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*Chapter Seven*

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PSYCHOLOGY AS A 'SOCIAL' SCIENCE

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To many of its critics, psychology is an 'anti-social' science, focusing on the properties of individuals abstracted from social relations, reducing social issues to interpersonal ones, servicing an unequal society. But suppose we were to reverse our perspective, to view psychology as a profoundly *social* science. The sub-discipline of 'social psychology' would be located within a broader web of relations that connect even the most 'individualistic' aspects of psychology into a social field. It is not only that truth is a constitutively social phenomenon: like any other body of knowledge staking its claims in the commonwealth of science, the truths of psychology become such only as the outcome of a complex process of construction and persuasion undertaken within a social arena. It is also that the birth of psychology as a distinct discipline, its vocation and destiny, is inextricably bound to the emergence of the 'social' as a territory of our thought and our reality.

GOVERNING SOCIAL LIFE

No doubt all humans are 'social' animals. But the social territory is an historical achievement, a shifting and uncertain terrain that began to consolidate in western societies in the nineteenth century (see Deleuze, in Donzelot 1979). It is the terrain implied by such terms as social security, social welfare, social workers and social services. The social is a matrix of deliberation and action, the object of certain types of knowledge, the location of certain types of predicaments, the realm traced out by certain types of apparatus and the target of certain types of programme and ambition. [104]

Psychology as a discipline - a heterogeneous assemblage of problems, methods, approaches and objects - was born in this social domain in the nineteenth century and its subsequent vicissitudes are inseparable from it. And psychology, as a way of knowing, speaking, calculating, has played a constitutive part in the formation of the social. As the human soul became the object of a positive science, human subjectivity and intersubjectivity became possible targets of government.

Government, in the sense in which I use it, is not a matter of the minutiae of political intrigue or the complex relations between politicians, civil servants, bureaucrats, pressure groups, and so on. But nor should it be understood in terms of 'the State', an omnipotent and omniscient entity extending its control from the centre throughout the social body. It refers, rather, to 'the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population' (Foucault, 1979b: 20).

Government is a combination of *political rationality* and *social technology*. It is a way of construing the proper ends and means of political authority: the objects to which rule should be addressed; the scope of political authority, the legitimate methods it may use. And it is a way of seeking to operationalise such ambitions, devising techniques and constructing devices to act upon the lives and conduct of subjects, to shape them in desired ways (Foucault 1979a, 1979b, 1981; Miller and Rose 1988).

Governmentality, as Michel Foucault has termed it, became an operable programme in eighteenth-century Europe. Previously the tasks of Princes and rulers had largely been limited to the maintenance and augmentation of the power of the state through accumulation of wealth, raising of armies and the exercise of sovereignty by the promulgation of laws and decrees. Now population became the object *par excellence* of political rule. The strength of the state came to be associated with the good order and correct disposition of the persons, goods and forces within its territory. And the exercise of political power came to depend upon procedures of rational calculation and planning, upon experts who could develop methods to act upon individuals and populations, not just to avert evil, but also to promote good. This distinctive combination was termed, in the eighteenth [105] century, the ‘science of police’ (Pasquino 1978; Oestreich 1982; Schumpeter 1954). The three dimensions of police mark out the space within which the discipline of psychology was to be born. There were the objectives of police, which concerned not just the minimisation of lawbreaking and other harms, but simultaneous augmentation of the coffers of the State and the wealth of the population, the maximization of public tranquillity and the qualities of individuals. This went hand in hand with the elaboration of procedures for the collection of information on the realm to be governed, on all the capacities and resources that comprised the population of a territory. And this was linked to the invention of techniques for the administration of the population, in the form of regulations governing the good order, education, habits and security of persons in various towns and regions.

The three dimensions of police constitute a kind of diagram of government as it would take shape over the next two centuries. Government entails ways of thinking about the population, ways of rendering it the object of political discourse and political calculation. It requires ways of knowing the population, instituting a vast enterprise of enquiry into its state and condition. And it demands the bringing into being of the mechanisms which can enable those in authority to act upon the lives and conducts of subjects. Government thus opened a space in which the psychological sciences would come to play a key role. For these sciences are intrinsically tied to programmes which, in order to govern subjects, have found that they need to know them.

## THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT

Government depends upon knowledge. Not simply the knowledge of statecraft which had been the subject of innumerable books of advice to princes. But a positive knowledge of the domain to be governed, a way of rendering it into thought, so that it can be analysed, evaluated, its ills diagnosed and remedies prescribed. Such ‘representation’ has two aspects: the articulation of languages to describe the object of government and the invention of devices to inscribe it. On each of these dimensions, psychology will play a key role.

The languages of government do not merely mystify domination or legitimate power: they make new sectors of reality [106] thinkable and practicable. Only through language can the ends of government be formulated, by portraying their object as an intelligible field with identifiable limits within which certain characteristics are linked in systematic manner. Whether it be a

question of governing a population, an economy, an enterprise, a family or oneself, the domains in question are realised, brought into existence, through the languages that 're-present' them, and the calculations, techniques, and apparatuses which these languages make conceivable (Braudel 1985; Forquet 1980; Miller and O'Leary 1987, and forthcoming; Rose 1988; Miller and Rose forthcoming; Tribe 1976).

The vocabularies of the psychological sciences have made two distinct but related contributions to social powers over the last century. First, they provided the terms which enabled human subjectivity to be translated into the new languages of government of schools, prisons, factories, the labour market and the economy. Second, they constituted subjectivity and intersubjectivity as themselves possible objects for rational management, in providing the languages for speaking of intelligence, development, mental hygiene, adjustment and maladjustment, family relations, group dynamics and the like. They made it possible to think of achieving desired objectives - contentment, productivity, sanity, intellectual ability - through the systematic government of the psychological domain (Rose 1989).

The succession of vocabularies in which psychology has been articulated since the nineteenth century is affiliated to a sequence of *problematizations*. The schoolroom, the slum, the court, the army, the factory, the family each constituted *surfaces of emergence* upon which problems would take shape - racial degeneration, intellectual decline, juvenile delinquency, shell shock, industrial inefficiency, childhood maladjustment - that psychology would make its own (see Foucault 1972). In and around these sites, psychology would find its subjects, scrutinise and study them, seek to reform or cure them, and, in the process, elaborate theories of mental pathology and norms of behaviour and thought. A psychological knowledge of normality did not precede these concerns with abnormality; quite the reverse. It was in terms of problems of pathology, identifying them and managing them, that psychology would begin to elaborate its theories of psychological normality (Rose 1985). And psychology, in turn, fed back into [107] social and political thought, the diversity of its languages making it a fertile resource for transforming, in many different ways, the problematisations of human existence, and opening up new domains for thought and action.

One example must suffice. In the twenties and thirties, the vocabulary of mental hygiene defined the terms for the government of subjectivity. This language reconstrued phenomena from crime to industrial accidents as symptoms of mental disturbances originating in minor troubles of childhood that themselves arose from disturbances in the emotional economy of the family. A new gaze was directed at family life and children's behaviour, structured in psychological terms: fears, early experiences, anxieties, attitudes, relationships, conflicts, feelings of persecutions, wishes, desires, phantasies and guilt. The language of mental hygiene made it possible to conceptualise a range of new institutions such as child guidance clinics, which were to be at the fulcrum of a comprehensive system for the inspection and treatment of all those pathologies now described as 'maladjustment'. It made it possible to reconceptualise existing institutions, from the courtroom to the factory, in terms of mental hygiene, seeing problems within them in terms of poor mental hygiene and defining a future for them in terms of their potential for promoting health, contentment and efficiency. The new language was disseminated to family members through the broadcasts and popular writings of psychologists and experts on child development, who came to experience and interpret their domestic and conjugal affairs in new ways. Mental hygiene was both a 'public' and a 'private' value: it linked social tranquillity and institutional efficiency with personal contentment. And psychological languages of this type acted as crucial go-betweens, linking subjective and intersubjective existence into governmental programmes

(Rose 1989).

Such associations between governmental ambitions, organisational demands, scientific knowledge, professional expertise and individual aspirations are fundamental to the political organisation of liberal democracies. It is not only that regulation extends way beyond the control of the pathological persons and conditions and embraces, as its preferred mode of operation, the production of normality itself. Crucially, regulation does not take the form of the extension of direct State scrutiny and control into [108] all the petty details of social, institutional and personal life. Political authorities 'act at a distance' upon the aims and aspirations of individuals, families and organisations. Such action at a distance is made possible by the dissemination of vocabularies for understanding and interpreting one's life and one's actions, vocabularies that are authoritative because they derive from the rational discourses of science not the arbitrary values of politics. It depends upon the accreditation of experts, who are accorded powers to prescribe ways of acting in the light of truth not political interest. And it operates, not through coercion but through persuasion, not through the fear produced by threats but through the tensions generated in the discrepancy between how life is and how much better one thinks it could be.

## INSCRIBING SUBJECTIVITY

For a domain to be governable, one not only needs the language to render it into thought, one also needs the information to assess its condition (Rose 1988; Latour 1986a; see Lynch and Woolgar 1988). Information establishes a relay between authorities and events and persons at a distance from them. It enables the features of the domain accorded pertinence - types of goods and labour, ages of persons, prevalence of disease, rates of birth or death - to be represented in a calculable form in the place where decisions are to be made about them - the manager's office, the war room, the case conference, the ministry for economic affairs, and other such *centres of calculation*. Projects for the government of social life were dependent upon the invention of devices for the inscription of subjectivity.

Statistics - literally the science of state - was originally the project to transcribe the attributes of the population into a form where they could enter into the calculations of rulers (Cullen 1975; Hacking 1986). The projects of police and government in the eighteenth century inspired a huge labour of enquiry. Inspectors were sent out and information gathered from throughout the realm on the numbers of persons, their wealth and forms of habitation and trade, their births, illnesses and deaths. From this avalanche of figures, transported and communicated from all corners of the land, tables were compiled, charts drawn up, rates calculated, trends noted, averages compared, changes over time [109] discovered. Those in authority - in the executive, in the civil service, in the professions, philanthropists, social critics, and social planners - pored over these figures, sought to interpret their meanings and divine their implications.

The transformation of the population into numbers which could be utilised in political and administrative debates and calculations was extended into a statisticalisation of the morals and pathologies of the population. The statistical societies in Britain compiled charts and tables of domestic arrangements, types of employment, diet, and degrees of poverty and want (Abrams 1968). Moral topographies of the population were constructed, mapping pauperism, delinquency, crime, and insanity across space and time and drawing all sorts of conclusions about changing rates of pathology, their causes and the measures needed to ameliorate them (Jones and Williamson 1979, Rose 1979).

These, however, were superficial measures of subjectivity, relying upon counting cases of evident pathological conduct. Psychology would stake its claim to be an effective social discipline on its capacity to individualise subjects in a more fundamental manner. Michel Foucault argued that all the sciences which have the prefix psy- or psycho- have their roots in a transformed relationship between social power and the human body, in which regulatory systems sought to codify, calculate, supervise, and maximise the levels of functioning of individuals (Foucault 1977). In this 'reversal of the political axis of individualisation', the kinds of detailed attention which had previously been focused only upon the privileged - royalty, nobility, the wealthy, the artist - now came to be directed upon the infamous - the criminal, the lunatic, the pervert, the schoolchild.

The power of psychology lay in its promise to provide inscription devices that would individualise such troublesome subjects, rendering the human soul into thought in the form of calculable traces. Its contribution lay in the invention of diagnostic categories, evaluations, assessments, and tests that constructed the subjective in a form in which it could be represented in classifications, in figures and quotients. The psychological test was the first such device. Codification, mathematisation, and standardisation make the test a mini-laboratory for the inscription of difference, enabling the realisation of almost any psychological scheme for differentiating individuals in a brief time, in a [110] manageable space and at the will of the expert (Rose 1988). Tests and examination combine power, truth and subjectification: they render individuals into knowledge as objects of a hierarchical and normative gaze, making it possible to quality; to classify, and to punish (Foucault 1977:184-5). Hence the ritual of the test, in all its forms and varieties, has become central to our modern techniques for governing human individuality, evaluating potential recruits to the army, providing 'vocational guidance', assessing maladjusted children - indeed in all the practices where decisions are to be made by authorities about the destiny of subjects.

The translation of the individual into the domain of knowledge makes it possible to govern subjectivity according to norms claiming the status of science, by professionals grounding their authority in an esoteric but objective knowledge. In the school, factory, prison and army, psychologists were to become experts on the rational utilisation of the human factor. Psychology began to claim a capacity not merely to individualise, and classify, but also to advise upon all facets of institutional life, to increase efficiency and satisfaction, productivity and contentment. It was here that the social psychologies were to be instated, playing a key role in rendering interpersonal relations thinkable and inscribable (Rose 1989). Persons, it appeared, were not automata; they acted in terms of a subjective world of meanings and values, in short, of 'attitudes'. The concept of attitude went hand in hand with a method for inscribing it. The 'attitude survey' became a key device for charting the subjective world, enabling it to be turned into numbers and utilised in formulating arguments and strategies for the company, the political party, the military -indeed anywhere where individuals were to be governed through their consent. This psychological gaze was to be directed at the nation as a whole through such devices as public opinion surveys. The social psychology of opinions and attitudes presented itself as a continuous relay between authorities and citizens. Government needed to be undertaken in the light of a knowledge of the subjective states of citizens and needed to act upon that subjective state, if citizens were freely to discharge their social obligations. Though its capacity to inscribe and translate subjectivity, psychology was to become no less than a science of democracy. [111]

## TECHNOLOGIES OF SUBJECTIVITY

It is thus no accident that psychology - as a language, a set of norms, a body of values, an assortment of techniques, a plethora of experts - plays such a significant role in technologies of government within liberal democracies. Such societies do not exercise power through the domination of subjects, coercing them into action by more or less explicit threats or inducements offered by the central powers (Miller 1987). On the contrary, they establish a necessary distance between the legal and penal powers of the state and the activities of individuals. Government is achieved through educating citizens, in their professional roles and in their personal lives - in the languages by which they interpret their experiences, the norms by which they should evaluate them, the techniques by which they should seek to improve them. It is exercised through assemblages of diverse forces - laws, buildings, professions, techniques, commodities, public representations, centres of calculation, and types of judgement - bound into those more or less stable associations of persons, things, devices, and forms of knowledge which we refer to as education, psychiatry, management, family life.

'The State' is neither the origin nor puppet master of all these programmes of government. Innovations in government have usually been made, not in response to grand threats to the State, but in the attempt to manage local, petty, and even marginal problems. Programmes for enhancing or changing the ways in which authorities should think about or deal with this or that trouble have sometimes issued from the central political apparatus, but more characteristically they have been formulated by lawyers, psychiatrists, criminologists, feminists, social workers, bosses, workers, parents. Effecting these programmes has sometimes involved legislation, and sometimes entailed setting up new branches of the political apparatus, but it has also been the work of dispersed professional groups or social organisations. Innovations have been sporadic, often involving the ad hoc utilisation, combination and extension of existing explanatory frameworks and techniques. Some have come to nothing, failed or been abandoned or outflanked. Others have flourished, spread to other locales and problems, established themselves as lasting procedures of thought and action. In the apparatuses and [112] relations that have solidified, the very realities of State, politics, and society have been radically transformed.

Psychology is not merely a space in which outside forces have been played out, or a tool to be used by pre-given classes or interest groups. To the extent that various of its theories have been more or less successful in enrolling allies in their support, in producing calculable transformations in the social world, in linking themselves into stable social networks, they have established new possibilities for action and control. In establishing and consolidating such networks, in forcing others to move along particular channels of thinking and acting, psychologists have participated in the fabrication of contemporary reality. It is not merely that new ways have been introduced for construing the entities and relations that exist in the world. It is also, as we have seen, that new associations have been established between a variety of agents, each of whose powers may be enhanced to the extent that they can 'translate' the arguments or artifacts in question so that they may function to advantage in relation to their particular concerns or ambitions (see Latour 1984, 1986b; Callon 1986; Law 1986, 1987). Technologies of government, that is to say, take the form of loose assemblages linking diverse agents through a series of relays through which the objectives and aspirations of those at one point -

Departments of State, Expert Committees, professionals, managers - can be translated into the calculations and actions of those distant from them in space and time - health visitors, teachers, workers, parents and citizens.

Psychology has become basic to such associations. It provides the languages to establish translatability between politicians, lawyers, managers, bureaucrats, professionals, businessmen, and each of us. It establishes the norms and techniques that can be applied in so many different contexts. And its expertise, grounded not in political partiality but in a claim to truth, allows for an indirect relationship to be established between the ambitions of governmental programmes for mental health, law and order, industrial efficiency, marital harmony, childhood adjustment and the like, and the hopes, wishes and anxieties of individuals and families. Convinced that we should construe our lives in psychological terms of adjustment, fulfillment, good relationships, self-actualisation and so forth, we have tied ourselves 'voluntarily' to the knowledge that experts have of these matters, and to their [113] promises to assist us in the personal quests for happiness that we 'freely' undertake.

## THE SOUL OF THE CITIZEN

Psychology, then, has been bound up with the entry of the soul of the citizen into the sphere of government (Gordon 1987; Rose 1989). The apparently 'public' issue of rationalities of government is fundamentally linked to the apparently 'private' question of how we should behave, how we should regulate our own conduct, how we should judge our behaviour and that of others. This link has not been a merely 'external' one, in which government has sought to manipulate otherwise 'free' individuals. It has been an 'internal' one, in which our very constitution as 'free' individuals has been the objective and consequence of regulatory programmes and techniques (Foucault 1982).

As early as doctrines of police, an explicit relationship was established between government of a territory and government of oneself. The individual was to be taught 'to control his own life by mastering his emotions and to subordinate himself politically without resistance' (Oestreich 1982:164). This entailed a training in the minute arts of self-scrutiny, self-evaluation, and self-regulation ranging from the control of the body, speech, and movement in school, through the mental drill inculcated in school and university, to the Puritan practices of self-inspection and obedience to divine reason. Only to the extent that such self-regulatory practices were installed in subjects did it become possible to dismantle the mass of detailed prescriptions and prohibitions concerning the minutiae of conduct, maintaining them only in limited and specialised institutions: penitentiaries, workhouses, schools, reformatories, and factories. Through such practices of the self, individuals were to be subjected not by an alien gaze but through a reflexive hermeneutics.

The concept of subjection may suggest that persons are entrapped in devices whose ends they do not share. Of course, there is an important sense in which this was and is the case in social machines such as prisons, the army, the factory, the school and even the family. But even in the nineteenth-century prison, the aim of the isolation, the daily delivery of moral injunctions from the pulpit, and the reading of the bible was to provoke [114] self-reflection on the part of the inmate. The rationale was to transform the individual not merely through mindless inculcation of habits of obedience, but through the evoking of conscience and the wish to make amends. In the classroom, the factory, and the asylum ward, the moral order of the child, the labourer or the lunatic was to be restructured such that the individual would take into him or herself the constant judgement of skill, punctuality, comportment, language, and conduct which were embodied in the organisation and norms of the institution.

Thus these apparatuses did not seek to *crush* subjectivity but to produce individuals who

attributed a certain kind of subjectivity to themselves, and who evaluated and reformed themselves according to its norms. This should not be viewed in terms of ideology but analysed as *technologies of the self* 'which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality' (Foucault 1988:14).

If psychology has played a key role in the technologies of the self that produce the modern subject, this has not been merely through its individualistic, adaptive and behaviourist branches. For in contemporary rationalities and technologies of government, the citizen is construed and addressed as a subject actively engaged in thinking, wanting, feeling, and doing, interacting with others in terms of these psychological forces and being affected by the relations which others have with them. It is upon these social and dynamic relations that government seeks to act. In the family, the factory, and the expanding systems of counselling and therapy, the vocabularies of mental hygiene, group relations and psychodynamics are translated into techniques of self-inspection and self-rectification. These techniques are taught by teachers, managers, health visitors, social workers, and doctors. Through the pronouncement of experts in print, on television, in radio phone-in's, they are woven into the fabric of our everyday experience, our aspirations and dissatisfactions. Through our attachment to such technologies of the self, we are governed by our active engagement in the search for a form of existence that is at once personally fulfilling and socially beneficial.

Within contemporary political rationalities and technologies of [115] government, the freedom of subjects is more than merely an ideology. Subjects are *obliged* to be 'free', to construe their existence as the outcome of choices that they make amongst a plurality of alternatives (Meyer 1986). Family life, parenting, even work itself, are no longer to be constraints upon freedom and autonomy: they are to be essential elements in the path to self-fulfilment. Styles of living are to be assembled by choice amongst a plurality of alternatives, each of which is to be legitimated in terms of a personal choice. The modern self is impelled to make life meaningful through the search for happiness and self-realisation in his or her individual biography: the ethics of subjectivity are inextricably locked into the procedures of power.

ways of living. The languages and techniques of psychology provide vital relays between contemporary government and the ethical technologies by which modern individuals come to govern their own lives. They are increasingly purveyed, not by univocal moralistic interventions of social agencies but through multiple voices of humanistic and concerned professionals, whose expert advice on the arts of existence is disseminated by the mass media. These may be polyvocal but they offer us solutions to the same problem - that of living our lives according to a norm of autonomy. Their values and procedures free techniques of self-regulation from their disciplinary and moralistic residues, emphasising that work on the self and its relations to others is in the interests of personal development and must be an individual commitment. They provide a language of self-interpretation, a set of criteria for self-evaluation and a technology for self-rectification that render existence into thought as a profoundly psychological affair and make our self-government a matter of our choice and our freedom. And for those selves unable to conform to the obligations of the free subject, unable to choose or anguished by the choices they have made, dynamic and social therapies offer technologies of reformation consonant with the same political principles, institutional demands, and personal ideals. They are mainly supplied by free

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choice in the market. They are legitimated in terms of their truth rather than their morality. And they [116] promise to restore the subject to autonomy and freedom. Government of the modern soul thus takes effect through the construction of a web of technologies for fabricating and maintaining the self-government of the citizen (Miller and Rose forthcoming).

## GENEALOGIES OF THE SUBJECT

In the complex of powers over subjectivity entailed in modern apparatuses of regulation, 'the social' has inscribed itself in the very interior of our soul. We are governed through the delicate and minute infiltration of the dreams of authorities and the enthusiasms of expertise into our realities, our desires and our visions of freedom. To write the genealogy of psychology in such terms is not, however, to subject it to a critique. Genealogy seeks not to reveal falsity but to describe the constitution of truths. It does not ask 'why?' but 'how?'. It does not simply reverse hierarchies - pure vs. applied; soul vs. body, ethics vs. administration; social vs. personal - but fragments them. It attends to the 'marginal' and shows its centrality, to the pathological as the condition for normality, to that considered inessential to show how, through it, the essential has been fabricated. And if the genealogy of psychology brings into focus the parts that orthodoxy considers impure and shameful, it does so not to denounce but to diagnose, as a necessary preliminary to the prescription of antidotes. [End of page 116]