meaning woven around it is "...an intersubjective exchange between narrator and reader aimed at producing a shared understanding of the meaning of a life" (Smith, 2001, p. 13). This being so, as readers of autobiography we are forced to find new and distinct ways of reading this genre. We cannot consider the information it contains as pure truth or pure fiction. We need to understand that there are discursive factors that influence the production of the life-narrative. Discursive patterns are the set of circumstances that guide the manner in which our stories find shape in being told.

Whatever we experience, after the event itself, we make sense of it using language and narrative, and we produce our stories from within language, using narrative, and from within the so-called discursive patterns (p. 26). In this sense, the notion of experience and constructing a subjectivity by relating that experience becomes central to the process of autobiography writing. It is the element in autobiography that engenders the play of truth because it is what draws the parallels between the narrated life and the reader's own life. Experience – and the kind of experience reported – is the very reason that the story at hand exists in autobiography. It is the raw material out of which the narrative is created. When reading autobiography, it is useful to keep in mind that what is given on the page is never identical to the raw material. It is the reading strategies of particular kinds of autobiography that create different positions from which we perceive the raw material. In a sense, an autobiographer is reading his own life and the reader is reading the autobiographer's reading. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson point to this relationship between reader and writer. They also emphasize the role of credibility and truth value in this relationship. According to them, autobiographers need to validate the experiences which they talk about in order to establish a mutually trusting relationship between author and reader (p. 28, 29). This interest on the part of the writer in generating credibility in the readers is another factor that adds to the modification of the story. Sometimes the writer aims to create sympathy for the story while at other times there may be a deliberate effort to receive a negative reaction. In any case, the identity of the writer plays a significant role in determining the attitude of the reader towards the narrative. "Readers also have expectations about who has the cultural authority to tell a particular kind of life story, and they have expectations about what stories derived from direct, personal knowledge should assert" (p. 30). The identity position of the writer

plays an important role in determining certain expectations on the part of the reader. However, deciding on what position the author speaks from is not an easy task and integrates into the process the vice of prejudice.

> To speak autobiographically as a black woman is not to speak as a 'woman' and as 'black'. It is to speak as a black woman. To speak as an Australian indigenous man is not to speak as a 'man' plus as 'Australian' plus as 'Aboriginal'. There is no universal identity of 'man' or 'woman' outside specificities of historical and cultural location. (p. 36)

This leads us towards a more expansive perception of identities with multiple origins and characteristics. "Like Lorde in *Zami,* Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* effectively traces the hybridity of her own identity in a way that suggests how multiple and intersectional identities can be" (p. 37).

The physical body is of central importance in the context of a discussion of autobiography because it is in fact the body itself that goes through experiences and then stores them in the memory, which itself is embedded in the body. It is "…a site of autobiographical knowledge because memory itself is embodied. And life narrative is a site of embodied knowledge because autobiographical narrators are embodied subjects" (p. 37). This embeddedness and embodiment has physiological and cultural implications which are reflected in a life narrative. These wants and needs of the body influence what will be included in the account and in what way. The body is placed into certain parts of the narrative as an acting, moving agent in ways particular to the events being narrated. Moreover this body is situated within political, social, familial contexts and within certain geographical locations and there are specific orientations, limitations, liberties associated with it (p. 38). Thus this moving, functioning, acting, reacting body is presented with a full array of performances that give shape to the body of the text itself. "Perhaps, then, it is more helpful to approach autobiographical telling as a performative

act. To theorize memory, experience, identity, embodiment, and agency is to begin to understand the complexities of autobiographical subjectivity and its performative nature" (p. 48). Judith Butler (1999) writes that the body is the space "on the surface" of which are written the whole array of performances that constitute the subject within a variety of contexts (p. 185). She talks about the way bodies are inscribed with a gender through a repetition of performances: "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically *incredible"* (p. 193). This again emphasizes the multifarious effects of a variety of powers and technologies at work in forming certain stories on and around the body, all of which shape the life-narrative being told. Autobiography in this sense is an inscription into a self-space – physical, psychological, emotional, cultural, political, spiritual, etc. – which was already inscribed and is at the same time already constantly in the process of being inscribed.

Sites create and fulfill certain expectations of credibility, authenticity and authority with respect to the relevance between identity and the subject matter at hand. These identities and contexts are situated within certain conventions, which have a rhetoric and style peculiar to themselves. This requires assuming particular attitudes, paying attention to certain elements and applying various methods to the process of reading autobiographies: "…when we read or listen to autobiographical narratives, we need to attend to methods of self-examination, introspection, and remembering encoded in them through generic conventions" (Smith, 2001, p. 70). What we have in autobiography is the 'I' telling the story to us, and that 'I' selects only certain parts that she is willing to relate with regard to the story being told. Smith and Watson refer to Bhaktin's notion of "heteroglossia" as suggesting that the "I" in the story is not unified

and stable. It is constantly being re-inscribed and reformed even as the story is in the process of being told. The 'real' or 'historical' I, which we cannot know; the narrating 'I', from whose perspective we receive the story; the narrated 'I', that is the persona that is presented as the image of the author within the narration; the ideological 'I', which reflects the circumstances of the author's cultural background (p. 58-62).

In "Autobiography as De-facement" Paul de Man (1979) speaks of the difficulties of defining autobiography as a literary genre. Just as anything tells something of its author and is thus in a sense to some extent autobiographical, by the same logic nothing is an autobiography (p. 922). There is always a space between the stories told, the ways in which they are complemented and presented and the factual information – names, addresses, etc., – that the autobiographer tries to put together with as much veracity as he can and is willing to. De Man says that it is possible to remain in an 'undecidable' position when it comes to talking about the difference between fiction and autobiography. According to him, autobiography is "…not a genre or a mode, but a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs, to some degree, in all texts" (p. 921). Being dependent on each other in the creation of this understanding, the autobiographer and the reader are on a plane of mutual exchange. The constitution of the subject is established through "…mutual reflexive substitution" (p. 921). De Man goes on to say that in the case of autobiography we are not to seek reliable knowledge of a self but instead we accept that there can be no final word in "...textual systems made up of tropological substitutions" (p. 922). This argument leads the reader of autobiography to a point where efforts to verify the veracity of the account will prove to be futile, yet seemingly in this case, rather unnecessary as well. Yet, there are times when the account carries a message that the author feels she needs to communicate to the readers, and

autobiographers use a variety of strategies to establish that sort of vitality in the way they present the life-narrative at hand in order to convince the reader.

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (2001) also speak of two kinds of narrative modalities: the chronological, where the author takes a retrospective glance at his life and presents happenings in a historically organized pattern, and in a linear fashion. Alternatively, linear chronology is abandoned and a stance of multi-directional 'geographics' is assumed. In the latter, a more multi-layered subject position is explored as the narrator is involved in overlapping subject positions (p. 72-73).

Similarly to the complexity of subject positions and overlapping identities in autobiography, a formal proliferation can also be observed in the way autobiographical material reaches us. In fact, it is represented in a great variety of guises such as "…short feature and documentary films; theater pieces; installations; performance art in music, dance, and monologue; the painted or sculpted self-portrait; quilts, collages, and mosaics; body art; murals; comics; and cyber art" (p. 74). Smith emphasizes the value of autobiographical acts as intertextual, multi-layered and eclectic ways of expressing, constructing, remaking, transforming identities, lives and the culture(s) in which they are located or originate from. "It is in our autobiographical acts, contextual, provisional, performative, that we give shape to, and remake ourselves through, memory, experience, identity, embodiment, and agency" (p. 81). If we want to understand what is at stake in narratives, we need to look in detail at the relationship between the author and the reader, as well as the ways in which autobiographical acts manifest themselves in the culture which we live in (p. 81).

Looking at some of these challenges, we can observe how a number of them are the result of the complex processes of one's evaluation of oneself. In the act of perceiving one's own self, there are numerous obstacles that arise:

> Not only is there that sort of omniscient, synoptic, after-the-fact coherence of which Millhauser speaks, but there is also an additional psychic load bound up with the simple fact that the object of one's scrutiny here is oneself. In addition to the problem of false coherence, therefore, there are problems such as wishful thinking, defenses, illusions, delusions… (p. 116)

Also, as mentioned before, the story of our life is told before us and the story we have of ourselves is made up of fragments and bits that reach us from the accounts of others, and the many ways in which we tell them can be in line with the canons that surround us (p. 117). We depart from what really happened when narrating our lives, and the politics of narrating the self add complexity to this process of autobiography writing. Yet, in the context of autobiography, narrative truth, with its set of tools of writing and reading takes the place of historical truth, as a result of the impossibility of historical truth. However, what is the truth value of narrative truth and how do we compare it to actual happenings and reality?

> …there is no possibility of ever returning to those ticking moments and telling it like it really was, autobiography—and, by extension, the process of self-reflection itself—can lead to nothing but illusions. Evolutionarily speaking, it would seem that we are born liars; and again, it is the very existence of self-consciousness that seems to be at fault. The situation is a paradoxical one. (p. 124)

Even though this puts us in a difficult situation with regard to the possibility of autobiographical truth, narrative presents us with illusions, self-conscious explorations, inventions, temporal motion, all of which help us reveal new meanings which are instrumental in reshaping and reconstructing our lives anew again and again. Mark Freeman (1995) speaks of the ability of interpretations of our lives to say much more

about lives than historical knowledge; that the past is scrutinized from the interpretive perspective of the present. Therefore, life narratives cannot be judged according to whether they represent what actually happened (p. 31). The presence of narrative integrity is not actually a direct indication of truth and sometimes to be able to attain that integrity narrators sacrifice much of the actual material. We attach meanings to events, people and objects for the sake of finding connections and links between them and to integrate them into the narrative.

Charles Taylor (1992) says that life-stories cannot be independent from a notion of the 'good life'; that is, lives are imbued with meaning and interpretation (p. 18). The peril here lies with manipulating the narrative in order to maintain a particular facade that suits the author's own notion of the 'good life' or the expectation of the reader's notion of the 'good life'. Taylor attempts to relate the ways and courses which are the sources of our modern selfhood today. He emphasizes that every life-story is imbued with a moral essence, or an expression of the good life lies behind human narratives throughout history. Taylor links the crisis of modern identities not only with an individual "meaninglessness" but also with the lack of a unifying meaning that unites a great number of people, the absence of a grand narrative; also, there is no binding aim that we are compelled to achieve collectively (p. 18, 19). Mark Freeman and Jens Brockmeier (Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001) distinguish between two kinds of perceptions of the good life and emphasize that in the West meanings and narratives are ambiguous and multi-voiced because there is no agreement on what qualities the good life carries. On the other hand, there are other cultures in which stories of the past are told with greater clarity and higher narrative integrity because the majority of people agree on certain standards concerning the good life (p. 76).

CHAPTER 3

MICHEL FOUCAULT AND THE TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF

3.1 Foucault in criticism

In his "Introduction" to *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault,* Gary Cutting (2005) gives a brief mapping of Foucault's work and outlines some characteristics inherent in his works. He says that Foucault's work is difficult to understand, that there is a general obscurity to it and that it requires at least some interpretation. However, he claims that given the fragmentary nature of his writings, interpreting is likely to misrepresent Foucault and misdirect the readers to a certain extent (p. 2). He proceeds to relate a number of interpretations and criticisms. According to Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Foucault has a "new method"; "interpretative analytics", with which he goes beyond structuralism and hermeneutics. They find Foucault's historico-philosophical method to have a privileged role in contemporary analyses. They find it to be a valid way of approaching certain problems that are inherent to more contemporary literary analyses (p. 3). Cutting states that there are two aspects in Foucault's voice that the above and other interpretations do not relate to: "specificity" and "marginality". Even in his works that seem to cover subjects very much related to each other, there is no interrelated reference among his writings. Cutting calls this "lack of self-citation" and explains how every time Foucault challenges a discipline and presents an alternative to it, he focuses particularly on one specific area. This specificity of the tone and his particular approach enable him to construct analyses that are not general tools to use for every situation but are useful for analyzing a particular set of circumstances (p. 3, 4). Cutting also emphasizes that, throughout his oeuvre, Foucault's concerns were

constantly changing, and that he was known to have, at times, provided generalizations concerning his works (p. 5). The wide variety of interpretations and criticisms of Foucault's work thus can be considered as possibilities of seeing, widening the perspectives on the strata of meanings in his work, rather than entrapping Foucault into a narrow range of meanings.

One of the criticisms directed at Foucault is that his analyses of power and knowledge point to a state of hopelessness or take out all the motivation or desire towards change; as if there is no way of escaping the clutches of an all-permeating and omnipresent power. Charles Taylor's criticism is that Foucault leaves us with no reason whatsoever to make changes in the system of power. Likewise, Richard Rorty criticizes Foucault for having an almost inhuman coldness when dealing with important practical problems of our day that require practical solutions (p. 107). According to Joseph Rouse, these criticisms are too insistent on extracting answers from Foucault, whereas Foucault's manner of articulating the way certain discourses have transformed throughout various periods implicitly points towards strategies through which one can transform one's understanding and approach to matters concerning our present day. He argues that Foucault's approach would be better understood if conceived as a dynamic perception of power. Power and knowledge in this sense are visible in the various fields in which they are used, deployed and exercised to create a network of alignments only to produce and reproduce power in numerous other ways again and again. To identify power and knowledge and to point to particular sources would be to misjudge the power of power to disperse in a multi-directional way (p. 108). In this respect, Rouse proposes that describing Foucault's analyses of power and knowledge as being insufficient to provide hope for a better world or being unable to have claims on truth are a lack of

ability to conceive the dynamic aspect of Foucault's notion power and knowledge (p. 115). In Foucault's case it is more like an attempt not to find answers but to delineate on and to implicitly relate to problems. He refuses to assume "an epistemic and political sovereignty" (p. 116) and evades pragmatic standpoints, for which he is criticized by Rorty and others. In fact, the matter of who might be considered as the authority to speak certain 'truths' is precisely what Foucault analyzes to show the way power and knowledge work together and proliferate.

With reference to the receptions of Foucault's work in feminist circles, Jana Sawicki (2005) emphasizes the toolkit aspect of his work rather than its ability to produce answers to problems. She speaks about the relevance of Foucault's oeuvre to feminist theories in terms of his focus on the relationship between power and oppressed and marginalized groups, his focus on the way science targets bodies and sexualities with a normalizing bio-power, his emphasis on the ways in which certain ways of thinking have been made invisible by other power and knowledge apparatuses. She also adds that Foucault and feminist theories shared a challenging attitude towards fundamentalist and foundational subject theories (p. 381, 382).

One of the criticisms that feminists have directed at Foucault's work is its gender-blindness. Sandra Barky discusses statements or demonstrations of the ways in which his theories relate to and apply to women. For instance, in this context, attractiveness and fashion, among others, are what women become disciplined towards indirectly; therefore they willingly submit to these oppressive mechanisms of power. What is problematic here is that Foucault's accounts of power do not describe power as a repressive force. Instead power produces subjects as a way of perpetuating itself. This is something that Foucault is criticized for because it leaves us with no legitimate motive

for resisting power (p. 383). Sawicki refers to Nancy Fraser's criticism of Foucault for not making distinctions between different levels of oppression as well as his anti-humanist rhetoric. Fraser bases her criticism on our need to have certain ideals, such as human dignity, and she would like to see Foucault presenting us with a new way to freedom. This simply ignores the fact that Foucault himself was against a universal and rational moral basis for his analyses. He rejects the idea that autonomy should be compromised in terms of values and conduct in order to maintain a more harmonious existence with society in general (p. 384). This normative appeal to Foucault's work in order to produce practical answers for problems of our day is in line with Richard Rorty and Charles Taylor's expectations from Foucault's work. Nevertheless, Foucault did not aim to base his work on a kind of social utilitarianism. Foucault's intention in this regard is to point to directions, but not to give answers, because that would, above all else, go against the whole cause of acting autonomously. To put it more clearly, in Foucault we see a rather suspicious attitude to humanism in general, as it is being used by this and that party in order to attain certain ends. Jana Sawicki describes Foucault's position as being a middle place between "…liberal ideologies of progress and nihilism" (p. 386). Foucault chooses to address certain periods and particular lines of thought and analyzes the ways in which they transform and relate to other thoughts and periods, rather than creating totalizing arguments, answering great questions of humanity and providing practical solutions. Foucault's approach is different from that of Kant's. Instead of submitting to a greater rational power, Foucault urges everyone to use their own rational faculties to push themselves to the limits of their own understanding (p. 387).

One of the common problems in Foucault's work from the perspective of feminist theorists is that he does not focus on female subjectivity per se, and that he

centers his analyses on homosexual hierarchical relationships. Jana Sawicki emphasizes the toolkit aspect of Foucault's work, rather than its ability to provide answers to problems of our day (p. 393).

Post-structuralist feminists find Foucault to be useful in giving directions and complementing analyses for the constitution of gendered subjects. Judith Butler (1997) is an example of this. In *The Psychic Life of Power, s*he makes use of Foucault in her theory of subjectivation. The way she utilizes Foucault to talk about gender theory points to possibilities for arguments that can counter the criticisms that claim the absence of feminist focus in his work.

At this juncture, it would be useful to emphasize once more the significance of Foucault's insistence on such a self-critique and the relationship of this with autobiography and its various ways of analyzing the self by one's own self. It is a field in which these techniques of self-understanding are put into practice. In this regard, the very manner in which this articulation takes place plays an important role in determining to what extent one can engage an open dialogue with oneself, and that dialogue is the result of practices that can be used to take care of the self; practices that allow one to be more easily able to tell what kind of powers invade and influence one's private ways of looking at oneself as opposed to teleological and totalizing approaches. Engaging language as a means in which we can constitute and habitualize certain ways of expressing our experiences in a manner that is not totalizing but rather performed for the sake of recalling in many different ways, and leaving the door open for other interpretations, is what will be emphasized again in the context of Delany's work in the last chapter.

3.2 Prelude to 'Technologies of the Self'

The word "technology" comes from the Greek word "technologia", a combination of the words 'technē'; art, skill, and 'logia'; logic. This etymology also establishes the link between the technological and the Platonic – Aristotelian discourse on knowledge, memory, science, systematization (Technology, 2017). The term 'technology' is of central importance in understanding Foucault's analyses of various periods in *Discipline and Punish (1995)* and *The History of Sexuality* (1978). He uses the term to talk about the practices, dynamics and other cultural powers that influence individuals in forming 'truths' about their lives, their experiences and in constituting selves through what is called the 'hermeneutics' of the self. This thesis takes Foucault's analysis of 'the technologies of the self' as its central theoretical perspective. In the light of Foucault's work, mainly *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality,* the kinds of narratives, selves and finally 'truths', created in *My Father's House* by Sylvia Fraser (1989) and *The Motion of Light in Water* by Samuel R. Delany (2004), will be analyzed as current versions of 'technologies of the self' that Foucault discusses in the context of various epochs such as Greco-Roman, Christian asceticism, Enlightenment and the twentieth century. The analysis and parallels will not take the form of tracing a lineage for current practices of the self in autobiography in the Greco-Roman times and in Christian practices – although Foucault's work suggests that there are parallels between ancient and modern practices of the self. Rather, understanding the mechanics underlying the formation of the self, through the way it interacts with and operates under certain forms of power, will be the object of this analysis.

Foucault looks at the ways in which certain practices and forms of thought are in time transformed into the norms that lie at the core of our current ways of understanding

and interacting with our selves. These relationships with the self in different periods are in a way what the subject establishes in autobiography; by relating oneself to oneself. The aim is to develop certain parallelisms between the ways in which Foucault analyzes self-formation and truth-production – by studying these practices – and the ways the two aforementioned works employ narrative, language, memory, writing, sexuality as instruments, through the respective uses of which in the two works, two distinct forms of technologies of the self in current autobiographical practices are portrayed.

The obligation to tell the 'truth' about the self, the need to find it inside the self, the necessity to discover it and to circulate it publicly; Foucault puts emphasis on this as being characteristic of certain technologies in the Greco-Roman period, as well as in Christian confessional practices and in psychotherapy, albeit putting emphasis on major distinctive features between Hellenistic, Greco-Roman and Christian confessional and ascetic practices. We shall first take a look at how he analyzes certain connections between these various practices and forms of thought.

The 'technologies of the self' that Foucault discusses span individuals' interactions in a variety of traditions and forms of thinking and relate to a broad array of themes. Setting his analytic concern with the technologies of the self within the context of his broader concerns with modalities of power, Foucault (1997) states that he would like to focus on the "...different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology" (p. 224). He sees the knowledge developed in the light of these powers as something that humans should develop a certain awareness about: "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" (p. 224). Foucault classifies these techniques into four main groups:

> …(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. (p. 225)

He emphasizes that these are interrelated as well as having a function of their own, whichever field they operate in. The focus of this thesis is the last one of the above technologies due to its immediate relevance to autobiography where individuals seek to establish who they are and to transform themselves. Foucault would like to analyze the ways in which the subject submits to certain technologies of the self in order to take control of himself (p. 225). He calls his analysis "…the evolution of the hermeneutics of the self…" (p. 225). The word 'hermeneutic' comes from Greek and its meaning according to Oxford online dictionary corresponds to 'interpreting' (Hermeneutic, 2015). The expression 'hermeneutics of the self' in theory and philosophy is used to talk about practices, ways of thinking and cultural tendencies that work together in constituting the self. In this respect, this thesis examines the processes through which the authors go as they construct their selves by forming 'truths' in the course of writing their autobiographical accounts.

In a lecture published as "About the Beginning of Hermeneutics of the Self", Foucault (1993) begins his discussion of technologies of the self by giving an example of the way Doctor Leuret takes his patient to the shower and makes him tell what is on his mind. He lets the cold water pour on the patient until the patient feels compelled to

accept that he is mad. To make the patient accept that he is mad, to make him recognize his condition, is the first step here to being cured (p. 200). Foucault states that,

> ...to declare aloud and intelligibly the truth about oneself – I mean, to confess – has in the Western world been considered for a long time either as a condition for redemption of one's sins or as an essential item in the condemnation of the guilty. (p. 201)

Foucault uses this example to initiate his argument that salvation is strictly tied to knowing who one is and telling it as explicitly as possible to others. This is how Foucault begins to talk about a genealogy of the modern subject. He speaks of the way pre-war and post-war philosophy in Continental Europe was dominated by the meaningful subject, as an effect of Descartes and Cartesian philosophy as being perpetuated through Husserl's philosophy (p. 201). The collapse of the walls of grand narratives around the individual meant that every individual was free to, and in fact had to, construct for oneself new meanings. This emphasis on the subject gradually waned in later years.

Foucault speaks of two complications that arose at the time: The philosophy of the subject did not yield a philosophy of knowledge. Also, this form of thought did not take into consideration the systems of meaning underlying cultural mechanisms and narrative practices. The filling of this two-fold vacuum later caused the rise of logical positivism, the thought of objective knowledge and the emergence of what was called structuralism (p. 202). This being the case, Foucault's own direction was distinct from these two. His intention was to steer away from the philosophy of the subject by studying the systems of meaning through which the subject was constructed, by providing a genealogy of the modern subject (p. 202). That is what his expansive project is concerned with.

The part of Foucault's project where he examines in various periods the relationships of individuals with themselves by submitting to a set of norms, practices and forms of thought, is the part that is most relevant to this thesis, since in this thesis the objective is to look at the way authors of autobiography engage a relationship with the self, as well as employing 'technologies', ways which make it possible to form and shape 'truths' about their lives in particular ways, and lastly to talk about the possible consequences and implications these formations may have with regard to 'truth'-production in autobiography.

Foucault emphasizes that there are two major points to dwell on throughout such a task as he engages. One is the techniques of domination and the other is 'technology of the self'. Here is his definition of the latter:

> Techniques which permit individuals to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves, and to attain a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power, and so on. (p. 203)

This thesis aims to first look at how Foucault traces these interactions between these techniques of domination and techniques of the self, and then to apply his analyses to the two aforementioned autobiographical works.

3.3 Technologies of the self

Foucault takes as the point of origin for his discussion of technologies of the self the term *Epimeleisthai sautou,* 'to take care of the self'. Taking care of the self always preceded 'knowing yourself'. "One had to occupy oneself with oneself before the Delphic principle was brought into action. There was a subordination of the second principle to the former" (Foucault, 1997, p. 226). 'Knowing oneself' is a way of living,

not something that is achieved and comes to an end. Foucault gives the example of Plato's dialogue *Apology*, where Socrates tells the Athenians that above everything else they should take care of themselves and that Socrates himself is helping them turn to this activity (p. 227). 'Care of the self' was widely practiced in Hellenistic and Imperial periods, taking on different forms among many groups; Epicureans, Cynics, Stoics, Pythagoreans all had some form of 'taking care of the self' embedded into their way of living (p. 232).

Later on, this practice gradually begins to undergo transformations: Knowing oneself in Christian tradition meant renouncing the self.

Alcibiades was seen as the most important dialogue of Plato by the Neo-Platonists in the third or fourth century A.D. For them Plato's dialogues were invaluable tools of education. It was a good starting point for Plato's philosophy and 'Taking care of oneself' is its first principle" (p. 229). Alcibiades is advised to contemplate his soul in the divine element in order to start taking care of himself. Foucault stresses the importance the dialogue gives to taking care of oneself as a prerequisite for any other activity; in this case becoming a politician (p. 231). With Stoicism the importance given to dialogue leaves its place to listening to the master. This is practiced as an extremely important part of one's life, as listening to *logos.* In this way one learns to separate truth from falsity (p. 236). Foucault gives an example from Seneca in order to point out the difference of approaches between Seneca's time and Christianity later on. In examining himself Seneca uses language that judges himself, like someone condemning himself, but this is not really a renunciation. Seneca does this all the time; this is a constant practice and not a way of rejecting one's own past. It is not tied to feelings of guilt. A Christian on the other hand does this kind of activity in order to find out in what way he

has sinned. *Anakhoresis,* spiritually retreating into yourself in the Stoic tradition is not done to find out what mistakes one has made but to remember the way one is to act: it is a "mnemotechnical formula" (p. 238).

Askesis in the Stoic tradition corresponded to continuous looking at yourself, separating wrong from right and making truth a part of yourself in the Stoic tradition. Foucault distinguishes Stoic practices of care of the self from renunciation of the self in Christianity, describing it as 'the memory of what one has done and what one has had to do' (p. 238). He stresses that the self in Christianity is renounced as it is part of a reality that is unwanted (p. 238). *Melete* was part of askesis, a meditational preparation, and *gymnasia* was more on the physical side. Together the aim of these practices was to prepare the individual to think, speak and act in the right way when circumstances required him to (p. 240).

When we look at the technologies of the self in Christianity we see a different picture. Taking care of the self in Christianity was looked upon with doubt as being preoccupied with the self instead of giving one's attention to God was a sin (p. 228). Also, '...in theoretical philosophy from Descartes to Husserl, knowledge of the self (the thinking subject) takes on an ever-increasing importance as the first step in the theory of knowledge' (p. 228). With Descartes, the affirmation of the thinking subject is rooted in the act of thinking planted there by an outside entity, God. Our meaningful existence is validated by the act of thinking and that act is a reflection and proof of God. Also, in the context of the Age of Enlightenment, man is at the center of everything as the ultimate 'knowing' agent. The emphasis is laid on the second Greek maxim, rather than taking care of the self. Foucault stresses that after the Greco-Roman philosophical traditions a gradual transformation of the forms of thinking and the practices surrounding the self-

created distinct moral values, which are present throughout our current ways of perceiving the self.

> There has been an inversion in the hierarchy of the two principles of antiquity, 'Take care of yourself' and 'know yourself'. In Greco-Roman culture, knowledge of oneself appeared as the consequence of the care of the self. In the modern world, knowledge of oneself constitutes the fundamental principle. (p. 228)

The urge to know the self and its deepest particulars and to subject that knowledge to the gaze of others through its articulation is what constitutes the link between Christian confession and the incitement to tell in the context of psychotherapy. The field of autobiography constitutes a prolific site where these practices, the technologies of the self that Foucault speaks of, operate and the care of the self is practiced.

There is a distinction between Greco-Roman philosophical traditions and Christian confessional practices that Foucault dwells on. In the first the focus is on enabling the individual to become autonomous by constantly applying himself to the task of the 'care of the self', as a lifelong practice. In the latter the individual renounces the former sinful identity, tells this to the master, to the public, the truth is extracted from within and before the light of the divine for everyone to see. This distinction is also obvious with the 'hupomnemata' and 'correspondence', which lay down some of the most important aspects of the culture of the self in the Greco-Roman philosophical and monastic traditions.

3.4 Hupomnemata and correspondence: Writing as a technology

Writing was also important in the culture of the care of the self. One of the tasks that defined the care of the self was that of taking notes on oneself to be reread, writing

treatises and letters to friends to help them, and keeping notebooks in order to reactivate for oneself the truths one needed.

In traditional political life, oral culture was largely dominant, and therefore rhetoric was important. Yet the development of the administrative structures and the bureaucracy of the imperial period increased the amount and role of writing in the political sphere. In Plato's writings, dialogue gave way to the literary pseudo-dialogue. By the Hellenistic age, though, writing prevailed, and real dialectic passed to correspondence. Taking care of oneself became linked to constant writing activity.

> The self is something to write about, a theme or object (subject) of writing activity. That is not a modern trait born of the Reformation or of Romanticism; it is one of the most ancient of Western traditions. It was well established and deeply rooted when Augustine started his *Confessions.* (Foucault, 1997, p. 232)

The Pythagoreans, Socratics and Cynics had been taking *askesis*, which was any sort of training that was performed to attain a skill, very seriously. Among these were memorizations, abstinences, self-examinations, meditations, silence, listening to others. Writing was added to these only in later periods, yet it played a very significant role (Foucault, 1997, p. 208). Through writing, one is brought before the gaze of others. Foucault talks about the link between writing, practice and thought.

> ...writing is associated with the exercise of thought in two different ways. One takes the form of a linear "series": it goes from meditation to the activity of writing and from there to *gumnazein*, that is, to training and trial in a real situation-a labor of thought, a labor through writing, a labor in reality. The other is circular: the meditation precedes the notes which enable the rereading, which in turn reinitiates the meditation. (p. 209)

In this respect writing becomes an important link between truth and rational action. It helps form principles to act upon from widely known and accepted ‘truths’. Foucault also refers to the term, *ethopoietic*, used by Plutarch, to describe the function of writing. According to this, writing acts as a tool with which truth is integrated into one’s

character. It is "...an element of self-training" (p. 209). Hupomnemata were "...raw material for drafting more systematic treatises, in which one presented arguments and means for struggling against some weakness (such as anger, envy, gossip, flattery) or for overcoming some difficult circumstance (a grief, an exile, ruin, disgrace)" (p. 210). However, these written accounts were not just simple auxiliaries for the memory. They were to be "...*prokheiron, ad manum, in promptu.* 'Near at hand,' then, not just in the sense that one would be able to recall them to consciousness, but that one should be able to use them, whenever the need was felt, in action" (p. 210). In this way, through repetitive writing and reading, these accounts make up an important part of the knowledge about the self. They are used to maintain a certain kind of control over the self; a "...*logos bioethikos* for oneselef, an equipment of helpful discourses" (p. 210). Foucault stresses that "The writing of the *hupomnemata* is an important relay in the subjectivation of discourse" (p. 210). Foucault analyzes the way these texts contribute to the formation of the self. Firstly, reading plays an important role in allowing a bridge between others and the self. By reading, one can benefit from what has already been said. However, it is advised not to over-indulge in reading, not to get lost in reading for one runs the risk of forgetting oneself. In order to avoid the 'stultitia' – distraction, mental agitation, lack of concentration, anxiety concerning the future – that excessive reading may lead to, one must engage in writing. 'Hupomnemata' serve to satisfy this need by "...fixing acquired elements, and by constituting a share of the past, as it were, toward which it is always possible to turn back, to withdraw" (p. 212). Secondly, writing allows one to take and adopt as one's own selections from other traditional names that represent an authoritative perspective (p. 212). They also serve as conduits by which the past is brought before the gaze of others, but they are more like instruments of sharing

rather than tools which render the individual transparent to the public gaze or emphasize the defective aspects of the person in a sinning context.

Also, this process requires the individual to digest the material that he has read and reread. This is carried out through a careful process of transcription. Through writing, one can now represent a 'body' in whom rational action has been acquired as a result of a process of interaction through reading, selecting, writing. This may bring to mind an erasure of one's own identity. However, we must keep in mind that, with regard to the material that has been absorbed through reading, one is advised to make them blend within one's soul in a harmonious way – and not have them lie in one's memory store as separate forms of thought:

> One's own soul that must be constituted in what one writes; but, just as a man bears his natural resemblance to his ancestors on his face, so it is good that one can perceive the filiation of thoughts that are engraved in his soul. (p. 214)

Foucault goes on to say that while the 'hupomnemata' "...enable the formation of the self out of the collected discourse of others" (p. 217), 'correspondence' is where we find the first traces of the historical development of the narrative of the self. One reads it as he writes and the recipient can read and reread it. In this way, correspondence is similar to hupomnemata. It renders the individual more able in whatever he is talking about, while at the same time acting upon the addressee (p. 215). It is also a tool that grants a transparency to the recipient. It is a meeting ground for the two of them.

Other times, the letter also takes the form of a 'review of the day', where daily events are related and thus one is placed under the gaze of others. Matters concerning health may very well constitute the subject of the account narrated in the letter. In juxtaposing the writing traditions of *hupomnemata and correspondence* to Christian technologies of the self, Foucault says:

> In this case – that of the *hupomnemata* – it was a matter of constituting oneself as a subject of rational action through the appropriation, the unification and the subjectivation of a fragmentary and selected already-said; in the case of the monastic notation of spiritual experiences, it will be a matter of dislodging the most hidden impulses from the inner recesses of the soul, thus enabling oneself to break free of them. In the case of the epistolary account of oneself, it is a matter of bringing into congruence the gaze of the other and that gaze which one aims at oneself when one measures one's everyday actions according to the rules of a technique of living. (p. 221)

Thus, we see more clearly that the hupomnemata and the correspondence played an important role in Hellenistic and imperial culture, and were later transformed into different technologies in the monastic traditions, where they made the individual's actions visible to others.

As we have seen so far, the technologies in the times of Plato and the Hellenistic and imperial periods could be characterized as instruments that served to aid the individual in understanding himself, allowing him to implement a set of practices and rules over himself, maintaining a constant care over himself, either on his own or with the help of a select group of other individuals, by keeping mental and written records, by recounting his experiences, actions and thoughts through speech or writing. The relationship with the master is one that aims to eventually grant the subject autonomy.

3.5 The role of dreams and their interpretation

Foucault (1986) notes that in the culture of ancient Greeks analyzing dreams was "one of the techniques of existence" (p. 5). There were professionals to consult on that matter, as well as individual effort to understand the meaning of a dream. It was commonly believed that dreams could show future happenings, as well as having a connection point with gods in order to receive advice (p. 5). In this regard, Foucault chooses to dwell on

The Interpretation of Dreams by Artemidorus, which was a rather concise source for a secular, methodological manual for interpreting dreams.

According to Artemidorus, 'enypnia' are dreams in which our basic, immediate desires are fulfilled; someone who is hungry dreams of food, someone who is ill dreams of being well. The other kind of dreams Artemidorus talks about are 'oneiroi'. These talk about what is to take place in the near future, as well as about what excites, moves and changes the soul (p. 10). There is another distinction at work with regard to each of these two types of dreams: Some are direct, transparent and clear; whereas others are figurative.

In this configuration the challenge in terms of interpretation is deciding whether the dream is a state or event dream and whether the dream is a transparent or allegorical one (p.10). According to Artemidorus, it is important to consider who the dreamer is; wise and virtuous individuals are able to keep their passions, fears and desires under control, and to maintain physical, mental and emotional balance in themselves, so state dreams do not occur to them (p. 11). When it comes to the interpretation of allegorical dreams, the first elements to look at are the relationship between what the dream shows and what those images say about the future. The other thing to consider is the dream in terms of good and bad, which is determined with respect to the dream's conformity with nature, law, custom, craft, names and time. Depending on the circumstances, the meaning of the dream can be read inversely though. "There is a considerable margin of variation, therefore, around the positive or negative signs and signifieds" (p. 16). This requires that the interpretation take into consideration all conditions regarding the dreamer, as well as the meaning related to what one sees in the dream (p. 16).

Foucault stresses that Artemidorus' text does not say what one should or should not do; what it reveals instead is an ethics of the subject in that period of time (p. 16). To put it briefly, what determines whether the dreamer will be fortunate or unfortunate is the social and cultural significations that dreams points to. For example, for a woman, to dream that she is in a sexual act with a man, is always good (p. 20). If a father is active in a sexual dream with his son, this a waste of semen; and is a sign of losing money (p. 21). If a father dreams he is passive in a sexual dream with his son, this is a bad sign, pointing to hostile feelings (p. 22). The dream interpretation described here talks about an economy between what is gained and what is lost according to the social status of the dreamer. It is not an analysis that aims to bring out what is wrong with the person, neither does it attempt to make public that which is personal by submitting to the gaze of an authoritative ear. In the culture of the self, everyone is encouraged to interpret their own dreams. It was part of taking care of the self. The cultivation of the self was of paramount importance within the culture at that time.

3.6 The culture of confession

In Christianity, these technologies become ways of keeping the individual under permanent scrutiny, making him submit to certain regular confessional practices, rendering him the police of his own actions and thoughts at all times, making him reject himself and his own life in order to be able to install in their stead the will of God and the master – the others to whose community he belongs.

Exomologesis, "making truth inside oneself", is publishing oneself. The idea here is to show through acts of repentance and other behaviors one's true sinning self in public, even before verbally admitting one's sins. In this way one publishes the sinning

body and it is made to reveal itself in its true sinful visage. The corruption of the flesh is shown to the world and the flesh is made to confess its sin in front of the gaze of others (Taylor, 2009, p. 19). This is a way of renunciation of one's sinful past and self and also a way of purifying oneself in front of God. Finally, it was different from Greco-Roman technologies of the self as it "…did not occur discursively but through public acts" (p. 20).

Exagoreusis, "permanent verbalization", was a technique which was developed in Christian monasteries. There was, in the life of the ancient disciple, more solitude and contemplation without the involvement of the master. This changed in Christian monastic life to performing every act with permission from the master, and anything that was done without the knowledge of the master was considered to be theft. Instead of retiring to their solitude as the ancient disciples did, the Christian monks obediently went to their masters to make their confessions. The aim was to control and discipline the thoughts, rather than the acts, so that they may continually be directed towards God (p. 21).

These technologies transformed in the later centuries into technologies to the gaze and scrutiny of which Western thought presented itself in the manner of "permanent verbalization". "Unlike in the monastic setting, however, these discourses of the human sciences and of psychiatry, medicine and law do not aim to simultaneously destroy the subject they discover…" (p. 25) but instead allow it to multiply and proliferate. Thus, we see at work a mechanism of power to which the individual willingly submits, a self-renunciation that one chooses to pursue. The relationship with the master, contrary to what it was in the philosophical traditions, aims to further cast the grasp of mechanisms of control and surveillance on the subject.

Chloe Taylor looks at Augustine's position with regard to Greco-Roman and Christian technologies of the self by referring to various interpretations of him and seeks to answer the question of why Augustine is not discussed in Foucault's work on confession. Taylor refers to an interview in which Foucault differentiates Augustine's view of self from that of the ancient Greeks. According to this, whereas for the Greeks, as well as for Stoic philosophy, the emphasis was on the way actions with regard to one's desires were managed, for Christian monasticism and for Augustine it was on "… 'Permanent verbalization' of thoughts and desires" (p. 27). Augustine is distinguished from Greeks and Stoics in terms of the significance he attached to submitting his thoughts and feelings to the scrutiny of God. Philip Cary's thesis also supports the idea of a contrast between the Greeks and Augustine. Cary argues that since it was not acceptable in Christian theology, Augustine eventually abandoned the Plotinian conception of God; something we can reach by turning inwards and seeing the divinity in our own soul. For Plotinus this divine part of the self was nothing different from God. Cary expresses this as the eyes turn "…in-and-then-up…" (p. 28). Cary and Foucault's arguments agree on Augustine being focused on the interior motives rather than actions in the world, which distinguishes him from the Greeks.

Another important point is the difference between the ancient Greeks' and Augustine's understanding of self-making, building one's self. For the Greeks this was possible and one had to do it oneself, but for Augustine this was not possible, because one only messed things up. According to him it was best to entrust oneself to the hands of God. Taylor emphasizes that the fact that Augustine blames others, and also God, for not stopping him from throwing blame on others, shows that his perception of agency

differs from that of the Greeks who thought that the only and most effective way to fashion oneself, to build oneself, was through one's own agency (p. 34).

When it comes to the subject of audience, Augustine shapes the truth of his life in the presence of God. He repeatedly addresses God and begs his mercy and forgiveness and reveals the details of his life in his presence. Taylor stresses that "Augustine confesses both in the sense of recounting his sins and in the sense of professing his faith…" (p. 45). He adds that the profession of his faith is more dominant in his writings, as was the case for sinners that were questioned in medieval times. Yet recounting sins is more relevant to modern confessional practices (p. 45). A concluding statement on the status of Augustine with regard to Foucault's work would be that the possible reason for Foucault's exclusion of Augustine from his study is because we can neither approximate him to the self-making practices of the ancient Greeks nor to practices of renunciation of the self in Christian theology (p. 46).

CHAPTER 4

FREUD, FRASER, PSYCHOTHERAPY AND FOUCAULT

The aim of this part of the thesis is to use Foucault's views to show that, although psychoanalysis is a potentially useful field for analyzing lives, in some cases it turns out to be a limiting discourse rather than allowing for more open ways of interpreting lives. The first section looks at Freud's psychoanalytical method, by giving details and examples from his case histories. Then follows a discussion of the debate concerning Freud's seduction theory. Following this is the historical context in which Fraser's memoir was written and then discussions of the ways Sylvia Fraser's *My Father's House* relates to psychotherapy and to Freud.

4.1 Freud's method and case histories

The word hysteria is derived from the Greek word 'hystera', meaning womb (Hysteria, 2017). In this way it is peculiar to the gender that has a womb, that is, it was exclusively associated with women. In "Aetiology of Hysteria" Freud (1896) describes how his approach to hysteria differs from that of Charcot's. For the latter the cause is linked to genetic dispositions, while in Freud's analyses nurture is given precedence over nature (p. 407). As Freud and Breuer (1893) put it in "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication" "...external events determine the pathology of hysteria to an extent far greater than is known and recognized" (p. 4). Both in Charcot and in Freud real events trigger the hysterical symptoms. The difference for Freud is that the symptoms are only signs that point to the actual cause, that is, infantile sexual experience. With this formulation, the cause being social rather than

physiological, hysteria is no longer a uniquely female disorder. The methodology applied in Freud and Breuer's studies on these cases is to try to bring to consciousness memories of the buried traumatic childhood sexual experiences by connecting the fragments the patients recollect during the therapy sessions (p. 6). In "Aetiology of Hysteria" Freud (1896) provides us with an analogy. An archeologist discovers what is on the surface at first, then digs deeper to find whatever remains from the actual construct. In the next stage he can reconstruct and arrive at a larger picture of what lay there before (p. 408). Freud's method of interpretation in this regard involves linking whatever signs he can find or are expressed by the patient during therapy sessions to childhood sexual experiences in order to explain the connection to the current pathology. Freud's precondition for this pathological situation to occur is that the experience must be a repressed one, not one that the patient can remember; that is, it must be buried in the unconscious. The effort then lies within finding a way for the unconscious material to surface and to allow the patient to gain some sort of understanding of the events.

It would be useful at this point to provide examples from Freud and Breuer's case histories in order to give a clearer picture of the way their psychoanalytical method functioned in practice.

In the first of these case histories, related in *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer, 1955), Breuer writes about a young woman with a very mild, helpful and pleasant disposition who becomes occupied by severe disorders that emerge during and after the illness of her father, who she was taking care of (p. 22-24). He describes the way Anna's terrifying hallucinations were relieved, allowing her some relative peace of mind temporarily, after recounting and reproducing them to him. She calls these sessions, in which she tells Breuer what is on her mind, the “talking cure”, and also “chimney sweeping” (p. 30).

Seeing the benefit in this, albeit temporary, Breuer continues to create the conditions for her to do this. He emphasizes that after regular repetitions of this talking Anna's condition greatly improved. Later on, he describes the way in the second stage of her illness symptoms and stimuli that reminded her of the first stage threw her into fits of anger, disgust, and so on, which were relieved after recounting the conditions she came across in the past (p. 31-35).

Freud and Breuer differed in their opinions on the aetiology of hysteria, and in this case we see that Breuer relates, merely as an observation, that with Anna "The element of sexuality was astonishingly undeveloped..." (p. 21). In Freud's observations regarding the case of Katharina he states: "...anxiety was a consequence of the horror by which a virginal mind is overcome when it is faced for the first time with the world of sexuality" (Freud, 1955b, p. 127). In Katharina's case she tells Freud about symptoms of anxiety which first started when she secretly saw her uncle lying on top of another girl called Franziska. At the time of witnessing this she was not able to decipher what was happening in that particular occasion (p. 127). Freud goes on to talk with her to see if it will be possible to find out what she possibly might have linked the event with and what kind of meaning she might have attached to it. Next Katharina talks about a time when her uncle had made sexual advances to her, but at that time she did not know what his uncle was trying to do. Added to these are stories of the first times she witnessed her uncle making sexual advances to Franziska. After this, upon beginning to establish a connection between the events to make sense of them, this memory was repressed and she later began to develop the symptoms. Freud observes the way talking about this experience and clarifying it by making sense of it had taken away the sulky expression and 'transformed' her (p. 129-131). Freud discusses the consequences of this encounter

with Katharina with regard to his theory in the discussion section: She excluded an experience from her conscious thoughts and this later returned to her in the form of symptoms of anxiety. Even though at the time of the events it appeared as if she was not disturbed by them, this became a trauma and continued to affect her in numerous ways, waiting to be admitted into her conscious thoughts to make a connection between the events. Only then was she relieved of the symptoms (p. 133). Freud adds that her anxiety symptoms showed that it was hysterical and says this is common in a great many cases (p. 134).

In the case of Frau Emmy von. N., Freud (1955a) carries out sessions involving massage and hypnosis for a certain length of time at the end of which some improvements are to be observed, but then after an interval in the psychiatric treatment he observes that many of the symptoms return. He then commences the treatment again, with the aim of continuing with the stories the patient was telling him. He says that an unfinished story under hypnosis does not provide benefits and infers that if there are no visible improvements this means that there is something that the patient is withholding (p. 79). In his analysis of her situation he expresses his conviction that the case is an example of hysteria. He classifies some of her phobias as being common to all humans: snakes, toads, thunderstorms. Yet, he adds that these were fortified by her own particular childhood experiences; like her brother having thrown a dead toad at her or the thunderstorm being connected to her clacking. He relates her fear of strangers to her persecution by the family of her husband. Her fear that someone might be standing beside her was related to fearful experiences she had had in the past. Freud additionally talks about lack of sexuality as being an important element in her life, a factor which, in his view, underlies most traumas (p. 103).

4.2 The debate concerning Freud's seduction theory

In what is called the traditional story, Freud abandoned his seduction theory after coming to a new understanding of the seductions that his patients had related to him in his therapies. [1] According to this, these were not events that had actually taken place, but just fantasies. With this new premise, his theories of infantile sexuality began to unfold. Jeffrey Masson's influential book *The Assault on Truth* (1984) argues, by looking at Freud's later writings and publications, that Freud abandoned his seduction theory as a result of strong ostracism he received from his colleagues. In "Jeffrey Masson and Freud's Seduction Theory: a New Fable Based on Old Myths", Allen Esterson (1998) claims that even though Masson's account was widely accepted by some circles in the psychoanalytic community, it was based on erroneous evidence (p. 1).

Esterson first attempts to disprove the validity of Masson's account by emphasizing that Freud's clinical claims and procedures were unsound and problematic. She writes about Freud's pressure technique as forcing the patient. In this technique Freud made an effort to get an answer from his patient by applying pressure on the forehead with the palm of his hand; then he put together the fragments and bits he received to turn them into a story to arrive at the buried pathology (p. 2). [2]

Esterson adds that, there were no indications or reports of Freud's theory of infantile sexual molestations in "Studies on Hysteria" or his papers published before that, but it was first mentioned in a letter to his friend Wilhelm Fliess and then within three months Freud sent the same friend a draft of a paper outlining the seduction theory (p. 3). She stresses that Freud develops his theory too quickly and based on a limited

[1] For the traditional story see "New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis" (1933) by Sigmund Freud.
[2] See "Studies on Hysteria" (1893-1895) for the techniques that Freud applied at the time.

number of cases, as well as by having applied methods that were not reliable and with the aim of confirming his preconceived ideas (p. 9). Esterson disagrees, making references to many other writers who claim it to be weak and without solid grounds, with Masson's notion that Freud's best paper was “The Aetiology of Hysteria” (p. 9).

Also, in response to Masson's claim that by seduction Freud had clearly and directly meant 'sexual assault' and 'incest', Esterson disagrees by giving examples from Freud's own papers that it does not necessarily mean these 'at all times'; sometimes he was talking about a much milder sexual approach (p. 9). Esterson also adds that Masson's view that Freud was ostracized by his colleagues is without grounds. She rejects Masson's view that Freud's aim was to defend abused female children and was even willing to defy his colleagues in pursuit of this. Instead, she stresses that Freud was interested in verifying his theory and method above all else. Esterson then refers to Freud's own words in his later years and looks at evidence from his own accounts. She suggests that the sexual scenes that emerged in the therapies were merely forced by the pressures Freud applied during his sessions and she states that Freud had not abandoned the seduction theory (p. 11). According to her, the reason for this is that Freud simply could not become completely aware of the shortcomings of his theory and kept insisting that the primary approach that lay at the core of his theory was correct in essence (p. 12). In the final remarks concerning the issue, Esterson says that “...the story that most of Freud's female patients in the seduction theory period told him they had been sexually abused in early childhood, the cornerstone of Masson's account of the episode, is contradicted by contemporary documentary evidence” (p.13). She criticizes Masson for accepting Freud's clinical approach without question and also accepting his historical

accounts without taking into consideration the scholarly criticisms that showed them to be unreliable (p. 13).

It is not absolutely relevant to this thesis which parties, whether Esterson or Masson, are ultimately right in this debate, but what is clear from the literature surrounding the debate, and also relevant, is that the methods that were used by Freud were not absolutely defensible in every aspect, and indeed in many cases they were the center of much discussion and debate over the years, receiving a great deal of criticism, not only for what they defend but also for what they imply for other practicing psychoanalysts and psychotherapists in their dealings with their patients in later years to come. What we can clearly see with the case histories, as forms of confessional technology, is that the therapy sessions involved a great deal of talking, telling, revealing whatever secrets the individual has and making everything about the individual visible to the authoritative ear of the therapist, who is then supposed to and expected to interpret these bits of selfhood into a coherent life-story with a promise of healing and recovery at the end.

4.3 My Father's house and psychotherapy

The debate that issued in relation to trauma and memory-repression reached its climax during the 80s and 90s. On one side were patients with their psychotherapists who argued that it was possible for memories to be repressed and then retrieved after long intervals. On the other side were psychologists and their clients whom they defended as not being guilty of the alleged accusations of abuse. Some therapists argue that repressed memory exists and that memories that were repressed at the time of the events can, in the later stages of the person's life, be retrieved using a variety of methods (Etherington,

2003, p. 27, 28). Others argue that traumatic memories are stored in ways that make them impossible to remember through deliberate efforts to try to connect to the memory of the event. According to another theory, memories that are not processed properly lie within the storage but are active and constantly influence the subject. If the avoidance mechanisms are sufficiently strong, the stressful material may never be fully processed; thus intrusions will continue as in chronic PTSD. Another theory is based on SAM (Situationally Accessible Memory) and VAM (Verbally Accessible Memory). Due to the intensity of the traumatic experience, processing is reduced and more of it is stored in the SAM system. For this to be resolved the person needs to bring the traumatic material to consciousness and into the VAM system as much as possible. In this schema, concentration on, rather than avoidance of, memories is necessary and vital for retrieval (Bernsten, 2009, p. 150, 151).

In 1990 George Franklin was convicted as a result of the testimony that an adult gave of her childhood sexual abuse experience. During this period, in the 80s and 90s, the idea that repressed childhood memories can be retrieved became widespread and individuals, by themselves or with the help of therapists, made efforts to explore whether they were sexually abused or not (Sabbagh, 2009, p. 68). Therefore, the question of whether lost childhood memories could accurately be retrieved, if at all, gained paramount significance.

On one side, there were a great number of people, who claimed that they were sexually abused as children and that these memories were repressed until adulthood, and their therapists supporting their claims (p. 68). On the other side were suspects and their psychologists, who had their own counter-arguments which opposed the probability of retrieving memories after long periods of forgetting (p. 70). As an overview of this

period of repressed memories, it was revealed that some of these cases were actually true; they were proven, the suspects confessed, the memories were corroborated by outside forces. Then again, in many cases innocent people were condemned for sexual abuse for years and then later it was revealed that they were not guilty of abuse. The media abused the explosive potential of the cases and contributed to their thriving by stimulating the interest of the public in the subject (p. 70-77). Written by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis in 1988, *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Sexual Abuse,* included exercises to enable readers to find out whether they were victims of sexual abuse as children. Karl Sabbagh's designation of the book is: "A Book Which Makes Women with a Wide and Diffuse Range of Mental Symptoms Believe that they were Almost Certainly Sexually Abused as Children" (Sabbagh, 2009, p. 78). The book contains instructions and guidelines to be used in order to determine whether a woman was sexually abused in her childhood or not. Many psychologists, like Richard McNally, believe that the book associates symptoms which anybody may display with sexual abuse. There are countless cases of women who, after reading this book, believed that they were victims of sexual abuse and in fact later discovered that this was not the case (p. 79). The above are only a brief overview of the debates that thrived around the period in which *My Father's House* was written.

Janice Doane and Devon Hodges, who have done research and published in the field of recent psychoanalytical theory, approach the subject in a highly critical manner, believing, like many other feminist writers, that incest memoirs are exploiting women's various experiences of distress. Their concern is that the current literature on incest is exploiting a form that otherwise bears the potential to prove useful in turning into a promising discourse in sharing experiences of incest (2009, p. 99). Here is how they

describe the general outline of the majority of narratives that they identify as incest memoirs:

> The author, a woman in distress over her contemporary dilemmas, suffers from flashbacks and bodily symptoms that she cannot explain. Operating like a detective, with the assistance of a supportive therapist, she begins to understand the forgotten origin of these symptoms: incest. Then, through a process of reconstruction, she discovers that her father was an evil perpetrator and she a silenced victim. Healing takes a narrative form, a coherent story about the past that gives the narrator a new identity as a survivor. (p. 100)

This is very similar to the narrative structure that Fraser's memoir presents us with. It gives us an account where the teleology of a psychotherapeutic process is dominant in the form of a promised healing at the end. A coherent story of Fraser's life became available to Fraser after she went through a process of retrieving the lost memories of her childhood. The account was available after therapy, and it was contained within the process of therapy as a potential telos; namely the aim of the process now stands before us as a text. The experience as she lived it is not the narrative presented in this book because of that very teleological orientation with which the psychotherapeutic process is imbued; namely the aim of achieving a healed self. The objective of healing by retrieving the lost experience from memory has now diffused all over the work, forging out of that experience something completely new, and it seems this befits the very essence of this process, to attain access to the 'truth' of Fraser's past life, so that healing can be achieved by integrating into the self and uniting again with those lost bits of meaning. The formal characteristics of the narrative demonstrate the particulars of the psychotherapeutic process. Here, while the telos of the process is to retrieve the lost memories, in the act of forming that connection with the past, a narrative emerges.

Fraser (1989) has a strong claim on truth, but since the sentence, "…to my knowledge, I have not exaggerated or distorted or misrepresented the truth…" ends with

"…as I now understand it" (p. x), we see here a truth after the transformation, one that has come to its current state after psychotherapy. This also means that her confidence in the psychiatric process and the truth produced therein is strong, a necessary bond with power in order for it to be able to operate freely through the individual, instead of having to force, restrict and repress. It is this relationship with 'truth' that is one of the central concerns for Foucault's work. It is not a question of whether the events really happened, but rather of what makes one feel the need to speak about it and in the context of which power this speaking takes place. What interests give this truth-speaking the impetus necessary to reveal itself by coming out of its intimate, secret personal corners within the subject's private realm? The psychotherapeutic process intervenes into the text; what was absent from lived experience is present within the text; thus, the text reaches us as a product of the process; as a reinterpretation, a final version of the life subjected to that process.

The title of the first chapter, "The Secrets", suggests a hidden and repressed stratum of meanings and revelations to be made in the later parts of the book. In this chapter, Fraser describes in vivid detail the secrets with which Fraser became acquainted after psychotherapy. These were admitted into the boundaries of the expressible only after therapy. Here we see how the process of her therapy and the text are in fact intertwined and mutually complementing. In her case, psychiatric power intervenes into truth-making about lives. Also, it is a doubly teleological act to put the account down on paper, to form the text; it shows the author's conviction of the veracity of the account and of the final interpretation of events.

The italics in the book indicate, as Fraser states in the Author's Note section, the details discovered afterwards; the recovered memories. In this case, these italics are

connections made and told in relation to memories. This kind of a complementary function used all throughout the book creates a pattern where one is forced to question the potential for other possible interpretations and readings. Namely, would we find other details that necessitate the accompaniment of further italics and changes? There is in fact, potentially, an endless cycle that will seek to produce and reproduce itself here, as Foucault argues, and moreover, it will do it through the individual. The structure of the book suggests a finality, a telos, rather than various interpretations of past events. The incitement that comes from the listening ear, the professional listener, is very clear and imperative. In the first chapter, as well as in others, we see numerous examples of extreme concentration on detail, exactitude in telling. Memories that were extracted out of memory by means of therapy are now put down on paper. "Something hard pushes up against me, then between my legs and under my belly. It bursts all over me in a sticky stream" (p. 8). "I lie naked on my daddy's bed, clinging to the covers. His sweat drips on me. I don't like his wet-ums. His wet-ums splashes me" (p. 10).

> My arms stick to my sides, my legs dangle like worms as my daddy forces me back against his bed. I love my daddy. I hate my daddy. Love hate love hate. Daddy won't love me love me hate hate hate. I'm afraid to strike him with my fists. I'm afraid to tell my mommy. (p. 14)

The truth that her father had sexually abused her has now become a concise narrative; its expression has taken the form of a full-length book; it has thrived into dreams that are interpreted in the light of the truth of a psychotherapeutic telos; it is taking the form of a written account here to express its 'truth'.

4.4 Repression and dissociation in *My Father's House*

Repression is a significant theme in the book and it is also the theme that establishes a teleological structure in the narrative as Fraser becomes aware of the presence of an underlying stratum of meaning buried beneath the surface of her consciousness later in her life, at a time when she finds herself in a cul-de-sac in almost every aspect of her life: business, social, matrimonial and so on. The general landscape of Freud's approach to the subject provides us with an idea, an experience, a hidden layer of meaning in the subject's mind. This idea then, being inadmissible to the present structure of meaning, is rejected, only to avail the subject of a temporary and superficial relief of its presence. Having thus been buried in the unconscious, it awaits the impetus that a momentary relation can grant to it. Freud also explains that the therapist plays a major role in re-enabling the associative links that permit the patient to have conscious access to the event or experience (Breuer & Freud, 1893, p. 6-8).

At a certain stage in her life Fraser becomes aware of certain problems in various aspects of her life. Since until adulthood all her memories of the incest experiences with her father and the events related to those were repressed and they were later revealed with the help of experts and therapists, now healing is expected to come only if she tells everything in great detail to a professional ear. During this examination, every period that she casts a retrospective glance at in the light of this new 'knowledge' is imbued with the essence of an absence of this 'truth'. That is how we proceed in the narrative; by constantly being reminded that something is wrong as a result of an underlying 'truth' that was unknown to the individual at the time of the events.

Dissociation is an important term in the context of psychoanalysis and it refers to what takes place as the conscious mind cannot cope with certain experiences and

impulses and represses them, in this way separating the psyche into two different parts. The repressed part later creates disturbances for the individual and the person needs to integrate the repressed material into the conscious state in order for the dangerous and harmful effects of these repressions diminish. That is in fact the very aim of psychotherapy, to reintegrate repressed material from one's past into one's present and thus to prevent it from creating disturbances for the individual (Breuer & Freud, 1893, p. 12).

In the second chapter, "The Other", Fraser (1989) describes how, as a result of the trauma she experienced because of her father's sexual abuse, she created another self. This other self undertook all the obligations that Fraser was unable to face consciously. "When the conflict caused by my sexual relationship with my father became too acute to bear, I created a secret accomplice for my daddy by splitting my personality in two" (p. 15). And she adds:

> ...I acquired another self with memories and experiences separate from mine, whose existence was unknown to me. My loss of memory was retroactive. I did not remember my daddy ever having touched me sexually. I did not remember ever seeing my daddy naked. In future, whenever my daddy approached me sexually I turned into my other self, and afterwards I did not remember anything that happened. (p. 15)

The distress that Fraser's damaged self experiences is directed to the other self, where the truth of all those problems is hidden, buried and stored. In the chapter "Secrets" we can read the earliest memories she has been able to recover of her incestuous relationship with her father: "*My Daddy and I share secrets"* (p. 6).

> I struggle against the heaving of my stomach, the yammering of my heart, trying not to experience, before I have to, that instant when the sweet smell of Other Grandmother's gardenia powder overwhelms me and my lips are swallowed in the decaying pulpiness of her cheek. Why this revulsion for an old woman's kiss? I do not know. I cannot say. *This truth belongs to my other self, and it is a*

> *harsh one: other Grandmother's caved-in cheek is the same squishy texture as daddy's scrotum.* (p. 19)

The title of the first chapter "Pandora's Box" links the woman in the story to the mythological character who held the box full of all the evils of the world. In this case the evils are attributed to Fraser's box which contains her sexuality. Fraser is presented almost like a sinner who carries an ominous hidden sexuality from which her problems originate and it needs to be cleared and cleaned by revealing it with all its details. She goes on to open the box and reveal the contents and finds that she must go on, for she hopes to reach the 'truth' of the matter. Together with this chapter, she begins to connect to her childhood memories and finds there something worth pursuing. She finds signs that give her directions on where to look for the origins of this dark cloud of depression that hangs above her; the darkness that her other self casts on her (p. 146-149). All of this we know about thanks to the book at hand which was available only after psychotherapy managed to illuminate the darkness around her sexuality and bring out from there the 'truth'. This made it possible for her to formulate everything in the light of that 'truth'.

Fraser sets out to find this wholeness and psychotherapy guides her in this journey, but first everything must be told in detail. She sets out to reveal the contents of this box with determination, because only then will the promised felicity be awarded her. Through a writing endeavor that is spontaneously overflowing from her other self, she fervently engages this process now, to bring the memories of her incest experience out of their hiding and in the course of this pursuit she makes sacrifices. "The deeper I delve through my time warp into the past, the more vivid it grows at the expense of the

present-day world" (p. 149). She goes through very intensely emotional times when she makes efforts to connect with her past:

> It's a classic catharsis – I'm not just recalling the past but reliving it with appropriate accompaniment of grief, pain, relief, some laughter, even exhilaration. *My other self leads me to the edge of her secret world, offering up murky clues without taking me over.* (p. 150)

This world she connects with is more real than the one she is living in.

> As I write, the world inside my head becomes more real than the physical world; feelings more real than facts; thoughts more real than any spoken words; my unconscious mind more real than my conscious mind; the visionary world of dreams more real than the waking world. (p. 150)

The chapter "Triangles" establishes Pandora as the conduit through which her other self found a way to expression. "Through Pandora, my other self had acquired a voice" (p. 153). Also, in the very beginning of this chapter we see how the mechanism of repression is formulated in psychotherapy: "It seems to be a law of human nature, as compelling as Newton's, that whatever is hidden in the psyche will struggle to reveal itself" (p. 153). This 'repressed' sexuality, operating via her other self, needs to reveal itself, free itself so that the individual can be free too.

Her other self now influences her to become nostalgic about her first love, and this becomes the grounds on which the explanation of why she fell in love with an older man later links to and gradually builds upon. This explanation is the 'truth' of psychotherapy, which enfolds Fraser's narrative and makes of it a metamorphosis of healing through the telling of her invalid sexuality. According to this, the things that she tells can be transformed, but can we know which parts of her life this defunct sexuality has infected and which parts it has not? Since we cannot, it is imperative and paramount that all must be told. This of course represents a pattern according to which many narratives are structured and in fact gives us the larger picture of an autobiographical

techne which has formed through practices of psychotherapy which make use of a particular kind of psychoanalysis as a tool to 'help' individuals create ‘truths’ about their past lives. First it grows into one narrative, Fraser’s account. Then, this process of healing takes the shape of a book that is bought and read by many. Later on, we can see more clearly the way this autobiographical *techne* allows psychotherapy as a power to shape life narratives within the genre of incest memoir.

4.5 Dreams in *My Father’s House* and Freud’s dream theory

We mentioned earlier that dreams were an important *techne* in the culture of the self in the ancient Greece and Rome. Dreams play an important part in Fraser's book as well as in psychoanalysis. They are integrated into the memoir at parts where the author deems they are necessary for the unity of the narrative. They are part of the fictional elements that complement the narrative structure and coherence of the events. Namely, they are used to fill in the gaps to hint at the meaning that is the teleology of psychotherapy. Thanks to the dreams, the finality that Fraser aims to allude to, which is that now she has achieved a better and more concise insight into the whole nature of the events of her previous life, is expressed in a more fulfilling manner. The book has a stylistic debt to Freud’s (2010) *Interpretation of Dreams* as the dreams are italicized. The dreams play an important part in the overall plot; their interpretations are in agreement with Fraser’s coherent story, and they are fitted into the plot of the book, their relations to the events are emphasized. Fraser states in the Author’s Note section, “I have used italics to indicate thoughts, feelings and experiences pieced together from recently recovered memories, and to indicate dreams”. This in a way implies that what is not italicized is what she remembers, the experienced details of the events as they occurred.

According to Freud's dream interpretation theory, the meaning of the dream is part of a hidden structure that awaits to be revealed. He states that it is important to prepare the patient for the process. It is better that the patient be in a lying position and close his eyes. He explains that the patient needs to be informed of the necessity of telling every detail, without withholding anything. Also, a patient reflecting in this manner must not exercise his critical faculties, so he may freely let out whatever comes to his mind (p. 126). Moreover, he stresses that the state attained is close to a dream-state. Every dream reveals itself as a psychical structure which has a meaning and which can be inserted at an assignable point in the mental activities of waking life. Freud states that interpretation of dreams is possible only when the patient tells all the details that he can tell. It is a matter of initially psychologically preparing the patient for the process of telling and then painstakingly extracting the minute details from him or her who must relate these without applying any kind of criticism to the selection of the details. Despite the difficulty of the process, Freud says that it is the expertise of the psychoanalyst that is another crucial factor in dream interpretation. He adds that his patients told him not only every thought that occurred to them in the course of the therapy, but also the dreams that they had (p. 126). In his method of tracing psychological pathologies, the dreams could be analyzed and interpreted in relation to the events, thoughts and emotions that the patient recounted. In this formulation the dream itself is a 'symptom', the analysis of which is to be integrated into the story emerging out of the interpretation of other symptoms.

Another important aspect of Freud's dream interpretation method is that instead of trying to make sense of a whole dream, he proposes cutting it up into segments and then asking the patient to make associations between different parts of it (p. 128).

Linking those different parts to each other and forming a coherent story that will make sense to the patient is the task that the analyst engages during this process. The patient and the analyst agree on the veracity of an appropriate interpretation of the events.

As for the subject of distortion in dreams, the way the contents in a dream are presented to us, Freud firstly emphasizes that at the core of dreams lies wish-fulfillment and relates that it is because of this very characteristic of dreams that children's dreams are more simple and 'uninteresting' and adults' dreams are more complicated and harder to interpret (p. 152). It is because of this complicated nature of the dreams of adults, or of people with certain pathologies and psychological tendencies, that dream interpretation requires the diligence and painstaking effort presented in his dream interpretation theory.

Freud goes on to relate that this complication and disguise, which we encounter in dreams is possibly the result of some kind of a defense against a particular wish. He states that dreams operate based on two psychical forces; one creates the dream, the other applies a kind of defense which is the source of the complexity in the presentation of the dream (p. 168). According to this formulation there is a constant process of modification of dream material with respect to what can be allowed to be represented in what way, as befitting the individual's psychological circumstances.

Fraser (1987) herself speaks of having become acquainted with dream analysis at a stage when she was trying to discover or retrieve the memories of her childhood incest experiences (p. 175). In her account, Fraser depicts her dreams in italics, and they play an important role in her psychotherapeutic process of remembering and accessing the lost memories of her childhood. Certain words that Freud uses in his dream interpretation theory are important here in order to reveal the way Fraser's *My Father's*

House relates to and is dependent on psychoanalysis. Freud uses the word 'censorship' to talk about the way the psyche filters and changes materials from daily life to give them a form and a manner of expression that the individual can handle: hence, the distortion that occurs in the way we see a dream (p. 167). In Fraser's case her dreams are distorted and await interpretation in order to be admitted to and to complement the coherent story that she is constructing in the psychotherapeutic process. Other important words are 'manifest' and 'latent', which Freud uses to talk about a hidden meaning to be uncovered through interpreting the appearance of a dream. "We must make a contrast between the *manifest* and *latent* content of dreams" (p. 160). Fraser's memoir is strictly tied to a formulation of this kind where the events of her life are what she sees and needs to interpret to arrive at the meaning underneath. At the core of Freud's dream theory lies the intention to bring about a recovery, by interpreting distorted dreams and fitting them into the general pattern of repression that emerges as a result of telling every detail to the analyst. This final promise of healing, by putting together a coherent story of her past life, is at the core of Fraser's memoir as well.

The dreams are part of the story, which she was able to put together after recovering her memories, so much so that there is no interpretation before or after the dreams she recounts. They are inserted into the narrative in a way that the progression of the events and the content of the dream will mutually complement each other and contribute to the creation of the teleology of her memoir.

> *I ride the incline up the Mountain. As I fumble for my fare, my purse plummets into dense undergrowth. I scramble barefoot through brambles under the incline, begging everyone I meet: "Have you seen my purse?"*
> *I find a cleft in rock. A voice intones: "This is where the evil comes from." A child's hand reaches out. It's covered in slime and blood.*
> *I climb down the perilous passage into the cave. A blond child is curled like a cat around her swollen belly. A demon monster raped her here many years ago by*

> *stuffing a giant white larva down her throat. Now it has lodged in her womb, threatening her life. I fetch a priest. Dressed in white robes and mask, he raises his silver dagger with both hands, then plunges it into the girl's abdomen.* (Fraser, 1989, p. 212)

In the next part of the dream she finds the giant that lusted after her in a grassy island. The giant is a reference to her father and the damage he inflicted on her (p. 213). She is at the hospital at this time, going in and out of operations because of a problem with her womb. The dream relates to the overall theme of the book, her relationship with her father; it is one of the many dreams in which her relationship with her father is expressed in a distorted form. As well as having a connection to the theme of repression in the book, the dreams provide connections between events and relate to the circumstances in which she finds herself in different parts of her life.

> *Danny and I make love in the long, sweet grass, swept by the wind. I hear a shivery, rustling hiss. Three matrons, in black gowns and starchy white aprons, advance upon us with measured tread, their hair drawn back in buns, their eyes blanked by steel-rimmed glasses, their lips pursed. I recognize my mother and her neighbor ladies to the right and left, joined by a clothesline. They shake straw whisks inside mixing bowls, swish swish swish swish. The sound is powerful and frightening. Danny and I try to escape, but it pursues us swish swish swish like hornets trapped in the brain. (p. 116)*

This dream reflects her mother's expectations from her daughter. She wants Fraser to be a good girl and Fraser is aware that she has already failed to do that. Also her fear of being disapproved of for being in a relationship with Danny is expressed in this dream. The dream relates to the progression of the plot, as well as to the overall theme of incest. The swishing sound is the curse of her trauma that follows her everywhere she goes.

Whatever phase of her life she is in, the events and dreams recounted are related to her traumatic experience with her father and the repression of what occurred in the course of it. The dreams also intensify the effect of the story by revealing the landscape of Fraser's mind at the time of the events.

4.6 Repression, confession, Fraser & Foucault

The first part of this section looks at Foucault's analysis of the theory of repression and what he designates a 'scientia sexualis'. Then we will look at the way this science of sexuality relates to Christian confessional practices. In *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction,* Foucault (1990) initiates his argument by starting to question the 'repressive hypothesis', which is the general historically-accepted notion that repression of sex began in the seventeenth century, in the form of denial, censorship and prohibition (p. 4). With such a notion of repression in mind the speaking subject assumes the subject of sex as if to wield it against those powers that made repression possible. Foucault argues that it is a defiant tone attributed to the subject of sex that rekindles a spirit of promise and hope for the betterment of sex in the future. He adds that what is called repression is in fact a proliferation of the discourse of sex through certain techniques of power. Power does not repress sex, but allows it to multiply in diverse ways, by using certain technologies of truth-making. One of these techniques was population. Foucault stresses that sex was at the heart of the political and economic context that surrounded population. Analyzing "…birth-rate, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, the ways of making them fertile or sterile, the effects of unmarried life or the prohibitions, the impact of contraceptive practices…" (p. 25, 26). The relevance of all these statistics to practical interests of power mechanisms around them brought about a questioning of the ways in which each individual made use of his sex. How could one utilize one's sexuality in order to maintain the highest benefit to the society in which one lived?

> It was essential that the state know what was happening with its citizens' sex, and the use they made of it, but also, that each individual be capable of controlling the use he made of it. Between the state and the individual, sex became an issue,

> and a public issue no less; a whole web of discourses, special knowledges, analyses, and injunctions settled upon it. (p. 26)

The main focus of this power was the sex of the citizens and how they used it. When it is such an important object of interest for power, sex is no longer a personal act. It is located within a cycle of power that perceives the subject in terms of numbers and in terms of his or her function. Another point of focus of these organizing powers was the sexuality of children. Foucault talks about the way silence operates around the discourse on the sexuality of children.

> Silence itself – the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers – is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. (p. 27)

He says that an examination of schools of the eighteenth century reveals the presence of an unarticulated discourse in the way different parts of the buildings were arranged, the rules that were practiced. "All who held a measure of authority were placed in a state of perpetual alert, which the fixtures, the precautions taken, the interplay of punishments and responsibilities, never ceased to reiterate" (p. 28). The sex of school children was a subject of constant debate, warning and recommendation among schoolmasters, doctors and parents. The education system and the medical authorities were bent on establishing certain regulatory mechanisms and movements and schools were founded for the sole purpose of managing adolescent sex (p. 28, 29). Foucault adds that even though adults and children were deprived of certain ways of speaking about sex, this was perhaps "…the condition necessary in order for them to function, discourses that were interlocking, hierarchized, and all highly articulated around a cluster of power relations" (p. 30).

Other centers that were producing discourses on sex at the time were medicine, by focusing on ‘nervous disorders’, psychiatry, by focusing on ‘mental illnesses’ and ‘sexual perversions’, criminal justice, by extending its focus on sexuality via ‘heinous crimes’ (p. 30, 31). He argues that these were some of the centers that took sexuality as their object. Gradually, the sexuality of men, women and children was examined carefully, designations and condemnations were made. ‘Natural’ and juridical law determined the set of normative regulations as a result of which notions of what was normal and acceptable, as well as what was dangerous and criminal with respect to matrimony and to society, were implanted.

Foucault emphasizes that the discourse on sexuality relied on a mechanism which incited the individual to speak. Especially those who are considered to be abnormal and weird receive the greater bulk of this encouragement to tell everything about themselves, so that their abnormality can be examined and documented in detail (p. 40). Foucault states that all this varied categorization undertaken by power did not operate through repression and prohibition. Power did not aim to eliminate these ‘degenerate’ identities, ‘abnormal’ sexualities. Instead, it gradually and carefully established around them a margin on which they could exist and multiply indefinitely, but where they would continue to be examined and designated by power and feel its hold over them at the same time.

The treatment of the onanistic child, for example, demonstrates the way power allowed these sexual practices and identities to exist, while surveillance and a set of rules, medical regulations were set up. These were formulated into a pattern which involved keeping things under control by establishing certain mechanisms. Such was the case when upon examination of the sodomite he was named as the homosexual. Thus,

countless others were examined, named, stamped and around them a web of cycles of power were multiplied.

Foucault argues that medical power during this time allowed the space for perversions and deviations to occur and multiply in and then embarked on the never-ending quest of measuring, checking, calculating, examining and controlling its subjects through a discourse that kept proliferating (p. 42, 43). Hence, it was not an eradication of sexuality that power wrought where it operated, but a perpetual cycle of chasing, examining and allowing was created. Everyone in society was drawn into this game; a perpetual system of control was established over individuals through the eyes of one another.

> Capture and seduction, confrontation and mutual reinforcement: parents and children, adults and adolescents, educators and students, doctors and patients, the psychiatrist with his hysteric and his perverts, all have played this game continually since the nineteenth century. These attractions, these evasions, these circular incitements have traced around bodies and sexes, not boundaries not to be crossed, but *perpetual spirals of power and pleasure.* (p. 45)

Pleasure is an instrument of those who hold authority and of those who are constantly moving in the peripheries of this discourse on sexuality. This power continued to encourage the proliferation and multiplication of sexualities, instead of exclusion and avoidance. "…it did not set up a barrier; it provided places of maximum saturation. It produced and determined the sexual mosaic" (p. 47). Foucault argues that there is a correlative relationship between these discourses on sexuality and the procedures of power:

> The implantation of perversions is an instrument-effect: it is through the isolation, intensification, and consolidation of peripheral sexualities that the relations of power to sex and pleasure branched out and multiplied, measured the body, and penetrated modes of conduct. And accompanying this encroachment of powers, scattered sexualities rigidified, became stuck to an age, a place, a type of practice. (p. 48)

Since then the power exercised through these modes of conduct has developed into polymorphous systems of controlling sexuality via "…medicine, psychiatry, prostitution, and pornography" (p. 48). Therefore, Foucault encourages us to abandon the notion that sexuality was repressed; instead, he insists that "…never have existed more centers of power, never more attention manifested and verbalized; never more circular contacts and linkages; never more sites where intensity of pleasures and the persistency of power catch hold, only to spread elsewhere" (p. 49).

Fraser's account speaks of sexuality in a variety of ways. It speaks of the sexuality of children, the sexuality of adolescents, the sexuality of a married woman, the sexuality of a father, the sexuality of a victim of incest, the sexuality of a whole array of other people as well. More and more people and their sexualities are implicated as we proceed in the narrative. The chapter "Mr. Brown" presents another family and another perverse character, Mr. Brown, who is the embodiment of what a 'pervert' is in terms of what Foucault calls *scientia sexualis*. Here we have a dysfunctional family, into whose sexual life we get a glimpse through the actions of Mr. Brown. There is a great deal that is wrong with this family: "The Browns fight a lot and their son, Barry, cries all the time" (Fraser, 1989, p. 17).

> *My other self whimpers rather than cries as Mr. Brown, trousers undone, rubs up against her, so rough she can count his ribs, back and forth, back and forth, stinking of smoke and whiskey, while he gets hard, then soft and – ugh! –sticky.* (p. 33)

The chapter "The Golden Amazons" speaks of Fraser's sexuality during secondary school. The four members of 'The Golden Amazons' hang out together and share their interests and experiences of love and sex. The chapter heavily focuses on their first encounters with situations where love and sex are concerned. "Increasingly,

we moon over who has a case on whom, and pool our knowledge of sex" (p. 41, 42). They read about sex together: "'Though it may be difficult for modest and inexperienced young girls to understand, married women who are deeply in love with their husbands may enjoy having their breasts caressed or their nipples kissed as a prelude to lovemaking'" (p. 42). They talk about married and unmarried girls' sex: "On the way home, I brood about my parents: the overwhelming fire between man and wedded wife?" (p. 42). We can read in this chapter the attitudes and thoughts of a whole array of children towards sexuality: "...being with a boy obliges me to conform to more ladylike standards" (p. 45). We also find descriptions of certain sites and celebrities and the significance they hold for the sexual climate of the time. The Delta Theater is one of them:

> Here the technicolor promise of Paulette Goddard's soft, white flesh, parted lips and tousled crimson tresses has been translated, by chalked graffiti, into a more direct offer: I'M HOT, LOVER-BOY! WANNA SCREW? The gun-swaggering challenge of Gary Cooper, Man of Destiny, has been rendered: MY PRICK IS BIGGER THAN YOURS. (p. 48)

Here at the movies we witness Fraser being sexually harassed: "Fingers pull at my pants, touch flesh. Shocked, I bend double. Now I bite a hand, tasting blood" (p. 51). Magda Lunt, who appears again in this chapter, together with her friends who are a coarse lot of boys, stand for a rough sexuality. As we see, the narrative continues to speak of the sexuality of children in manifold ways in this chapter. Apparently, psychiatric power incites Fraser to relate her various experiences regarding sexuality in her childhood years. This is deemed necessary in order for a stance with respect to the 'truth' of the matter to be gained regarding every epoch of her life. She needs to bring them forth from memory and tell them so that the disturbances that swept into every corner of her life can be healed. The pajama party of The Golden Amazons becomes a threshold into

another period, where the way the boys view them becomes influential in shaping the girls' own views of themselves. They learn how the boys characterize them and Fraser is said to be the sexiest. When Fraser hears this, certain images from popular culture about what sexy may mean pop up in her head: "I imagine Rita Hayworth tossing her hair in Gilda, Jane Russell throwing out her bosom in The Outlaw, Marilyn Monroe jiggling her hips in everything she has been in: what is sexy?" (p. 63). "Already we were beginning to see ourselves and each other only as the boys see us" (p. 64).

Another chapter where we encounter extensive amounts of information on school children's and adolescents' sexuality is "Red Shoes". Centering on 'Appearances', another self Fraser creates to hide her wounded self, this chapter relates a great deal concerning her relationships with the other girls and boys at school. We also get considerable amounts of information on Hamilton High's attitude to sex and sexuality. For example, Miss Joper gives the girls detailed advice on how to behave properly as cheerleaders as required by the standards of Hamilton High (p. 69, 70). Every now and then we are reminded of certain codes in Hamilton High: "All social life at Hamilton High is strictly two-by-two, as in Noah's Ark. Not to date is to be an object of scorn or pity" (p. 71). All throughout the chapter we read about the girls' anxieties concerning dating. Fraser struggles in this chapter with her inability to keep a relationship going. Every time she starts to become a little intimate with someone, she automatically retreats: "Don't call me. I can't explain. Even to myself. The more I like you the faster I have to run" (p. 87). The mysterious problems in all parts of her life continue throughout every period of her life and together with the details concerning these, we also read extensively on the sexuality of others around her. For example, we hear in this chapter a great deal on the boys' sexuality too. Their perversion climaxes during the scene of the

match and while Fraser is cheering we can read in great detail on how coarse and perverse they are. "'C'mon, boys, lift those legs, Let's see a little garter!' ... 'We want to see pan-ties' ... 'Get those tits moving!' ... 'Give us CROTCH'" (p. 88). "I stop in mid-cheer, feeling as if my head were caught in a clash of cymbals. All I can see are mouths, hurling down obscenities that unroll like used toilet paper" (p. 88).

The chapter "Love" tells the story of how she fell in love with Danny. Fraser tells us the main reason why this happened: "...kindness. I denied their lies, and I was believed. I am believed!" (p. 110). Also, "He holds me, binding the pieces of myself together, allowing me to heal. He strokes my hair. He kisses me. His lips are warm. He believes me. He believes in me" (p. 110). The teleological narrative presents this falling in love as a need that had climaxed as a result of years of isolation, repression and emotional despair. It appears she clung onto Danny as if he was a savior that would carry her out of her emotional alienation. And she did not know at the time of the events that her love towards Danny was simply an effort to fill in the space emptied by the absence of a fundamental 'truth' concerning her sexuality. In this chapter, again in the light of the 'truth' that emanates from psychotherapy, we see how the whole array of family encounters and relationships is minimized into a set of mind games: They talk about family memories during the meeting with Danny's family and then, "Afterwards we watch movies: jerky black-and-whites with each member of the family smiling self-consciously as he or she waves into the camera" (p. 111). All throughout this chapter, we see how Fraser's hidden 'truth' unknowingly has spread over all her life. This spreading is depicted in as detailed a way as possible. Through this narrative of dysfunction psychotherapy finds its way into every part of her life and incites Fraser to speak on and on and to relate every detail in order to attain the promised 'truth' and

healing as a reward. The book becomes, in this Foucauldian perspective, the embodiment of an incitement by a science of sexuality to speak with the intention of reaching the 'truth' of sexuality and thereby to attain happiness. "Once again I pick fights with Danny – *willful, irrational fights, which indicate my other self is back in charge"* (p. 117). Just as the previous chapters spoke about the sexuality of Fraser during her childhood, as well as the sexuality of the children and adults around her, in this chapter, Fraser's life continues to unfold to psychotherapy, as well as to us. This time we read about a problematic marriage and a hysterical woman.

> Like a bad soprano, I run the same scale, sharp and flat, sweet and strident, hit another piercing note and hold it till everything shatters. *See? Didn't I warn you? Am I still beautiful when I'm screaming? See what power I have to inflict pain? How much of this can you take?* Just as predictably, I am whimpering for forgiveness, taking advantage of our working together to make up before sundown, knowing I don't dare give him a whole night to decide how pleasant life would be without me. (p. 118)

There are many quarrels that take place between them and Fraser's hysteria at the time was inexplicable to her. Now that she knows that the absence of the 'truth' of her sexuality, whose knowledge was hidden at the time of the events, is responsible for these hysterical outbursts she can tell this memory with confidence in her memoir. She calls these reactions 'irrational', and therefore associates them with her other self. What is experienced there is not meaningful when we look at the events themselves, without taking into consideration the negative effects of her incest experience; that the stratum of actions and behaviors that are observable have to be treated with the intervention of a professional who can help create a coherent story of the events.

According to Foucault the subject of sexuality has been dispersed into various discourses and instead of being silenced it is in fact articulated with even more fervor, but within certain spaces and in certain ways, as power disguises itself into multiple

points of influence. These articulations shaped by power are produced through people in accordance with what Foucault calls "…the polymorphous techniques of power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 11). He is interested in revealing the impetus that is the driving force of the desire to speak about sex and to create truths on the subject of sex. How does power shape the discourse on sex, how does power speak through people in various spaces? And where and in what ways have the effects of this power crept in? (p. 12) Foucault argues that "...since the end of the sixteenth century, the putting into discourse of sex, far from undergoing a process of restriction, has on the contrary been subjected to a mechanism of increasing incitement" (p. 12). He states that repression is only a new course of action that the power operating in, through and around the subject of sex has taken and this course is one that establishes a science of sexuality through invocation to speaking about it.

4.7 Confession in *My Father's House* and Foucault

Foucault (1978) argues that the West has invented a *scientia sexualis*, that holds the power-knowledge regarding sex. He adds that, at the root of this new science lies confession, which is precisely the kind of power that is contrary to *ars erotica*. Despite this, we treat sex with respect to the dictates of the confession; urging it to tell itself, so that this science may decree its truth and constantly formulate new truths, acting as the professional ear (p. 57, 58). He draws parallels between confession and this *scientia sexualis*, both of which constantly urge one to seek the 'truths' concerning sex.

In the introduction of Taylor's *The Culture of Confession from Augustine to Foucault* there is a juxtaposition of the ways in which Foucault distinguishes between history and genealogy. The first is static, immobile and aims to justify its own present

circumstances, while the latter aims to refute totalizing arguments, to fragment what was unified, and compels us to reconsider our existential premises. In the case of a genealogy of confession, histories to refute would be the ones that argue in favor of a certain kind of human nature that necessitates confession (Taylor, 1989, p. 4, 5). Foucault links the incitement to tell in psychotherapy to Christian confessional practices, where one is encouraged to tell every little detail about one's self in the form of a renunciation. In this respect, rejecting one's past is a necessary step in order to arrive at a new truth about one's life and to be able to transform the self through this revelation. This transformation is achieved through the subject's telling of what was wrong about his or her past in detail to the priest. Foucault links Christian confession to the process of retrieving truths from a patient's past by telling every detail to a psychotherapist, an expert, in order to formulate a truth about the individual's life. In both cases there is a strict emphasis on the sexuality of individuals, and an incitement to discourse about it. With the help of the book, the ear of the analyst has now multiplied into thousands and millions of readers, who assume the role of listeners and in fact authoritative listeners, for here in the account before us is the 'truth' of the matter and to us, who are interested in hearing about how it has been chased out of hiding, falls the duty of hearing about it and confirming its validity; the validity of something very private and personal. This is what relates to Foucault's notion of a confessional society. Making meaning of one's life is carried out through the consent of others. Power here, as Foucault argues all along, does not impose itself from above, or in a restrictive, negative manner. It assigns individuals the role of telling about and listening to sex and a mechanism of constant collective scrutiny is established. A *techne* for producing selves and forming 'truths' is at work in this formulation.

Confession and renunciation of one's past are significant techniques that the memoir uses extensively. Fraser talks about fake, superficial selves, created to hide her actual suffering self. At the time, that is, before the revelation of the truth about her life and before the retrospective teleological reconstruction of her past, she did not know that those selves were fake.

In the second chapter, "The Other", Fraser (1989) describes how, as a result of the trauma she experienced because of her father's sexual abuse, she created another self. This other self undertook the whole bulk of obligations that Fraser was unable to face consciously. "When the conflict caused by my sexual relationship with my father became too acute to bear, I created a secret accomplice for my daddy by splitting my personality in two" (p. 15). She also says,

> ...I acquired another self with memories and experiences separate from mine, whose existence was unknown to me. My loss of memory was retroactive. I did not remember my daddy ever having touched me sexually. I did not remember ever seeing my daddy naked. In future, whenever my daddy approached me sexually I turned into my other self, and afterwards I did not remember anything that happened. (p. 15)

This is not the only other self in the book.

'Appearances' functions as one of these other selves, a third one, this time created deliberately and knowingly, not as a psychosomatic reaction to the traumatic experience, but as an identity that she could project outwards to make people think she was alright when in fact deep inside she was struggling. Here is how she describes this character in the beginning of the chapter "Red Shoes":

> I have a shirt box full of old photographs. I spread its contents around me – blurred black-and-white pictures taken with an assortment of Brownie box cameras. Myself in sloppy-joe sweater and saddle shoes with hair draped over one eye like Veronica Lake. On the steps of Hamilton High in red-and-yellow cheerleading outfit. In red strapless velvet: Fall Frolic '52. Always I am smiling,

> my lips a scarlet bow even when my teeth are clenched and my eyes closed against the sun. (p. 65)

When she looks at these pictures she does not think that they are really her, instead they seem to her to be the pictures of a 'glamor girl' which she put together out of bits cut from movie magazines.

> …this glamor girl was an alter ego I created to hide my shadow-twin. I invented her to fool myself as well as the world. I invented her to paste over the pictures that do not appear in this box – dark photos, still underexposed, of my other self and daddy... (p. 65)

As for the function of this character whom she called 'Appearances', it was to "...demonstrate that everything was super-keen while I was most despairing. I ran her in school elections, entered her in popularity contests, placed her on athletic teams, bought her a cheerleading outfit" (p. 65). However, Fraser says this self was like a computer and it did not act out of real emotion, "…she played to rule. Since dating was the standard by which Hamilton High judged a girl's popularity, she filled her date book like a junkie" (p. 65). Appearances is one of the selves created by Fraser and one that she has distanced from her own current self while examining her past. It is an invented appearance, a deceptive outlook to the outside world, a surface concealing what 'really' was going on deep inside.

The chapter "A Severed Head" portrays another such deceptive outlook. Here is how she describes this illusive self by commenting on old photographs:

> From the way the picture is cropped, it looks as if I'm also wearing a black gown. That is an illusion because only my head went to college. My severed head. That was how I rid myself forever of the red shoed mannequin I invented to hide my other self – I chopped off her head and registered it in Honors English and Philosophy at the University of Western Ontario, eighty miles away. (p. 120)

This is a different self with a different set of rules and motivations, quite distinct from Appearances.

> My incestuous relationship with my father was now over for good, leaving a sooty aftershadow of self-hate which mistook for the residue of my bad experiences at Hamilton High. Philosophy was my high-minded defense against this legacy. Through rational knowledge I would put together a functional and successful person I could respect. Feelings were on hold. They were irrational, hence dangerous. (p. 120)

This intellectual self now is another invalid past self, which helped her endure or survive a time of suffering, and the reason for this past self to emerge was the absence of the knowledge which she currently possesses about herself. One other such instance of retrospective rejection in Fraser's account is her wedding day: "*I will have no memory of the wedding ceremony. It will never be written on my consciousness any more than a hand inscribing water produces a record. If it hadn't been for the photographs, I would never believe I'd been there"* (p. 141). The norms of confession require that in order to purify oneself one must denounce the past life and the deeds that are a part of it. Those deeds must be addressed and brought to light. For confession to serve its purpose, everything needs to be told to the person who holds authority over 'truth'. Foucault states that this incitement to speech takes place in the context of a science of sexuality. Foucault's analysis links psychoanalysis and its incitement to tell everything to an authoritative ear to Christian confessional practice.

> According to the new pastoral, sex must not be named imprudently, but its aspects, its correlations, and its effects must be pursued down to their slenderest ramifications: a shadow in a daydream, an image too slowly dispelled, a badly exorcised complicity between the body's mechanics and the mind's complacency: everything had to be told. (Foucault, 1978, p. 19)

Everything is put under painstaking examination, all of one's thoughts and feelings, under meticulous analysis, to chase sex down and to become aware of even the smallest traces of it in the soul. This frequently practiced pursuit of sex and its transformation into speech over the centuries found its way into a gradually formed scientific discourse,

a science of sexuality, where medical authority took hold of the authoritative position of the listening-ear. This 'telling' in detail, examining in the light of medicine; preferably by consulting a psychiatrist or psychotherapist and on the couch, speaking on this subject to reveal the 'true' narrative about it, at a glance, is the whole work itself. The aim of psychotherapy is achieved by means of producing a 'truth' that heals the subject, whose life-narratives are washed in this 'truth' and are altered in the light of its telos. Namely, all of the text is a result of this telling, an embodiment of this inclination to extricate the most intimate and minute details of how the incest occurred and the revelation of this hangs onto an expectation that this will bring freedom, the emancipation of the individual from a hindrance or inhibition which is thus taken to be the sign of an external power's impingement upon the self. The psychotherapeutic process promises to set things right, to bring everything back to normal, after the patient tells in detail every detail about her suffering sexuality. It is mainly this that Foucault argues, that while from a certain perspective, self-expression through exhaustive narrating is presumed to be emancipatory, it is precisely through this mechanism that the web of power is drawn more tightly around the subject (p. 20).

In the first chapter, "The Secrets", we see numerous examples of extreme concentration on detail, exactitude in telling. Memories that were extracted out of memory by means of therapy are now put down on paper. "Something hard pushes up against me, then between my legs and under my belly. It bursts all over me in a sticky stream" (Fraser, 1989, p. 8). "I lie naked on my daddy's bed, clinging to the covers. His sweat drips on me. I don't like his wet-ums. His wet-ums splashes me" (p. 10).

> My arms stick to my sides, my legs dangle like worms as my daddy forces me back against his bed. I love my daddy. I hate my daddy. Love hate love hate.

> Daddy won't love me love me hate hate hate. I'm afraid to strike him with my fists. I'm afraid to tell my mommy. (p. 14)

The truth that her father had sexually abused her has now become a concise narrative; its expression has taken the form of a full-length book; it has thrived into dreams that are interpreted in the light of the truth of a psychotherapeutic telos. What takes place is a renunciation of a past self, confession to an authoritative ear, that is, the analyst, and also the forming of a textual discourse with a multitude of readers and experts and professionals that lend their ears to this confessional truth-making technology. Not a repression of sex, but a multiplication of sexualities. Through multiple *techne*s of confession and renunciation of her past life, Fraser allows the box of Pandora to open to psychotherapy and to her readers and the repressed memories of her childhood come out of it; all those memories put together retrospectively in the form of a coherent story constitute the life-story in this memoir.

CHAPTER 5

BUTLER AND FOUCAULT,

DELANY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TECHNOLOGIES

5.1 Butler's subjectivation theory and further possibilities with Foucault

It is important to note that Foucault distinguishes between different kinds of psychoanalysis. In fact, in *The History of Sexuality I,* he writes that psychoanalysts have been stating that sex is not repressed, that desire and power relate to each other in a much more complex way. Foucault refers to psychoanalysts who are not content with classical psychoanalytical formulations that claim the libido is at the core of every behavior and every problem the individual is experiencing. He says that "…the law is what constitutes both desire and the lack on which it is predicated" (p. 81). This premise, that psychoanalysis has been looking for other formulations for itself in order to escape a too simplistic and naive conception of repression, is an important one since it implies that it is possible to make use of psychoanalysis in other ways.

Together with the above mentioned premise, that Foucault gives psychoanalysis a privileged place but also emphasizes problematic strains of it as being an extension of the power of medicine and scientia sexualis, Judith Butler's use of Foucault in her psychoanalytical theory of subjectivation shows the directions that Foucault's work points towards and justifies Foucault in distinguishing between one type of psychoanalysis over the other.

Butler dwells on the emphasis Foucault puts, in *Discipline and Punish,* on the body as a site for the workings of power through which it creates subjects. Butler goes on to state that the subject, the exterior of the body – that is, the soul – is created at the

expense of the destruction of the body (Butler, 1997, p. 91). This sublimation of the body, in Butler's terms, allows for the self to emerge but on the grounds on which that body was destroyed. This site of destruction is preserved in the self and "…the body is now to be understood as that which not only constitutes the subject in its dissociated and sublimated state, but also exceeds or resists any effort at sublimation,.." (p. 92). What we have here is a body that is sacrificed for the self to emerge and to live, but this act of repressing the body's urge to live does not altogether do away with it; in fact, the body remains as a potential resistance inherent in the force that sets out to control the body (p. 93). She then goes on to refer to the calling "Hey you there!" that Althusser relates [3] as an act which can potentially constitute the subject. However the subject can evade being constituted by that calling in the case of a misrecognition of the intent with which the calling is made (p. 95). The efforts of power to form identity through discourse, in a Lacanian sense, result in the impossibility of the discursive formation of identity. "Identity can never be fully totalized by the symbolic, for what it fails to order will emerge within the imaginary as a disorder, a site where identity is contested" (p. 97). This formulation of Butler is interesting in contesting certain classical forms of psychoanalysis in which we see totalizations and teleologies about identities at work. Butler then goes on to refer to a passage from Foucault to make contrasts between Foucault and Lacan. According to this, failure is integral to Lacanian law, as the psyche poses a constant resistance to the law, never overthrowing it, but keeping it at a distance and contributing to its existence. With Foucault it is different; resistance is "…an effect of the power that it is said to oppose" (p. 98). Therefore, the law creates and forms a

[3] See p. 174-175 for Louis Althusser's notion of interpellation in "Ideology and State Apparatuses" in *Lenin and Other Essays* (1971).

resistance to that law. In this regard, the psyche is given the ability to produce its unexpected subversions and reactions through the workings and impositions made upon it by the symbolic (p. 99). The subject created in this kind of a configuration is not a fixed subject but a subject whose subjection is characterized by a constant remaking of its subjectivity. "This repetition or, better, iterability thus becomes the non-place of subversion, the possibility of a re-embodying of the subjectivating norm that can redirect its normativity" (p. 99). In this regard, Butler states that Foucault is proposing a formulation of power in which the power mechanism that forms subjects, simultaneously creates the conditions for the overthrowing of that mechanism itself (p. 100). In this sort of an analysis, Butler dwells on Foucault's notion that what power in fact aims to achieve is to create resisting subjects in order to stabilize and entrap identities in a certain 'individualization'. In the course of this though, as identities never achieve a complete totality and continue to perpetually repeat who they are, the incomplete space of identities becomes the potential for them to subvert the power mechanisms that created them. Butler derives a theory on the formation of the psyche by referring to Foucault's work. As we are exposed to the recognition and designations of others and enter the social world of classifications and denominations, we also render ourselves open to being subordinated. Entering the symbolic thus we become subjects, but the part of us that is not defined by and overflows the realm of the symbolic, in the Lacanian sense, the psyche, is formed at this juncture as that which exceeds definitions and identifications (Sawicki, 391). Sawicki talks about the way Butler makes use of Foucault in her theory of subjectivation and states that it is "…remarkably Foucaultian in spirit…" (392) and also "…a theory that rests on the account of a desiring subject and that presumes that the logic of identity is inherently exclusionary (392). She states that

there are many ways we can engage Foucault; in Butler's way of doing it, we see evidence that even though feminist concerns are seemingly absent in Foucault's work, we can develop ways and theories that can fill in that gap and make Foucault instrumental in constituting or complementing other theoretical positions. "In drawing attention to the queerness of Foucault's project, Butler corrects a deficiency found in much of the commentary on his work" (393). Foucault did not look down upon psychoanalysis as a whole and the way his work is open to being utilized in the way Butler makes use of it, is a proof of that.

5.2 Repression and teleology

The general landscape of *The Motion of Light in Water* can be seen as presenting a picture of repression of (Delany's) homosexuality. The author gives an account of his life in which he deals with questions concerning his sexuality. In this respect, we can read the persona behind the narrative as someone who is seeking a kind of freedom through giving voice to and opposing a repressive power. He designates this sort of a function to his book. He wants to bring into articulation the language of those who were marginalized and whose existence is repressed by power. He uses words like 'sexual revolution' to talk about the sixties and says that giving expression to various sexualities will play a very important role in bringing about that revolution (Delany, 2004, p. 294). He says, "I sincerely hope this book – not as a nostalgia but as possibility – helps" (p. 294). He believes that it is necessary to express marginal sexualities in order to be able to give those experiences a name: "…once the AIDS crisis is brought under control, the West will see a sexual revolution to make a laughing stock of any social movement that till now has borne the name" (p. 294). Delany's account privileges writing with being

potentially instrumental in bringing about a big change and talks about restrictions placed upon sexual writing (p. 295). All this suggests that repression and the ways in which power represses are an important underlying theme in the book and that Delany might possibly be expecting and talking about a kind of emancipation from this repressive force to take place. For him desire, and in the context of that period of time homosexual desire, creates conditions where expression of it, as well as acting upon it, is not acceptable as desire creates "...silences, new divisions, between the speakable and the unspeakable, the articulate and the inarticulable" (p. 516).

Delany meets a guy called Phil and he goes to his house. He talks about Phil's sexual stories because he attaches a certain function to writing about his sexual encounters. Not only does he relate with vivid detail his own sexual encounters, but he also includes writings or sex stories of other people in his account. We see an example of this when he tells the systematic manner in which Phil writes and accumulates a collection of stories of his sexual encounters: "…many were beautifully written, dense with detail and observation that far outweighed mere prurience. This was before the days of *Straight to Hell* and *First Hand;* before Stonewall and Gay Liberation" (p. 317). Delany says that D. H. Lawrence, Marquis de Sade and Henry Miller had not been published in the United States at the time. He finds Phil's stories to be "…astonishing documents on gay sexual patterns in New York" (p. 317). Within this regulatory system these gay documents were at the time paving the way for what we can read as Delany's hope for a sexual revolution, an emancipation through the expression of sexualities, which suggests parallels with Freud's work on repression, the unconscious and psychoanalysis and raises questions of whether Delany is trying to reveal a hidden layer

of meanings, the repressed truth about his sexuality and himself, by telling his past in detail and making the truth of his life public.

There are numerous occasions where he speaks of the many challenges homosexuality faced at the time. He says that some words related to sexuality were not allowed in his household, as well as not acceptable in writing in general (p. 57). We see a repressive force in action when Delany's mother, after having discovered the erotic accounts that he wrote, takes him to a psychiatrist and his writing endeavor is interpreted as "attention getting behavior" (p. 58). Also, in Delany's fragments relating his school years we see a constant depiction of sex and sexualities: marginal and homosexual sexuality appears to be foregrounded in the events depicted.

Splitting [4] is a term which Freud refers to as a defense which emerges as a result of a conflict between what the instinct wants and what sort of fears and dangers reality presents in the way of attaining the desired object. To avoid the danger and to get what he wants the individual uses some strategies in order to achieve this end, but only at the expense of creating a 'rift' in the ego which does not heal but continues to grow (Freud, 1940b, p. 5063). Seeing female genitals generates fear because there is an implied castration, or there is a danger of losing one's penis in the vagina. Therefore, one immediately couples that experience of seeing the vagina with the experience of seeing a penis. Since it is hard to admit this sort of thing, the experience of seeing the vagina is coupled with the fetishizing [5] of another object which was probably there at the time of the experience (Freud, 1940a, p. 5008). Let us take a dream Delany has in relation to this approach. He has a very intimate encounter with a boy named Snake in his dream. His

[4] Freud refers to splitting in various articles: "Studies on Hysteria" (1893-1895), "Splitting of the ego and its relation to parent loss" (1985).
[5] For a detailed account of Freud's view of fetishization see "Three Essays on Sexuality" (1905).

tongue having been cut, the boy cannot speak, but he and Delany can understand each other. Delany wakes up feeling very good the morning after this dream. According to Delany, being "…castrated of language and rephallicized by his name,.." this boy was a split of Delany and represented a kind of distance, gap between two different poles within him (Delany, 2004, p. 97). With respect to the Freudian formulation above, it is possible to say that Delany is experiencing a splitting throughout the narrative, with the book putting together the fragments of his past life to give him, and also other homosexual men of the times, a language. The fear of not being able to realize his intention of opposing a repression of homosexuality is the source of the dream. This is also potentially relevant to a teleology placing emancipatory homosexual concerns at the center of the book and stating that this was some kind of 'truth' that was not understood at the time. In this regard, Delany can be seen as telling us every detail of his sexuality retrospectively in order to achieve the telos of opposing a repressive power through a technology of publishing himself; 'exomologesis', which was a term discussed in the section on Christian technologies of the self. All the fragments of sexual encounters, in this respect, become pieces that he is trying to weave together in order to achieve a unity about his life, and to achieve a unified self, a totalized identity. We have so far read Fraser's memoir as an account in which she ties recovered memories and fragments of her past life together with dreams to weave together a unified teleological meaning with the intention of achieving a healing from her past experience, and in doing this she renounces the selves she created at certain points in the past. It is possible to look at Delany's memoir in the light of technologies of this kind, such as renunciation, telling to a professional ear one's sexuality in exhaustive the detail. In this regard, it is a retrospective glance at all these fragments of homosexual experiences with the aim of

putting together, as he calls it "…something I can recognize as my own" (p. 15), at the same time directed towards the teleology of giving voice to repressed sexuality, both on the personal level and on the social level.

He wants to go to the show where there will be a 'transvestial extravaganza' (p. 102), even though his family is not in favor of his going, in order to perhaps find something that, as he puts it, "…would enlighten him about his sexuality" (p. 102). In this respect there are many instances in the book in which we see an investment on Delany's part in abject or marginal sexuality as bearing a potential to bring about a kind of emancipation; this underlying theme in the narrative is potentially totalizing and teleological.

In another instance, Delany talks about the sexual advances initiated by Marilyn and he says, "I was curious if I could function heterosexually" (p. 108). This is not the only instance in which he demarcates homosexual and heterosexual identities distinctly and unambiguously. He says he was happy to be able to have heterosexual sex, yet, when compared to his experiences with other men, there was something missing. Again this supports the claim that Delany might be putting homosexuality at the center of the novel as a possible way of being through which some kind of truth about the relationship between power and sexuality at that time can be revealed.

After his heterosexual experience with Marilyn in the park, he thinks about himself as neither male, female, black nor white, and as a writer he feels he is "…the most ambiguous of citizens" (p. 110). As mentioned before, Delany's approach can be read as a way of teleologizing and totalizing homosexuality: "It seemed, in the park at dawn, a kind of revelation – a kind of center, formed of a play of ambiguities, from

which I might move in any direction" (p. 110). The word 'center' suggests a stable identity, or fixed position in this sentence.

5.3 Delany and the repressive hypothesis

As discussed in the first part of this chapter, Delany's style seems to be, at times, suggestive of parallels with Freud and psychoanalysis and there are some sections which could be read as potentially implying a repressed persona seeking sexual freedom through detailed telling and public verbalization of his past sexual experiences. Nevertheless, there are many instances in which Delany's writing points to the contrary. He does not attribute to homosexuality an emancipatory mission and does not totalize sexualities with respect to it.

> Now that a significant range of people have begun to get a clearer idea of what has been possible among varieties of human pleasure in the recent past, heterosexuals and homosexuals, females and males will insist on exploring them even further. (p. 294)

We are not looking at a totalizing and unifying approach but instead Delany emphasizes that there is possibility for more sexual exploration and experimentation in the peripheries of this discourse on sexuality.

This is in fact in line with what Foucault says about homosexuality. Arnold I. Davidson (2005) refers to one of Foucault's interviews to express that "…for Foucault, one link between the ancient practices of self-mastery and contemporary homosexuality is that both require an ethics or ascetics of the self, tied to a particular, and particularly threatening, way of life" (p. 134). We can see a parallel between Foucault's work and Delany's use of autobiography as a *techne* for articulating sexualities (p. 294). This

again does not mean it is going to be a shared and collective meaning but instead it means everyone can use autobiography to talk about their own experiences of sex.

The other parallelism is the manner in which they approach homosexuality as a way of life. There is an instance in which Delany asks a heterosexual couple at his friend's house whether it is not disturbing for them that it is much harder for heterosexuals to find sex (p. 395). Delany says that heterosexuality is so structured and institutionalized that it does not allow for sexuality to be experienced in ways that are sufficiently that allow sufficient variation and richness in terms of experimentation. This is in line with the above emphasis that Arnold makes with reference to the way Foucault sees homosexuality as a way of life, a kind of asceticism of our times through which subjects can experience sexualities in the peripheries of power.

Subway johns, the truck area and some other locations in the city are depicted as hidden compartments in which homosexuality is experienced in a very systematic and organized manner by great numbers of men. Delany shows us that during those times, instead of a repression, a multiplication and proliferation of sexuality was taking place. He gives detailed descriptions of the way in which men have sex in public orgies and apply a great deal of care and attention to the whole repertoire of movements that are involved. Delany attributes to the orgy the quality of being "…the most social of human interchanges" (p. 262). In the alleys that he went to "…cock passed from mouth to mouth to hand to ass to mouth without ever breaking contact with other flesh for more than seconds" (p. 226). About the scene he witnesses and takes part in around the alley he says: "It was engrossing; it was exhausting; it was reassuring; and it was very human" (p. 226). When we speak of power being not repressed we see that this is valid for Delany's own manner of experimenting with sex as well. He does not totally refrain

from having sex with women. Apart from Marilyn, on another occasion he has sex with both Ana and Marilyn at the same time and then with Ana alone, even though he claims to entertain many reservations with regard to sex with women. He describes the experience as being similar to what a heterosexual feels when he has homosexual sex and says that,

> …the reality of human bodies, despite the intricate psychic web that binds it, is often, and especially in the young, more agile than our expectations. I liked her. And I was still interested in exploring the limits of my own sexual map. (p. 263)

We can clearly see here that Delany does not want to act upon the prescribed norms of either heterosexual or homosexual sex. This goes hand in hand with the notion that with Delany we see a sexuality that is not repressed but in fact open to function in various ways. He voices this in another instant by referring to expressions such as gay culture, gay society and says that,

> …at the intuitive level (i.e. that level *wholly* culture bound) where we feel as if, somehow there is such a thing as a culture apart from infrastructural realities, gay society has always seemed to me an accretion of dozens of dozens such minutiae, a whole rhetoric of behavior – how to twist the skin of a clove of garlic… (p. 231)

Delany quite clearly expresses that he is a homosexual, but he does not present sexuality as a cultural point of resistance. For him homosexuality makes it easier to experiment with this kind of exploratory and individualistic experience of sexuality.

It is interesting to note that when Delany talks about the news reporting on a number of gay men that were caught for 'indecent behavior' it seems that for a short period of time or on a superficial level authorities and people can perceive homosexuals; the notion enters their mind, they become visible but only as outsiders. Yet, those that were not caught and are actually in much greater numbers are invisible (293). In this regard, the visibility of homosexuality is a kind of invisibility and in fact it is in practice

more useful than complete invisibility because it is more distracting. Foucault and Delany seem to share this notion of freedom that comes with a certain degree of visibility and a great deal of invisibility when it comes to dealing with power, which we will talk more about in relation to Butler's theory of subjectivation in the next chapter.

The dream in which he meets a boy who cannot speak called Snake speaks of the absence of a certain marginal sexuality within conventional history. Delany's book is one that attempts to inscribe into the margins of that given history an alternative one that gives voice to the unexpressed, invisible sexualities and identities of the time.

In the Chamber Theater meetings led by Risa, Delany meets Peter who is trying to become an actor. They go to Peter's house, albeit with some reservation on Peter's part, Delany stays there and they have sex at night, without a verbal invitation from either of them. The next day, seeing that Peter shows no inclination of perpetuating the sex initiated the night before between the two of them, Delany decides to wait for the night. This time Peter refuses to have sex with him. After the account with Peter, Delany interprets Peter's reservations with regard to having sex with him as representing one of the two common types of behaviors, developed as a reaction to the general atmosphere of silencing and fear when it came to matters regarding sexuality (p. 391, 392). He says that Lorenzo's forceful attitude (p. 381) was the other type of reaction to the reticence surrounding the subject of sex (p. 392). He adds that young people in the sixties reacted and rebelled against this censure and fear applied to sex, mentioning – in a way that aligns easily with Foucault's analyses – that they were not aware that the rebellion was allowed by power itself (p. 393).

Finally, Delany's book is not an account focused on sexuality per se, but is richly laden and varied with memories of walking in the bazaar with his father, discussions of

literature with Marilyn and other people, descriptions of city landscapes and local venues, encounters with people, famous or otherwise, lengthy commentaries on memory, writing, narrative and literary theories, his own changing perspectives on the same events, as well as the accounts of other people concerning the same events (p. 72, 73).

5.4 Technologies of writing and memory in *The Motion of Light in Water*

It is argued in this section that despite being potentially structured in ways that parallel Freudian psychoanalytic conventions, Delany's account aligns with Foucault's views on the repressive hypothesis and uses technologies of self-writing and memory in particular ways to avoid, to work against teleological and totalizing conventions and to subvert them. In this way Delany presents us with a narrative and an identity that are not totalized and unified. The memories and events he relates are not oriented towards one singular topic, a unifying theme. He talks about his writing, the media, people he met, conversations on literature, cooking, meeting other writers, hitch-hiking experiences, jobs he did, art, etc. These subjects are not meant to create a kind of narrative unity underlying some kind of teleology, and he is comfortable with calling them fragments. This fragmentation, evident in the designation of the chapters, as well as in the overall manner of depiction of the stories without linking them to one unifying and overarching story or teleology, is employed by Delany to emphasize the move away from a totalizing narrative structure.

After watching Kaprow's play called *Eighteen Happenings in Six Parts,* Delany expresses his bewilderment at the way his expectations about the play were not met at all. He had thought it would be "…rich, Dionysian", the happenings would "…would

crowd in on one another, would tumble into my perception one after another, that they would form a rich, interconnected tapestry of occurrences and associations" (p. 205). Instead of the density and colorful interaction he expects, he finds something that is "…spare, difficult, minimal, constituted largely by absence, isolation, even distraction" (p. 206). What he had in mind was that he would see "…a unified theatrical audience before some temporally bounded theatrical whole" (p. 206). Delany interprets this subversion of expectations at that time in a way that reflects his manner of thinking about unity and fragmentation. He is disappointed about the play but finds the subversion of his expectations meaningful and he reads it in relation to the spaces in which there was a great deal of libidinal activity later on in the book. He reads the separated parts and rooms in the play as being related to different groups not having access to the spaces of each other; every group going through their own experience and not being able to see the whole picture (p. 293). He also adds that while certain spaces accommodated sex in various ways, as a matter of fact it was all divided up into smaller partitions, like the rooms in the game, so no one saw all of it, it was all in a fragmented state. He writes, "The work I saw was far more interesting, strenuous, and aesthetically energetic than the riot of sound, color, and light centered about actorly subjects in control of an endless profusion of fragmentary meanings that I'd been looking forward to" (p. 208). The way Delany appreciates Kaprow's work shows us a great deal about his conception of his narrative and also of identity. He says that the work was a very good "…representation and analysis of the situation of the subject in history" (p. 208). By this we can see that Delany is not in favor of a unified and totalized conception of identity, or expression of identity through an autobiographical narrative with such characteristics. This approximates his account and approach all the more to a relationship with the self

that was practiced in Greco-Roman times as it emphasizes the subjective aspect of experience and identity; every individual needs to attend to these, to try to understand the self and the ways in which it experiences the world, by making this a lifelong practice of taking care of the self.

The many instances in the book in which he suspends the recounting of events to contemplate together with the reader on relevant narrative conventions and theories proliferate the parallactic possibilities of looking at the events, adding a perspectival richness to the narration. At one point, he writes that he does not remember much about what happened after his hitch-hiking trip by plane and then adds how this might look from different perspectives: a psychological convention that hints at the potential revelation hidden in that experience, a narrative convention that says the reason for not remembering is because the experience contained nothing out of the ordinary (p. 541). Also according to a feminist theoretical perspective the unknown holds information about "...the woman you have forgotten, repressed, or never, really, known" (p. 542). Delany comments that what makes history is the discrepancies that different approaches to it bring into perspective as an account is being put into writing (p. 543). "(When everyone knows what has occurred there is no history - only a mythology that, for all its practical effects, is contemporaneous with the present)" (p. 541). The account produced is one among many possible fabrications, no matter how detailed the author may endeavor to make it.

Delany does not attempt to create such exhaustiveness and talks about the impossibility of it. No matter how much the writer tries to put down his own experience into the writing, eventually the text is perceived by the reader according to the reader's own experience. Even though he says he is going to attempt to engage such

exhaustiveness, when he begins to relate the particulars of his hitch-hiking trip (p. 477), he is aware that it is going to have its shortcomings with regard to memory or perspective. The challenge comes as the difficulty of mastering a text that becomes like water on which the light of the readers' own experience moves and evades the mastery of the author. He talks about the totality of his account, but does not attribute to it a realistic value: "I am surprised as anyone that the totality of this narrative, however interim, makes such an easy fiction…" (p. 540). He calls it 'interim' and 'arbitrary' and attributes the seeming satisfactory totality, perhaps for some, to the ability of memory to have this potential to create for us totalizing teleological retrospective accounts. Linking Delany's approach to the earlier mentioned techniques of the self in the Greco-Roman times with regard to writing in the section on Hupomnemata and Correspondence, we can say that Delany perceives autobiographical writing as a techne in which one can (attempt to) see the self in many mirrors. For him, writing is not a site of constructing a 'truth' by means of applying some retrospective teleology:

> Despite the separate factual failing each is likely to fall into, the autobiographer (much less the memoirist) cannot replace the formal biographer. Nor am I even going to try. I hope instead to sketch, as honestly and effectively as I can, something I can recognize as my own, aware as I do so that even as I work after honesty and accuracy, memory will make this only one possible fiction among the myriad – many in open conflict – anyone might write of any of us, as convinced as any other that what he or she wrote was the truth. (p. 15)

Delany leaves the door open for other possible interpretations that might come as time goes by: "Incidents turn, in time, to reveal a previously hidden facet" (p. 176). Writing is a lifelong practice, a techne to be used for engaging and looking into the self.

He talks about one 'floating' memory which for a long time he was not sure about whether it was a dream or an actual event, but then says that after some time he was able to recognize and fix it, remembering it with more clarity (p.485). Nevertheless,

this play hints at the playful and transitory nature of memories as they can in time move from one context to the other or become more, or less, transparent. The way Delany approaches memory allows his writing to possess another kind of *techne* for supporting his underlying claim that identities are fluid, not unified. This is a conception of memory that does not take what is remembered for granted; thus, again it undermines the idea of arriving at a particular truth about one's life by telling everything in detail about one's past life. In the opening part of the Introduction of his autobiography, Delany talks about his memory of his father's death. He gives us details about the time his father died and the events before and after with an accurate chronology and then he finally says:

> "My father died of lung cancer in 1958 when I was seventeen."
> "My father died of lung cancer in 1960 when I was eighteen."
> The first is incorrect, the second correct.
> I am as concerned with truth as anyone - otherwise I would not be going so far to split to such hairs. In no way do I feel the incorrect sentence is privileged over the correct one. Yet, even with what I know now, a decade after the letter from Pennsylvania, the wrong sentence still *feels* to me righter than the right one. (p. 16)

Yet, it seems that on a personal level, the way he registered that memory is quite different from its realistic time frame. "I don't know why memory separates it so completely from the time in which, objectively, it occurred" (p. 14). He adds that someone compiling biographical information about a person can give more accurate data about that person than that person can do about himself. "In both cases, disjunction in memory was strong enough to make me, now and again, even argue the facts..." (p. 15). Yet he does express clearly that he does not intend to "…provide evidential certainty" (p. 15). He does not attach to memory a function of extracting the truth of what happened in the past. In fact, he says that he sees these recollections put down on paper as "…one possible fiction among the myriad…" (p. 16). This is a clear trait that

distinguishes this technology of memory, remembering, from a retrospective truth-making which shapes telling with regard to a teleology of finding the truth with regard to one's past and making it public, in this case through the act of writing an autobiography. All this does not mean truth is not important for him (p. 16). Delany looks at the two sentences, one expresses what he feels to be the true time of death of his father, and the other is the chronologically realistic time of death of his father. He does not privilege the incorrect sentence over the chronologically accurate one but still favors it and says: "Now a biography or a memoir that contained only the first sentence would *be* incorrect. But one that omitted it, or did not at least suggest its relation to the second on several informal levels, would be incomplete" (p. 16). Being aware of this fictional aspect of remembering and integrating both the chronological and the personal, fictional memory together and drawing from these an interrelated effect is characteristic of the way Delany uses memory as a *techne*.

There are other instances of a similar usage of memory in the narrative. One of them is when he thinks about his twelfth birthday.

> This is now. It's my birthday. But this particular now will be gone in hours, minutes, seconds. Tomorrow it won't be my twelfth birthday – where will I be on my thirteenth?
> And a year or five years or fifteen years from now it won't be my twelfth birthday even *more!*. (p. 52)

Apart from being mere contemplation of the future, this is a moment in which he has an awareness that it will become part of the past some time later. He looks at the pastness of the moment from a potential future vantage point. Then he does the opposite a year later. But having looked at the moment with that awareness before, when he stops in the future to look back at that moment of the twelfth birthday, it carries more layers of meaning. Delany adds to remembering these instances of awareness with which he

allows the narrative to reveal itself not only on a realistic chronological level but also on a personal and emotive level; on a level of larger possibilities.

Elsewhere in the narrative, Delany relates a memory with Billy and Bobby and then includes a memory of how he saw different aspects of that event after some time had passed. Juxtaposing these two different perspectives, he says that he is able to look at each memory from a larger vantage point. “Incidents turn, in time, to reveal a previously hidden facet” (p. 176). This again relates to an awareness recollection gives us is never complete and there are always new layers that can be added to it. “Now and again, if rarely, we’re given the opportunity to look back and judge if what we thought was so characteristic of a place, a person, eternal unto judgement, was after all, so telling” (p. 176). The way a memory is registered changes altogether in time as other aspects related to the incident are revealed. Instead of perceiving memory and recollection as fixed, keeping in mind that there may be other sides, that what is included in the remembered part does not reflect the events in any kind of totality, and that our memories can change depending on our perspectives; these constitute the *techne* of memory that Delany propagates in his narrative. He is hesitant when it comes to making judgements and to hastily forming truths or submitting to teleologies when it comes to putting together memories. One other clear instance of such a hesitant mode when it comes to relying on the fragments that memory provides is the following:

> Having written it, I seem to remember it. But *is* it memory? Or logic? Or only the pressure of narrative, yearning after its own truth?) However much any of these speculations satisfy (or subvert) a narrative sense, specific memories do not come with them to suggest, to confirm, to create, to invest these structural judgements with images, with textures, with lingering sensory detriti. Thus the writer attacks this moment – in its way, more like a story than any other in the book – with a feeling of immense impoverishment of all the extra-narrational material that impels diegesis into possibility, into narrative, into language. (p. 462)

The above section is a clear example of the way Delany inserts pauses into the narrative to turn his, and the readers', attention to the way writing, memory and logic work together to create coherence in reconstructing the past. His hesitation when it comes to fully relying on the veracity of these reconstructions constitutes the *techne* at work in his approach to writing, memory and narrative. Also, this is one other instance in which Delany talks about the way writing works; he writes about writing itself, attempting to reveal the mechanics of this autobiographical *techne*. What characterized the culture of the self and the care of the self, which we have talked about in the context of Foucault's work earlier, was the aim to allow the individual to look into oneself and to be able to see truth within, as well as becoming autonomous and being able to engage taking care of oneself autonomously. Hupomnemata and correspondence were instrumental technologies in this respect. Delany uses his autobiography to talk about himself, but he also talks about writing itself and he shares with the reader the ways in which writing can be utilized to connect with desire. He seeks to establish a connection between writing and pleasure; instead of using writing to reveal 'truths' – by publishing himself – about himself.

He talks about a journal which he carried with him all the time and on one side of which he wrote "…impressions, journal entries, or jottings on occasional projects" (p. 84) and in the back of this notebook he wrote his masturbation fantasies. As he kept writing and the notebook kept filling from both sides; daily life and fantasies would eat the space in the middle and writing for Delany became

> …marginal to a vast, empty, unarticulated center called the real world that was displaced more and more by it, reducing that center to a margin in its turn, a mere and tenuous split between two interminable columns of writing, one finished, one still to be begun… (p. 84, 85).

This interpretation of writing implies that, for Delany, writing displaces the real world; it presents a representation among many possible ones. Hence, the endlessness of notebooks, as well as fantasies and representations of reality. Seeing writing as this kind of a technology Delany can do without ascribing to it an agency for truth, but rather formulates it as an instrument for exploring possibilities. Also, this is another instance in which he contemplates the way writing reflects the self and can be utilized to see one's self and one's desire, as well being the site where the individual can accumulate the many daily occurrences. This parallels with the technologies of the self in Greco-Roman times as writing becomes a mirror to see the self in, as well as a conduit through which one can later look back and evaluate one's past; not in order to judge, as in Christianity, but simply to evaluate and to allow the individual to engage new possibilities of thinking and acting.

In the park, after having sex with Marilyn, he thinks about himself as a kind of hybrid creature between black and white, between male and female, and as a writer, "…the most ambiguous of citizens…" (p. 110). This is a satisfactory feeling for him. He does not feel the need to have a unified and totalized identity. It suggests movement, fluidity, like the motion of light in water.

Delany does not use writing as a form of confession, with respect to a retrospective teleology; instead for him writing is a tool for exploring the possibilities of connecting with the worlds of reality and fantasy. It is like moving in the most devastated, ruined, complex, disorganized part of Manhattan, where he starts to live with Marilyn when they get married. The second part in the book starts with the description of this neighborhood and bears the same name with Marilyn Hacker's poem "The

Peripheries of Love" (p. 17). A possible reading of the poem could be suggestive of the hybrid, rather than uniform, conception of love, and / or sex, that Delany is going after in his experiences: "If you are angle, I am complement, / If you are circle, I am circumscribed. / If my hands mold, yours is the form described… / I sound a note and you complete the chord,.." (p. 18). The poem is suggestive of the ways in which love can take many different shapes with respect to the particular way it engages its subject in different modes of expressing itself; as in the relationship between Delany, Marilyn and Bob. As we have seen in the section on hupomnemata, for Delany writing is a way of engaging oneself, a kind of meditative practice, rather than a means of confessing one's past mistakes; a practice through which Delany brings desire into interactions with reality.

> At the outer pole, all forces drove to realize the word on paper, to let the immediate feedback and intensifying potential of the letter enrich and specify, clarify and analyze, increase the imaginative specificity that was one with its insightful and experiential richness – a richness that made its resonances in my young body sing and soar – the richness art alone renders of the everyday... and which mysticism sometimes broaches with the extraordinary. (p. 58)

We are reminded again of the spiral notebook with both sides – fantasies and daily events – advancing to the middle, and sometimes 'interpenetrating'; as the interpenetration of - two men in sex or – writing and desire. Writing, memory and explorations of sexuality are all forms of *techne*, practices undertaken to engender an openness of being; ways of 'taking care of the self'. Finally, by talking about writing as extensively as he has done, Delany explores the basis, the grounds upon which writing resides; thus speculating on the possible instrumentalities attached to this autobiographical *techne,* contributing, in a way that is similar to the practice of forming

helpful discourses for oneself "*logos bioethikos*", which we mentioned earlier in the chapters on the technologies of the self.

5.5 Foucault, psychoanalysis and Butler

Judith Butler queers Foucault in an attempt to make use of his work in creating her theory of subjectivation. This is significant as it provides an answer to critics who accuse Foucault of not giving answers and of not providing possible solutions to the problems he poses. Secondly, it provides an answer to feminist critics who accuse Foucault's work of focusing on male homosexual relationships and leaving feminine sexuality out of the picture. Also, Butler's account demonstrates that psychoanalysis can be a useful discourse. Foucault's criticism in *The History of Sexuality* did not aim to do away with all psychoanalysis altogether.

In Foucault's work on the prison [6] the prisoner is subjected to certain practices and disciplined to act in certain ways that allow for it to be controlled and manipulated without requiring external force. The body becomes the object of power and power makes the individual internalize a set of thoughts and behaviors. In this formulation, power produces the individual and at the same time creates prohibitions around him. "…a restriction without which the production of the subject cannot take place, a restriction through which that production takes place" (Butler, 1997, p. 84). This regulation and production is not limited to the confines of the prison but instead operates around the body of the subject; this is the manner in which discourse effects the subject. The individual thus made to act in certain ways, submits to the normative ideals of the prison and is made "coherent, totalized". Foucault calls this identity – planted like a seed

[6] *Discipline and Punish* (1995) by Michel Foucault.

into the individual – "soul". The soul constitutes the outside of the body. Through this kind of a subjectivation the soul becomes the prison of the body (p. 85). Following this logic, the soul gains a kind of privilege over the body, in that it can entrap the body in a way that is particular to its own discursive subjectivation. Butler draws parallels to Lacanian psychoanalysis and says that the soul can be thought of as the psyche, and that it exists before the body. The subjects make a sacrifice by repressing their psyche as they enter the symbolic; they do this to become intelligible, but the parts that are resistant to this movement into the symbolic remain in the unconscious (p. 86). Now, in Butler's words, the most relevant part of this analysis to the two autobiographies that we have looked at so far – in terms of the technologies they employ with regard to memory, unity, writing, retrospection, identity, teleology – is:

> If discourse produces identity by supplying and enforcing a regulatory principle which thoroughly invades, totalizes, and renders coherent the individual, then it seems that every 'identity', insofar as it is totalizing, acts precisely as such a 'soul that imprisons the body'. (p. 85, 86)

It is inferred from the quotation above that discourse attempts to render the individual visible, comprehensible, clear and intelligible. It defines the whole array of mechanics that constitute the prisoner's manner of conduct. This determination imposed on the body is not done by means of a unilateral effect. Instead, the individual accepts this set of behaviors as the expression and extension of certain ideals that are the representation of a particular identity. In Lacan's terms, "This viable, and intelligible being, this subject, is always produced at a cost, and whatever resists the normative demand by which subjects are instituted remains unconscious" (p. 86). The symbolic imposes an identity on the psyche. That is the only way the subject can gain access to discourse, to the symbolic; by leaving out the part of the psyche that remains unworked and

unintelligible to the shaping of discourse. In the course of this production of the subject, the part that resists the normative influence of discourse is kept in the unconscious (p. 86). The subjectivating discourse attempts to render the subject coherent and "The psyche is precisely what exceeds the imprisoning effects of the discursive demand to inhabit a coherent identity, to become a coherent subject" (p. 86). In this formulation the soul is the outside of the body and the body is inferior to that exterior. What Butler questions at this point, an impasse which we have mentioned before as having been attributed to Foucault's work, is whether it is possible for the psyche to affect the mechanism, the discourse through which subjectivation takes place. Foucault's analyses showed resistance to be integral to power, that power in fact contained within itself the efforts that produce the tension and challenge for its own overthrowing. Butler looks at this by drawing parallels to the workings of the psyche and the unconscious. If there is a part of the psyche that remains in the unconscious, and that remains there as a passive force – instead of active and able to change the terms upon which the symbolic, or in Foucault's context discourse, bases its workings – then this resistant part of the psyche, is defined with respect to a limit; the limits of normalization on the subject. "If the unconscious, or the psyche more generally, is defined as resistance, what do we then make of unconscious attachments to subjection, which implies that the unconscious is no more free of normalizing discourse than the subject"? (p. 88) Butler questions what function this kind of resistance on the level of the unconscious, one that prevents a complete production of the subject by power, might have. She states that this kind of a resistance is not able to change the rules and mechanics which determine the operations of the power which produces subjects (p. 89). Firstly, according to Foucault's formulation, the body is brought into being by the soul, that is, by power. Power relates

to the discourse surrounding the prison and this in turn brings about the subjectivation of the prisoner. Butler talks about this with reference to Foucault's work, stating that in the course of this subjectivation that takes place, the body becomes a site upon which some kind of destruction is wrought. It is upon this site of destruction that the subject is instituted by power. Butler describes this as the "…sublimation of the body…" and the self as "…the body's ghostly form…" (p. 92). According to this, a subject is formed in a particular way through the effect of power at the expense of the body, and as long as power exercises its effect in that particular manner of subjectivation the body's destruction remains preserved in the normalization that has taken place (p. 92).

For Foucault, power does not produce subjects instantly and immediately, for instance as they respond to the call of the policeman. Instead, power exercises its effect in multiple ways and through constantly proliferating alliances. Subjectivation in this regard takes place in repetitive and continued ways. In this respect, the term 'homosexuality' for example can be a designation that attempts to present a normalization. This word can become an instrument by which one can experience another subjectivation by adopting homosexuality as a normality, by essentializing a particular identity. It is particularly in this configuration of affecting the creation of certain signs that the possibility of the emergence of a "…a reversal of signification…" as well as "…an inauguration of signifying possibilities…" emerges (p. 94). This subjectivation that takes place through a reiteration of the language of power is never fully completed but again and again reconstituted, and this leaves a certain kind of space for the reinterpretation and resignification of the terms with which power applies itself to the process of subjectivation (p. 94).

Referring to Althusser, Butler seeks an answer to how subversion of power's attempt to subjectivation can take place. As power attempts to identify the subject with regard to a discourse that it creates around him, he may in fact 'misrecognize' the call of power, read it as a call that does not address him although the name called refers to him, interpret it as a coincidence, disregard it as coincidental, and so on (p. 95, 96). This is precisely the effect of reiteration that is integral to subjectivation. This lack of completion is the space through which the imaginary has the potential to have this constant interaction with the symbolic and to exercise a misrecognition, which allows for a space in which new designations to what is being interpellated by power can be made. "The Althusserian use of Lacan centers on the function of the imaginary as the permanent possibility of *misrecognition,..*" (p. 96). In the Lacanian sense "Identity can never be fully totalized by the symbolic, for what it fails to order will emerge within the imaginary as a disorder, a site where identity is contested" (p. 97). Butler attempts to provide a bridge between Lacanian psychoanalysis and Foucault's theory of power. In her formulation, we see a constant contestation between the ordering of the symbolic and the disorder of the imaginary. Butler juxtaposes Lacanian law – in which resistance is unable to change the law that it resists – with what she finds in Foucault as "…resistance as the effect of the very power that is said to oppose" (p. 98). In this respect, Foucault is distinguished from Lacan as "…Lacan restricts the notion of social power to the symbolic domain and delegates resistance to the imaginary, while Foucault recasts the symbolic as relations of power and understands resistance as an effect of power" (p. 98). This dependency of the subject on repetition for subjectivation to continue allows for a formative potential to remain in there all the time.

> In its resignifications, the law itself is transmuted into that which opposes and exceeds its original purposes. In this sense, disciplinary discourse does not unilaterally constitute in Foucault, or rather, if it does, it *simultaneously* constitutes the condition for the subject's de-constitution. (p. 99)

Butler adds that "The disciplinary apparatus fails to repress sexuality precisely because the apparatus is itself eroticized, becoming the occasion for the *incitement of sexuality* and, therefore undoing its own repressive aims" (p. 101). This once more relates to the notion that Foucault dwells on in *The History of Sexuality;* that sex is not repressed, but on the contrary proliferated by power. Foucault proposes a refusal of who we are instead of trying to find out who we are. Butler goes on to say that this feeling will be met with a rejection. Bringing in Freud to the equation, Butler argues that,

> Under the pressure of the ethical law, a subject emerges who is capable of ethical law, a subject emerges who is capable of reflexivity, that is, who takes him/herself as an object, and so mistakes him/herself, since he/she is, by virtue of that founding prohibition, at an infinite distance from his/her origin. (p. 103)

For subjectivation to take place, prohibition influences the subject to part with its present totalized self. While this parting takes place, the subject becomes attached to prohibition itself; by obeying and eroticizing it. This prohibition is even more attractive because it prevents the subject from dissolving into psychosis. This is different in Foucault's context. In Interpellation, or the name with which discourse calls the subject into being by injuring him, the subject embraces this injurious name because that is what he needs to do to stay alive; because of the narcissism attached to being. So the paradox here emerges as follows: "…only by occupying – being occupied by – that injurious term can I resist it" (p. 104). In this way Butler incorporates Foucault's analysis of power into psychoanalysis. Resignification of identity in this configuration becomes possible as a result of an injurious subjectivation, which at the same time carries the potential to unsettle and undo this "…passionate attachment to subjection…" (p. 105).

How does Delany fit into this final picture in which Butler bridges psychotherapy and Foucault? Delany's account shows a parallelism with the Foucauldian perspective that Butler aligns with psychoanalysis in her theory of subjectivation, as well as depicting instances that serve as examples to that theoretical framework it presents.

He says that this is not a "…full-out attempt at biography…" (p. 42). The fragmentary organization of the book is in parallel with Delany's views of identity: he does not present, or theorize upon it, as being unified, totalized and coherent. Throughout the narrative there are events and instances by means of which Delany seeks ways to discover something about his own identity. He does not search for this in some coherent, totalized, conventional meaning. When it is announced in the family that there will be a play with female impersonators in the Apollo theatre, Delany listens to the comments made about it and wonders how his Uncle can praise something so anarchic. He keeps quiet about his enthusiasm to go and see it. "Perhaps I would notice something, meet someone and recognize something in one of those strange people who'd clearly been marked as foreign and alien to everything I knew, that would, in some way, enlighten me about my sexuality" (p. 102). Years after that Delany overhears his mother and a neighbor talking in the kitchen about Stormy, one of the main actresses in the show. Delany is surprised to hear his mother say that she would have gone if it would not be offensive to Stormy's mother, who is an acquaintance of hers. For Delany this is an instance in which two worlds, that of his family and that presented by the play, which he deemed to be separate, converge and almost intermingle: "…that the glacial solidity of the boundary I'd been sure existed between them was as permeable as shimmering water, as shifting light" (p. 104). This is a reminder of the way Butler

elaborates in a Foucualdian perspective that discourse subjectivates through repetition and in between those repetitions there is always at every instant the possibility of the unsubjectivated remainder of the psyche to surface. The transvestial extravaganza has an attraction in terms of presenting the body as a site of destruction for the subject to emerge. Seeing the body in such an altered and unconventional state draws them to it; Delany, his uncle and his mother, all for different reasons, but mainly because it signifies an undoing of a particular unified, coherent structure with regard to identities.

In the park, after having sex with Marilyn, Delany attempts to define himself within the social categories around him. This is a moment of questioning for him. He asks himself who he is, what he is doing, where he is going and so on. Black, but not fully black, hard to guess which country he comes from, a homosexual who can function heterosexually, not male or female, an ambiguous citizen as a writer, Delany feels satisfied and sad at the same time. "It seemed, in the park at dawn, a kind of revelation – a kind of center, formed a play of ambiguities, from which I might move in any direction" (p. 111). It feels as if he does not have to conform to any law or custom and that there is no power that can influence him towards any direction. He feels that he is completely free of any restraints. Ironically, Marilyn misses her period a few weeks later. Then later in the narrative, he writes about the time in the hospital when he thinks back to that almost mystical moment in the park:

> In my exhaustion, what I'd been experiencing was the comfort of – for those few moments – shrugging off the social pressures I felt from being black, from being gay, indeed, from being a citizen who made art. (Above all, perhaps, from being male.) But at that time, the words "black" and "gay" – for openers – didn't exist with their current meanings, usage, history. (p. 399)

Delany talks about the discourse that was dominant at the time and the pressures it brought upon someone like him. He would like to shake off the constraints of being gay, but he discovers that it is not that easy.

> I saw that such moments were themselves largely social and psychological illusions – unless you realized that what they meant was that forces both social and psychological were at work to pull you toward the *most* conservative position you might inhabit, however poorly you might be suited for it. (p. 399)

He feels trapped and unable to proceed with his life the way he wants to. The sexual act in the park and then trying to do the morally right thing by marrying Marilyn put him into a set of circumstances which influence the conditions he will live in for the coming years. He is made to make a conscious choice about the way he will use his body.

> The mystic experience was a psychological sign that you'd reached a cul de sac where it was too exhausting to separate the personal from the social on the most conservative level. It was an exhortation to vigilance against this muddying phenomenon, for which I suspect, a few years later, the radical slogan "The Personal *is* the Political" was formulated. (p. 399)

In Butler's analysis of the prisoner's subjection in Foucault's work the prisoner is made to internalize the rules of the prison and to act accordingly. In the first instance in the park Delany thinks he is free of the rules of society, the prison or the discourse, in which he lives, but in fact he later on discovers that the feeling was only an illusion and that he was made to conform in a way he was not able to realize at the time.

Delany says that the year 1956 was important for the country as there were many changes that took place in that year; politically and economically and so on. He talks about the arrival of a play four years later "…after this postindustrial point…" (p. 201): *Eighteen Happenings in Six Parts* by Allan Kaprow. Delany says that for many critics the work was a "…transition between the modern and the postmodern in cultural developments" (p. 201). A reading of Delany's experience of the work shows the ways

in which Delany's approach parallels Butler's theory of subjectivation in which she brings Foucault and psychoanalysis together. Delany expects the work to be "…rich, Dionysian, and colorful; I'd thought that the happenings themselves would be far more complex, denser,.." (p. 205) and, "I'd also thought the eighteen happenings, despite their partition, would crowd in on one another, would tumble into my perception one after another, that they would form a rich, interconnected tapestry of occurrences and associations" (p. 205, 206). Delany does not expect it to have a "…singular, synopsizable meaning…" (p. 206), yet he thinks it would be "…rich in meanings and meaning fragments, full of resonances and overlapping associations, that they would be thick with ready-made suggestions, playful, sentimental, and reassuring – like a super e.e. cummings poem;.." (p. 206). Delany's expectations are not met. Instead he finds that the work is "…spare, difficult, minimal, constituted largely by absence, isolation, even distraction. For all its immense framing in wood and polyethylene, the actual work was even difficult to locate as to its start, content, style, or end" (p. 206). He likens the organization of the play – the fact that all happenings were in progress at the same time; only in different compartments – to historical events. The audience was divided into groups and each group was experiencing what was happenings in their own room. Moreover, nobody knew what was going on in the whole of the play. Nobody could tell exactly when it started and when it came to an end. In fact, they did not even know how to define a single happening (p. 207). Delany describes the work "…as a representation and analysis of the situation of the subject in history,.." (p. 208). Subjection continues at the same time in a variety of ways in different compartments in society and the way it happens is not by means of unilateral injunctions; instead it is always in progress and

when it takes on a new course or when it comes to an ending or separation or multiplication is hard to tell, just like in Kaprow's play.

In some other occasion he learns from a painter named Simon that the trucks area near the docks is a place for instant sex. He goes down there once but does not find what Simon told him of (215). Then he learns that he needs to cross over, so he goes a second time, this time finds a great number of men having sex and joins them (216). Elsewhere in the narrative he writes about the invisibility of what goes on behind the trucks to the people who watch the news of the apprehension of a number of men in that area for indecent behavior. The great majority of people are not aware of the vast proportions of the multitude of men who have orgies in places that only those men know and are unknown to the dominant discourse (293).This parallels both with Butler's formulation – that the reiteration of the subjectivating discourse bears the potential of being misrecognized or not heard or ignored altogether, thus resulting in an inability of discourse to effect itself to the subjects.

> When he goes to the trucks area in other times he describes it as "… a libidinal saturation impossible to describe to someone who has not known it. Any number of pornographic filmmakers, gay and straight, have tried to portray something like it – now for homosexuality, now for heterosexuality – and failed because what they were trying to show was wild, abandoned, beyond the edge of control, whereas the actuality of such a situation, with thirty-five, fifty, a hundred all-but-strangers is hugely ordered, highly social, attentive, silent, and grounded in a certain care, if not community. (p. 225, 226)

With Delany we can see a move from the destruction of the body for the subject to emerge towards a care directed towards the body and homosexuality for him is more open for exploration of his sexuality as well as a lifestyle in which he can actively engage an existence in the peripheries of the dominant discourse at the time. What Delany adds to Butler's analysis of Foucault to form her theory of subjectivation is an

active awareness of the possibilities of power as proliferating through subjects and acting with deliberation with regard to its potential encaptivating and subjectivizing clutches.

> The parallel containing the discourse of repetition, of desire, whether satisfied or unrequited (but always purveying its trope of truth), forever runs beside one of positive, commercial, material analysis. Many of us, raised on literature, have learned to supply the absent column when the material is presented alone. And a few of us have begun to ask, at least, for the column of objects, actions, economics, and material forces when presented only with, in whatever figurative form, desire. (p. 228)

He talks about becoming aware of the body not as inferior but as the interior, the part where the care is primarily to be directed at – just as it was in the context of the care of the self in Greco-Roman times, and the exterior of it that is the soul (or discourse) according to Foucault. This awareness can entail the pursuit of ways of looking at oneself, autobiographical *techne*s that one can utilize as lifelong practices. This is in line with what we have mentioned earlier with regard to Foucault's approximation of homosexuality to asceticism in terms of being a way of living on the margins. Not only did Delany engage the lifestyle that he did, but he also attempts to reinstate into mainstream history the account of that life. Despite being unregistered in mainstream historical accounts, homosexuality was an active engagement for a great number of men at the time and Delany shows us proof of that in his account. Describing the activity in the trucks area near the docks Delany says, "It was engrossing; it was exhausting; it was reassuring, and it was very human" (p. 226).

As a way of life that emerges as marginal within the accepted dominant social structure, homosexuality carries with it the risk of becoming all too coherent and systematized and totalizing in itself, and Delany hints at this at times:

> …gay society has always seemed to me an accretion of dozens of such minutiae, a whole rhetoric of behavior – how to twist the skin off a clove of garlic, how to open the doors to the unsold box seats at Carnegie Hall with a dime, the shifting, protean, and liquid knowledge of where sex is to be found in the city, this season, or Worcestershire Sauce in your eggs – that together make up a life texture I was at once almost wholly appreciative of, and at the same time felt almost wholly estranged from: as if it were a myth that I could never quite reach. (p. 232)

We see above Delany's detached attitude with regard to the particularities that constitute what has become a cultural normativity called gay culture. Being imbued with this awareness Delany – and his restrospective account – demonstrate, and encourage, a way of understanding identity, writing, memory and life to be aware of the subjectivating effect of culture, as well as the inherent resistance attached to it. The way he chooses to use his body when it comes to sex, the way he interprets its engagements with regard to the discourse that was dominant at the time and with regard to the artistic developments that were in progress then in his autobiographical account, all parallel his account to that of Butler's analyses of Foucault to formulate her psychoanalytical theory of subjectivation. Homosexuality is first of all emphasized not as a teleology, but as a way of experiencing a transgression; a transgression which is presented not only through Delany's personal life but also by relating events to what is being experienced in the unconscious of the public sphere of that time. Those locations in which homosexuality was experienced almost represent the unconscious activities of the city, of this institutionalized and normalized psyche (p. 293).

By going to the play that was a 'transvestial extravaganza', with the way he approaches Kaprow's play, the manner in which he engages homosexuality to explore what was beyond the conventional at the time with regard to sex, Delany is constantly in the search for something beyond what is presented by the discourse of the time in which

he is living. He shows an awareness of the rules with which the ideological apparatus of that period operates.

We can go back to Marilyn's poem which he quotes in the beginning of the Chapter titled "The Peripheries of Love" and read it as a poem that talks about the constant reiterated interaction between a subjected identity and the psyche that always bears the potential of subverting the subjectivating discourse.

> If you are angle, I am complement. / If you are circle, I am circumscribed. / If my hands mold, yours is the form described. / Your voice is my familiar instrument. / I sound a note, and you complete the chord. Your eyes are an inscription in my hand / that reads my face and tells me what I am. My singing resonates beneath your words. / A move completes a move; as games are played, if I betray, you are the one betrayed. (p. 18)

It always reminds us that it is there; every time the reiteration of the subjected identity is done, it makes its presence felt, a song beneath words, a surrounding psychic presence around the circle – structure – of identity, a kind of mold and form implied as the absence of the form that is described through the shape of the body, and a most familiar voice, the times when it is heard.

On the last page of the book Delany comments on the title of his book, *The Motion of Light in Water*. He once again calls his autobiography "...most arbitrary fragments" (p. 570). The word fragments is significant in tying together what has been emphasized in this thesis all along; Butler's use of Foucault to talk about the way power, by fragmenting in subjectivation, the subjectivized but at the same time already-in-itself resistant subject; Delany's understanding of Kaprow's work, the visible and invisible parts of homosexual practices, his perception of his work, of identity, of memory. All of these together point towards not one single autobiographical technology, but one body of work that is made up of parts, fragments, *techne*s, that constitute the whole array of

dissections with regard to what has already been established, through a way of living that is open to experience sexuality in a more collective manner and by making use of a particular attitude, an autobiographical technology that is likened to the way light moves in water. What we see when we look at the play between water and light is ever-changing, an almost mystical relationship, yet when we add motion we attempt to understand it through our own temporal approach. We try to attach some meaning to it, but the truth of what happens in those transitory and passing moments remains hidden for they only show us tiny glimpses of the play between them. Delany's closing comments are suggestive of the difficulty of seeing when we look retrospectively at the ways light moved around and played with the water, our lives and events and the people in them. He says: *"I looked out the window at walls of moonlit cloud rising beside us as we were at the bottom of some, gray and ivory canyon, hung above the moon-smashed sea..."* (p. 570). This sentence, he says, complements the motion of light in water by suggesting its opposite. In this case, perhaps as a final comment, we can say that no matter if there is a lack of ability to interpret fully what happened and to excavate and find it in its original form from within memory – as it is hard to follow the motion of light in water – a life has been lived, and its experience, the feeling of having traversed through all those images and events and places remains as clear and vivid as the pathways that walls of clouds suggest when lit by the light of the moon that make it clearly discernible and perceivable, so much so that it will not give way to doubt. Delany's reaction to Courtney's comment that only Jesus was able to perform a miraculous act was that he could do it too, meaning he could actually dare to try (p. 35). In his book he is aware that attempting to put together an account that speaks what was not articulated at that period in terms of sexuality, and practiced as well, is challenging

and will remain as a trial, but one that is worthy of being, albeit vague and flickering as the motion of light in water, an exemplary tool serving as an encouragement for many others in the same vein to it to be written.

When we are born we find ourselves in stories that are already in progress and the story of our lives is being written for us, as an extension of long histories that have been in the progress of being written from ages ago. Delany is trying to look at the light in the water and to show us that there are other possibilities and interpretations of what has been shown to us; one needs to be ready to do away with what has been accumulated in terms of knowledge, to be able to start taking care of oneself, to look at what one can see as one's reflection in the water. And indeed when we read Foucault's various genealogical mappings of life today, we can see that he constantly uses the word 'we' and 'our society'. It is as if Foucault, similarly to Delany, is attempting to write an autobiography of the way we have become what we are today by countering an already given autobiography; an autobiography we have been weaving around us unawares; one that a certain power has, not commanded into our lives, but instead created the attraction for. One that was already initiated as an inherent resistant force within a subjectivating discourse.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis examines two different autobiographies, *The Motion of Light in Water* by Samuel R. Delany and *My Father's House* by Sylvia Fraser, in the light of Michel Foucault's analyses in *The History of Sexuality I, The History of Sexuality II* and *The History of Sexuality III.* The reason for choosing these works is that they are two autobiographies with distinct characteristics: the latter relies on the psychotherapeutic process to retrospectively form its 'truth' to arrive at the teleology of healing and the former is open-ended, avoids totalizing identities, uses a fragmentary narrative structure and resists teleological conventions.

The second chapter looks at the field of autobiography in general, discussing the elements (language, remembering) and the terms (experience, narrative, teleology, reconstruction) that are relevant in reading and analyzing autobiographies.

The next chapter talks about the technologies of the self, in the context of Foucault's work, and makes the connection between the way the ancient Greeks and Romans understood the lifelong practices of taking care of the self and Christian confessional practices, as well as elaborating on the ways in which they continue to influence us through a discourse of sexuality today. To put it briefly and simply, this chapter stresses that what was understood as a set of lifelong practices in the Greco-Roman cultures, transformed into practices aimed at making the personal public in the context of Christianity. Individuals were expected to discover the smallest traces of sin within themselves and to reveal it to the priest and to make it public. In this way, introspection and practices related to this (care of the self), which for the ancient Greeks were aimed at

showing the individual something about himself, became *techne*s of making the individual visible to power. In the same manner, medical science started to painstakingly analyze and examine individuals' sexuality, seeking what was wrong with it, and attached to it a hope of liberation and well-being to come after a process of healing.

The chapter on Fraser discusses the way Fraser's account is caught up in a cycle of retrospective renunciation through the incitement to tell by psychotherapy in a way that individuals renounce their selves and past lives in Christian confessional traditions. The 'truth' of Fraser's life becomes the telos of healing that the psychotherapeutic process promises individuals. This is the way in which power renders subjects visible and transparent, by inciting them to talk about themselves and tell everything. In this way power creates subjects through their own deliberate acts and proliferates through them.

The first parts of the chapter on Delany show the possible ways in which it is possible to read the same kind of power, inciting subjects to tell everything about their sexuality, at work in Delany's account. The next parts in the chapter demonstrate the ways in which Delany employs a variety of narrative, remembering and fragmentation *techne*s and subverts expectations of coherence and totality, resisting the conventions within which he writes. In the final part of this chapter, by way of reference Judith Butler's theory of subjectivation, which she elaborates on in *The Psychic Life of Power,* we look at the way Butler brings Foucault and psychoanalysis together by referring to Foucault's work on the prison, *The Birth of the Prison.* In this work Foucault talks about the way the prison creates subjects by targeting the body and making it act in certain ways. Butler says that the body is sacrificed for the subject to emerge, but the destruction of the body is preserved as the force that is preserved within the subject as a potential

inherent resistance. Finally, this thesis goes on to show the ways in which Delany's narrative parallels with Foucault's analyses and Butler's formulations to show that autobiography is the grounds, the body of writing itself, in which new and more open *technes* of looking at the self can be engaged, by avoiding totalizations, becoming aware of teleologies that intefere in truth-forming about the self, without rendering identities coherent and unified.

The Foucauldian critique of the repressive hypothesis targets only a particular strain of psychoanalysis: the kind of psychotherapy in which the therapist plays the role of the authoritarian ear who holds, as given by the patient, the power to interpret the life he hears about, and to determine what is and what is not the source of the disturbance for the patient. We have seen the difference in terms of focus between the care of the self in ancient times and Christianity. The same authoritative ear, as the one in psychotherapy, is present in the latter, whereas in the former the aim is to make it possible for the individual to engage a number of lifelong practices, *technes,* technologies through which he or she can transform himself or herself. The section on Butler shows that it is possible to take psychoanalysis out of its rigid Freudian structure where the power of interpreting the life, as well as the dreams, of the patient lies with the analyst and to use it in a more fluid interpretive context. Psychoanalysis itself is potentially a useful discourse which allows interpretation on an individual level, akin to the practices of the care of the self in ancient times. Just like in the other technologies that we have mentioned in the context of the care of the self, psychoanalysis is a technology which individuals can constantly engage to transform themselves.

The Foucauldian critique also implies that there is a whole literature of accounts, a genre, the incest memoir, that proliferates in strict compliance with the structure

provided by traditional psychoanalysis; that is the interactive process between the patient and the therapist in which a promise of liberation incites individuals to reveal a hidden layer of meaning with regard to the subject's sexuality. Psychoanalysis itself and the genre of incest memoir are potentially useful and beneficial, yet the fact that they are exploited, in ways we have talked about, shadows their potential usefulness. In fact, what takes place in conventional psychotherapy is an abuse of the tool with which the subject could engage the self in an ongoing manner and which could prove useful in producing narratives that have more variety and contain other autobiographical *techne*s, rather than following the uniform patterns emerging in conventional psychotherapy. In this formulation we can see it as the abuse of the *techne* which could prove useful in dealing with the abuse.

Looking for ways of engaging the self and creating 'truths' for onself as a lifelong practice or relying on someone who is seen as an authority on a subject – medical, educational and so on – marks the difference we have emphasized all throughout this thesis. This difference points to a relationship with the self that makes autobiography so relevant in this context. The way one sees oneself determines the manner in which the subject renders himself or herself open to the influence of power and in what way this influencing will take place. Autobiography is a field with rich possibilities in which we can develop technologies of seeing ourselves, constructing and reconstructing identities as well as employing and developing new technologies of remembering.

This is not to say that we can and must always and absolutely distinguish between conventional and more resistant forms of autobiography. The elements and forms which work against attempts at teleology are likely to be found in works that are

seemingly more conventional. In fact it is possible to observe the contrary too: Autobiographies which rely heavily on fragmentary, fluid and resistant modes of narration may, on some level, be read as demonstrating characteristics and style that align with conventional narrative forms. Fraser's narrative easily aligns with the conventions of incest memoir and with the teleology of psychotherapy, yet she does, for example, employ a great deal of fiction in its retrospective engagement with her past, which contributes to creating a sense of constructedness. On the other hand, while working against the conventions and teleologies within which he writes, Delany's narrative at times can be read as aiming for a telos of liberation of sexuality. Despite these, in Fraser's account we see a strict parallelism with traditional psychotherapy, as well as with Christian confessional practices as analyzed by Foucault. Moreover, Delany's fragmentary manner of narration that avoids totalizations and arriving at a telos, also the fact that he demonstrates an awareness of the Freudian and Foucauldian contexts to which his writing relates, negate an absolute focus with regard to the implied teleology, that is sexual liberation, through the instrumentality of his work; as well as through the instrumentality of other works in the same vein to come.

Moreover, psychoanalysis and autobiography can, in such a self-focused context as that of the care of the self, be approximated to each other as both hold mirrors to the constructedness that surround the self. Perhaps it would be fair to add that they contribute to the forming of a metafictional layer in the narrative structure of self-narration. Psychoanalysis in this sense, the interpreting and becoming aware of one's own mental processes, becomes a useful *techne* for writers of autobiography.

What is not an implication here is that the discussions in this thesis do not delineate all autobiographical narratives as disciplinary forms of confession. As it was

emphasized throughout the thesis, the presence of the confessional is dependent on certain factors such as an incitement to tell everything about every aspect of one's life in a manner in which one renounces one's past. Demonstrating an awareness of the possible forces that are influential in the production of the narrative that is being told, is one among the technologies that can work against those conventions within which the account is being produced.

Anything can be autobiographical, we said at one point in the chapter on autobiography; a film, a painting, a building, a novel and so on. Anything can be autobiographical, but an autobiography may very well not be autobiographical. An autobiography devoid of the *technes* of seeing oneself, contemplating the self, disentangling the self from surrounding interfering forces falls short of presenting and representing that self in the narrative it provides. It may very well dictate limits to the ways the writer of the account, as well as the readers, can employ to look at the self; albeit still providing information about that self. At this point it is the technologies of reading which reveal the forces at work in producing selves in autobiographies. Thus, an autobiography being autobiographical is autobiographical on two levels: It is both able to provide an account of the events and of the self writing it, and it can at the same time make implications with regard to the possible sources of those interpretations as constructions with the potential to be interpreted in other ways; making implications or carrying reminders with regard to the possible constructedness of the stories remembered and of the authorial persona implicated within them. This is nothing different from making an effort to be aware of, or to avoid becoming too embedded within, the layers of meaning that surround us in order to be able to peel them off to be able to contemplate a selfness that is, not ultimately absolutely naked, but more visible and perceivable to

ourselves within the particular shrouds peculiar to itself.

Where to place the body then in these formulations; in-between, around, underneath, over, beyond, in the front or behind the structures that govern, dominate, program, scorn, praise, excite the body? Where to place this unknown entity that for so long has been made to follow the many convictions, restrictions, fantasies, impositions? Its appearance, movements, the many geometrical forms it assumes, the ways in which it poises itself, its so long articulated and debated so called 'needs', its inner layers upon which scientists and shamans alike have for so long propounded, its pathologies and desires and fantasies, the ways in which it plays and loves and kills; the body is the sum of all of these, and yet to write about the body, to reach the body that has gone through all of these various kinds of fertile destructions which it has been subjected to since there was a body, since the body ever was, it is perhaps another overly hopeful attempt to think that there is no harm in psychoanalyzing that body in autobiography, maybe a little bit, without hurting it too much; it might, in this way, talk to the person living inside it and in a manner that it did not before – not in a profound wildness like the explosion of a volcano, but like fishing together with someone who knows you well, where fish is scarce. On the other hand, whatever destructions the body has gone through - its foods, its souls, its educations, its many forms of socializing, its productivity, its vanity, its guilt, its addictions, its ways of caring - they have made a mark in the interiors and exteriors that have been attached to it. In the sense that Butler talks about it, the body is at the threshold and at the same time the intersection that holds those attachments together. It holds them together more in the symmetry of its invisibility than its visibility. It extends together with the destructions wrought upon it as explosion extends space, as a big bang extending and creating new life all around itself. The body holds

these together in shapes that are not symmetrical, like the looks of a river, like a cloud, like a lie that will require another lie very soon, and another, another and so on. Continuing to absorb these markings, designations, analyses, pictures, fantasies, perhaps it is the body that still stands as the resistant force that can twist and bend itself in countless ways, allowing the forces which express themselves through it to manipulate themselves through their own interdictions. The aim and focus of autobiographical *techne*s in this sense are to bring to the forefront, and to language, the *techne*s that body has accumulated over time with regard to dealing with all the attempted inscriptions and destructions that threaten, yet at the same time mark the body in ways that enrich its possibilities and enlarge its trajectory. In this context we can see autobiography as the *body* of writing in which the one who lives in the body attempts to read the selves and the inscriptions that the body has been through in its subjectivations.

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