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Nurturing the Worker's Self: The Ethic of Authenticity in The Discourse of Professional Self-Development

Introduction

The theme of interconnection between technologies of power and technologies of the self was a recurring topic of Foucault's work. Technologies of power are in Foucault's thought associated with processes of subjection - the ways in which subject is formed by imperatives of various forms of knowledge or by surveillance and training. On the other hand, technologies of the self are associated with processes of subjectification - the ways in which individuals relate to themselves in order to shape their selves according to a certain ethical ideal and a particular guidance for the proper way of living. These two levels are in Foucault's later thought seen as always interrelated and technologies of the self are understood to be associated with certain type of technologies of power (Foucault 2000:225). It is through concept of governmentality that Foucault sought to capture their interconnection and to reflect on how we are governed within particular rationalities of government defined broadly as a 'conduct of conduct'. Lemke argues that the concept of governmentality is useful, above all, precisely because it helps us to theorise the link between technologies of power and technologies of the self, or between "the constitution of the subject and the formation of the state" (Lemke 2001, 2002:50). Similarly, Allen (2011) argues persuasively that the combination of focus on these two dimensions - how the self is constituted by power-knowledge relations and the ways in which subject constitutes itself - is the crucial tenet of Foucault's critical project.

Foucault (2008) opened the study into the emergence and discursive roots of neo-liberal governmentality. This project was later developed by many followers (Barry, Osborne, and Rose 1996; Bröckling, Krasmann, and Lemke 2010; Dilts 2011; Gane 2012, 2014; Miller and Rose 2008; Read 2009; Rose 1999a, 1999b; Springer 2012) into a burgeoning inquiry that seeks to understand the neoliberal rationalities of government through exploration of what type of subjectivity is both presupposed and simultaneously produced through the reforms, programs and technologies of neo-liberal government. Neoliberal formula of government is based on the understanding that governments should above all create an arena in which citizens can freely develop their own strategies of well-being using their freedom, skills and determination in order to succeed. Government should limit itself to ensuring such conditions where these efforts can be played out without unnecessary constraints and outcome of these individual strategies can be maximised. Simultane-

ously, the individual 'active' citizens are portrayed as solely responsible for the outcomes of their life strategies (Lesenich 2010). The ideal subject presupposed by this formula of government takes the form of homo economicus - a rationally calculating entrepreneurial agent acting out of self-interest, seeking maximisation of its human capital thus maximising its economic gains. As Foucault puts it, homo economicus is "an entrepreneur, the entrepreneur of himself" (Foucault 2008:226).

However revealing this line of inquiry is, this article argues that the unequal attention has so far been paid to the two levels of investigation into the neo-liberal governmentality. Many accounts focus on the form the ideal subject of neo-liberalism takes in economic theories or general plans for government of particular institutional field. Their point of view is usually that of theoretical school or institution presupposing an ideal subject. As Binkley puts it, governmentality scholarship suffers from 'macro-level bias' (Binkley 2009, 2011). In other words, its attention often stays with the issue of what ideal subject is presupposed by these grand designs and the tools designed to form the subject into particular shape. What is lost within this perspective are the ways in which individuals are invited to think about themselves as a certain type of subject and perform a work on their selves in order to achieve a particular change in their lives. This article's goal is to contribute to our understanding of this problematics: discourses and practices offered to subjects to take up in their pursuits to change themselves and to become individuals of certain kind. It will inquire into a particular case of guidelines for living that are offered to subjects to help them in their striving to become successful and satisfied agents within the contemporary social conditions. In other words, the article will focus on a particular case of a *technology of the self* that is supposed to help agents to become successful and fulfilled productive subjects.

In what follows I will draw on two lectures concerned with a practice of professional self-development provided by two "experts of subjectivity" (Rose 1999a:24). Lectures were given to university students attending a conference concerned with successful career and professional life. The two lectures will be taken as an illustrative case of technology of the self, illuminating how individuals are invited to think about themselves and work on themselves in a particular manner. I will argue that the version of subjectivity entailed in the two lectures differs considerably from a pure picture of homo economicus as described in works concerned with neo-liberal governmentality. I will contend that rather than instructing the individual to become a pure rationally calculating maximisers of economic gain, the lectures identify within the subject an ethical substance - the authentic self - that is seen as an important value in one's life. In addition, I will argue that rather than portraying an individual as a self-enclosed unit rejecting any concerns with problems of collective life, the two lectures take the authentic self as a basis for a larger critique of power arrangements and tie the individual life to a larger vision of a proper society. Finally, using the two lectures as a backdrop to a discussion of the study of neo-liberal governmentality, I will argue for more careful and detailed exploration of how individual lives and subjectivities are incorporated into the schemes of neoliberal governmentality.

The discussion is divided into four parts. The first section develops a critical reading of studies of neoliberal governmentality and the position of homo economicus as a supposed model for technologies of the self used by individuals navigating the waters of neo-liberal society. The second section uses the empirical material to illustrate how discourse of pro-

fessional self-development formulates ethical substance of "authentic self" which is used as a basis for a particular technology of the self grounded in introspection and dialogical exploration of one's authentic personality. The third section explores implications this technology of the self has for thinking about collective social life. It shows how it is tied to a critique of normalising pressures and disciplinary institutions as well as to a positive vision of an ideal society. Finally the conclusion (the fourth section) ties empirical material back to discussion of subjectivity in neo-liberal governmentality.

Neoliberal governmentality and technologies of the self

The link between the ways in which human beings are shaped into subjects of certain kind (technologies of power) and the ways in which human beings themselves work on their selves in order to became proper subjects according to various ethical doctrines (technologies of the self) is central to Foucault's thought about rationalities of government (or governmentalities). In parts of his writing, Foucault refers to this link when he says: "This encounter between the technologies of the domination of others and those of the self I call 'governmentality' (Foucault 2000:225). Attention paid to this dual character of rule is what allows analytics of power to escape the narrow focus on domination. It helps us to capture the ways in which government is more than simple ordering of actions of the governed by force and restraint and leads us to look at the ways in which government functions as ordering of action of 'free' individuals. As Lemke argues, it is this notion of governmentality as interplay between domination and ordering of 'autonomous' actions of the governed that helps Foucault to transcend limiting dualisms of freedom and constraint or consensus and violence (Lemke 2002). Instead, it suggests "to analyse government as a continuum extending from political government through to forms of self-regulation" (Lemke 2002:59). In certain respect, we may say that Foucault's later emphasis on the issues of governmentality and technologies of the self is a continuation of his intellectual struggle against understanding of power as a merely repressive force. This effort is by this move extended beyond exploration of how subject is constituted in situations of domination to consideration of how subjects relatively autonomously constitute themselves as agents through a use of various technologies of the self.

Importance of such perspective is perhaps made more urgent by the contemporary rationality of neo-liberal rule. Rose portrays at length how under neo-liberalism the societies are governed increasingly through techniques which seek to utilise 'free' conduct of individuals. Indeed, it is opening or enlargement of spaces of freedom (and simultaneous offering of instructions on a proper use of this freedom) that are the most distinct characteristic of contemporary government (Miller and Rose 2008:209–218; Rose 1999b). Similarly, Deleuze in his attempts to reformulate Foucault's work on power for contemporary conditions emphasizes that power functions increasingly through utilizing individual's own motivations and ambitions (Deleuze 1992, 1997; see also Gane 2012). Observation of these developments is perhaps captured the most succinctly by Burchell:

> "Liberalism, particularly its modern versions, constructs a relationship between government and the governed that increasingly depends upon ways in which individuals are required to assume the status of being the subjects of their lives,

upon the ways in which they fashion themselves as certain kinds of subjects, upon the ways in which they practise their freedom"

(Burchell 1996:29–30).

We may say that neo-liberal government, by increasingly delegating responsibility for attaining various social goods from state to individuals simultaneously invites these individuals to utilise various doctrines and practices in order to become free, responsible and successful subjects navigating the changing waters of contemporary society. To help them achieve this goal plethora of advice is available from various sources (Rose 1999a:259–265). Technologies of the self are not only made possible, but are to a great extent necessitated in contemporary rationalities of government.

However, scholarship about neo-liberal governmentality to a large extent remains focused on the dimension of technologies of power rather than technologies of the self. The processes of subjectification and technologies of the self are not altogether ignored and as the brief review above shows, their importance is being recognised. Nonetheless, as Binkley (2009, 2011) argues, the studies of neoliberal governmentality still remain predominantly within perspective of Foucault's geneaological study of technologies of power or processes of subjection. As he puts it, they focus predominantly on "the production of subjects but not the production of self-producing subjects" (Binkley 2009:65). While authors often acknowledge that doctrines of government of conduct rest on the presupposition of citizens as entrepreneurial, independent and to a large extent self-forming subjects, we hear surprisingly little about how precisely are subjects invited to undertake this self-forming work on their selves. Often, we do not see the "ethical work by which the rationalities of domination are extended into a program of self government itself" (Binkley 2009:65). In other words, the governmentality scheme then remains rather top-down and deterministic, not paying justice to Foucault's conception of governmentality as a link between functioning of technologies of power and technologies of the self. Guidelines for practices of everyday life that subjects are invited to follow are then often overshadowed by greater logics of government (either of society as a whole, a particular institution or a field of expertise). What seems to be lost is precisely the link between "institutional rationalities and subjectivities of the individuals" (Binkley 2011:85). The question how precisely are the great visions of neo-liberal government connected to guidelines for living in contemporary society often remain under-explored in these accounts. In addition, Campbell (2010)makes a case that the term rationality of government is narrowed down to a rather limited understanding of what rationality means. Studies of governmentality, she argues, often contain implicit focus on cognitive and instrumental aspects of the way subjects relate to governmental technologies and practices, as well as to themselves. As her study in the field of criminal justice and apparatuses of security demonstrates, affects and emotions play an important role in acceptance of governmental rationalities and connected practices. As she argues, it is important to inquire into the ways in which rationalities of government "capture *hearts* as well as minds" (Campbell 2010:37 emphasis in the original).

This bias towards grand doctrines of government and general schools of (economic) thought can perhaps be best documented by a short exploration of a status given to the figure of homo economicus in a Foucault-inspired study of neo-liberal governmentality. Homo economicus, according to Foucault, represents the central point of reference of neo-liberal thought. It is a notion of an individual who rationally applies economic cost and

benefits analysis to decisions in all spheres of life. Government can count on such economically rational mode of behaviour and utilise it in its plans for government. Homo economicus is seen as not only reacting rationally to stimuli and constraints (Foucault 2008:269–270), but also as working on maximisation of its own productive potential - understood as human capital - and financial returns stemming from it (Foucault 2008:226–228). Homo economicus is thus recognised as an ideal and central model of subjectivity presupposed by neoliberal economic and governmental doctrines (Bröckling 2010; Dilts 2011; Foucault 2008; Read 2009). As Read argues (2009) homo economicus represents a conception of how human beings are in their reality - a conception of human nature. This conception of subject then translates, according to Read, into a particular ways of living (Read 2009). It is therefore of paramount importance (Lemke 2001, 2002; Read 2009) to explore the ways in which human beings are formed and form themselves into this kind neo-liberal self-entrepreneurial subjects.

However, what seems to berather problematic is an ease with which passage is often made from homo economicus as a central discursive figure of neoliberal economic theory to homo economicus as a model for living followed by individuals themselves in their self-shaping efforts. This is intuitively understandable, as these levels are naturally difficult to distinguish in practice and the line drawn by Foucault between processes of subjection and processes of subjectification seems to be rather a heuristic device than a statement about two separate aspects of reality (see Harrer 2007). However, it seems that in certain respect these two levels are conceptually mixed together and the processes of subjection are taken to automatically translate into the practice of subjectification. In other words, it seems that writers often simply assume that the version of homo economicus underpinning neo-liberal economic and political theory translates unproblematically into active self-fashioning of subjects. For example, Hamann (2009) seems to take this approach in her article about relations of neoliberal governmentality to ethics in everyday experience. While she acknowledges that "economic man" is a subject that must be produced within relations of power and knowledge, she skips the ways of how such subjects are produced altogether. Moreover, even though she acknowledges that there are particular technologies of the self offered in a form of self-help books and other guides for self-management, she does not empirically engage with the material. Instead, she assumes that the form of homo economicus translates directly into every day experience of individuals. Two points are of particular importance here. Firstly, homo economicus as a living individual uses "rational choice and cost-benefit calculation *to the express exclusion* of all other values and interest" (Hamann 2009:38 emphasis in the original). It seems that this individual does not recognize any other values, norms or affects that would lie outside the very narrow space of economic value. Secondly, such individual is construed as a self-interested atom, who is unable to take into account considerations of its co-citizens and rejects an idea of government of the social. As Hamann puts it, "[n]eoliberal subjects are constituted as thoroughly responsible for themselves and themselves alone because they are subjectified as thoroughly autonomous and free" (2009:44). Individual living in neo-liberal times thus seems to be a subject who sacrifices all values to economic value and whose self-interest prevents him from thinking about collective concerns and well-being of the society as a whole.

From a perspective similar to that of Binkley (2009) I will argue that this perspective indeed suffers from a "macro-level bias". Ideal subjectivity is taken from the discourse of

neo-liberal economics or from the proposals for governmental reforms and it is automatically assumed that this is a version of subjectivity offered to or even assumed by the (self)governed subjects. This perspective ignores the question of whether and how the figures taken from texts of experts of economics are translated into the particular guidelines for living - or technologies of the self - that are presented to subjects navigating everyday waters of life in contemporary societies. What is lost, among other aspects, is the ethical content of particular technologies of the self and their relation to a normative visions of ideal society. As a response to this perspective, I will argue that paying attention to actual technologies of the self offered to individuals can help us to see neo-liberalism from a different angle and to understand how its rationalities are actually translated into life and experience of individuals.

Professional self-development as a technology of the self

Job Academy is a conference organised for students of Masaryk University by its Career Centre, which is a university body seeking to help students to find a job during their studies or after their graduation. The event organised in 2014 consisted of several plenary talks delivered to all the participants, as well as smaller workshops that were designed to offer guidance in particular aspects of their preparation for the competitive job market (such as self-presentation, CV writing, stylistic advice). The mission of Job Academy, according to the event's website, is to help students "to become creators of their own career path that will originate from their individuality, and which will not only provide for them economically, but will also be a source of fulfilment". The conference should not merely give advice on how to find a job, but should help students to develop a particular attitude and set of skills that will be necessary for their personal and professional success. The conference does not limit itself to informing students about particular realities of the job market, but rather seeks to help students to become subjects of a particular kind - to become creators of their careers. The goal is not simply to inform, but to help students to change themselves. Assisting with this were various experts, ranging from successful entrepreneurs and professionals (often Masaryk University alumni) to psychologists, fashion gurus, motivational speakers and personal coaches. Two speeches delivered by two personal coaches will be analysed here in a greater detail, as they offer particularly interesting insights into the technology of the self connected to the notion of professional self-development. Both speeches formulate certain form of ideal subjectivity in relation to working life and devise methods of self-development that will lead to growth of such subjectivity. This, according to the speakers, will lead to a development of a fulfilling work and life, maximisation of individual happiness as well as self-actualisation.

I will read the lectures as an example of a technology of the self. Foucault defines the technologies of the self as practices that: "permit individual to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality" (Foucault 2000:225). While various technologies differ in several dimensions, two of them will be crucial for the analysis presented here. The first one is the dimension of "determination of ethical substance". It represents "the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of

himself as the prime material of his moral conduct" (Foucault 1990:26). Ethical substance functions as the basis around which the technology of the self is built and forms the prime material that is targeted through various techniques that subject applies to itself. The second one concerns "elaboration of ethical work that one performs on oneself" (Foucault 1990:27). Subject performs ethical work on itself in order to bring its conduct into compliance with a given ethical rule. Using analogy, we may say that ethical substance presents a certain material or target of ethical pursuits, while ethical work is a particular tool or method used to shape them.

The road to professional success and personal happiness as it is presented in the two lectures leads through laborious process. The labour starts with getting to know one's self properly or with mastering skill of looking at one's self from a particular perspective. The process starts with identification of who listeners truly are. Only through recognising characteristics of one's individuality and one's key talents can individual attain material prosperity, satisfaction with an engaging job and personal self-actualisation. Personal uniqueness is a value that must be respected and protected. So important found one of the speakers this message that he repeated it at the very end of the lecture, as if to remind listeners what really matters before they will disperse:

> "I wish you that you would never forget - or that you will be constantly reminding yourself - that you are truly unique and that you won't allow anyone to tell you otherwise."

> (PM, 14:65).

Protecting and nurturing of one's authentic individuality is important goal in itself, as it allows the individual to lead an honest and fulfilled life. However, being true to one's true individuality is also a characteristic that is positively valued by others, as for example by selectors during a job interview. Two aspects - self-satisfaction and positive appraisal by others are seen as inherently connected:

> "So the genuineness is something by which you can get people on your side. But it's mainly quite good for you, because you won't have to worry about who you are; you are just as you are."

> (PM, 14:41)

The emphasis on the importance of authentic individuality for both success and happiness ties this instance of discourse of professional development to what Rose called "an ethic of authenticity" (Rose 1999a:267). This approach to ethic of the self is connected to developments within apparatus of psychiatry and psychology whereby therapies cease to be exclusive tools in the hands of experts and are promoted by experts who do not hold strictly scientific status (coaches, speakers, consultants, managers) as well as by mass media (Rose 1999a:261, 263–265). The ethic of authenticity substitutes external codes of moral judgement with principles that are supposedly internal. In other words, norms seen as external have to be resisted in order to make room for subjects' own judgement which compares the state of their being "with their inner truth" (Rose 1999a:267). In opposition to the authentic self-formation stands life in hypocrisy and self-denial. Authenticity then functions as a basis for production of one's subjectivity which is meaningful both to the individual herself and others. Rather than seeing it simply as a part of neo-lib-

eral subjectivity production machine urging individuals to become ruthless maximisers of economic value, Rose understands the ethic of authenticity as being part of larger "'passional economy' in which human beings are connected into flows of needs and desires, pleasures and anxieties" (Rose 1999a:271). However congruent this concern with authenticity is with the governmental rationalities dominant in the age of the supposed crisis of the welfare state (Rose 1999a:260), they contain irreducible ethical, affective and passional element.

It should not surprise us to find emphasis on authenticity and personal uniqueness in lectures about working life and professional self-development, as it fits rather well within larger contours of contemporary thought about work. Theorists of work have been for some time pointing out how the new ethics of work is tied to values of self-actualisation and genuineness. In chapters devoted to discourses of production and management, Rose(Miller and Rose 2008:173–178; Rose 1999a:103–119, 1999b:156–158)describes how emphasis on self-fulfilment through work became dominant within this line of thought since approximately 1980s. In a similar vein, Boltanski and Chiapello (2006, 2007) argue that the management discourse in France since 1990s incorporated aspects of the "spirit of 1968", such as desire for autonomy and creativity. Reflecting on the issues of power and resistance in contemporary workplace Fleming and Spicer (2008:303) note that "[r]ather than exhort employees to subjectively conform to a unitary set of values ala the 1980s cultures of commitment, the latest wave of management gurus invites employees to simply be themselves...". No matter how this use of ethics of authenticity might be seen as instrumental it undeniably formulates an ethical concern with subjectivity of the individual at work.

In the analysed speeches we can see how similar logic is used as a part of the technology of the self that the listeners are invited to apply to their lives. The authentic self plays the role of ethical substance in practice of professional self-development. It is the prime material that must be uncovered, delimited from other parts of one's being and further developed through the use of appropriate techniques. It forms a basis of *"ethical work* that one performs on oneself" (Foucault 1990:27). And work it is, as to get to truly know one's authentic self is not an easy task. The skill of relating to this inner authentic self must be practised, perhaps most effectively under the guidance of a personal coach or other self-development expert. Introspection, an honest and careful look at one's own personality and one's way of life, is an important aspect of steering the life onto the path to authenticity and fulfilment:

> "It is good from time to time to conduct such a small self-reflection. So you can take a look into how you are really thinking about things, what you do, where you are going, who you meet. Why do you do that? Does it make any sense? What do you get from that? So, the self-reflection is important".

> (PM, 14:47)

The second speaker, the personal coach, describes coaching as a technique which is not based on providing any specific directive or a strict plan for life. Rather, coaching is described as a specific form of dialogue in which coach merely helps his conversation partner to discover what matters to her individually and what life perspective and necessary actions are meaningful from this perspective:

> "Consultant comes saying 'I have a solution, I have gone through this before and I can give you a solution'. Coach won't give you any solution. Mentor is someone who is an expert in a particular field... mentor can help you build exactly those skills that you need in that field. Well, life does not work that way. When I give advice to someone, in 95% of the cases it is an absolute waste of time, because you cannot advise people. If coach gives you an advice, it is not a coach".

(AV, 13:24).

In contrast to a therapist, a consultant or a mentor, coach is not supposed to provide his client with a strict directive or a list of steps that she needs to do in order to achieve a desired goal. The practice of coaching is rather based on coach's ability to assist client through a guided dialogue to discover what goals are meaningful to her personally and ensure that expenditure of energy in real life pursuits is in alignment with goals that are essentially meaningful to the individual herself. Coaching is thus presented as a technique that positions an individual as an exclusive judge of his life.

Professional self-development, as a technology of the self presented in the two lectures, does make the practice of active introspection central to the work on the self. Recognition of one's authentic self is not an easy task and its discovery requires not only certain practice and diligence, but also a particular knowledge of how the authentic self might be obscured. The authentic self as an ethical substance must be set apart from other traits of one's personality, mainly from the sediments piled up on the character by the apparatuses of family, education and collective pressures in general. These sediments represent major obstacles to full realisation of one's authenticity and maximal potential. One speaker labels these sediments as "self-limiting settings" and positions them as a central problem of self-development practice:

> "I would like to remind you that what personal development is all about is the fact that everyone in this room, myself included, has certain self-limiting settings... a comfort zone, things that we have given up a long time ago, dreams that we have buried... But it does not have to be that way".

(PM, 14:32).

The self-limiting settings that we carry with us present a major problem to authentic self-development. Firstly, they represent limits of possible understanding of oneself, one's qualities and opportunities in both personal and professional life. Secondly, they impose harmful limits on possible behaviour. Authentic behaviour, self-actualisation and professional success stemming from it are restricted by self-limiting settings which impose standards of what action is suitable, acceptable and efficient. The central imperative of self-development as it is presented in both lectures is, through practice of focused introspection, to make these sediments known to the subject and thus to open to a conscious change.

The subject of personal development, as presented in the two lectures, surely resembles the figure of homo economicus. Most importantly, it too is an entrepreneur of the self, working on increasing its potential (human capital) which will lead not only to self-actualization but also to financial reward. However, it would be simplistic to say that personal development reduces life to minimization of income and views personality as a portfolio of

knowledge and skills that can be sold on the labour market. On the contrary, the professional self-development as a technology of the self formulates a certain ethical substance - the authentic self - within individual. Moreover, it formulates a particular practical approach to one's self that should allow this authentic self to fully develop. In sum, rather than reducing all values to economic value and the individual to its blind maximizer, it formulates an ethical ideal of existence and a corresponding practice of its realization. It is consideration of this technology of the self in greater detail that allows us to see the ethical dimension of incorporation of the subjective level into contemporary neo-liberal rationalities of government.

Against normalization, towards professional utopia

In the previous section, I have shown how discourse of professional self-development identifies an ethical substance within the subject - the authentic self. Discovery of one's authentic self leads through practice of introspection that must uncover the authentic self from factors which are obscuring it. These obstacles to authentic personal development are seen as accumulated effects of influences from individual's environment - family, educational institutions and societal norms in general. 'Self-limiting settings', as they are called by one of the speakers, present an important point where concerns with one's individuality are connected to the critique of larger social arrangements.

We may say that a particular technology of the self in this way relates to the dimension of technologies of power. In other words, the way in which one should govern oneself is set as a basis for problematisation and critique of how one is governed by others. This issue is strongly present in Foucault's later works. As Karayakali argues, Foucault portrays technologies of the self as essentially transformative, as "they stem from a problematisation of the existing forms of power relations and subjectivity in a society" (Karakayali 2014:10). Technologies of the self invite subject not only to conform to certain ideals and practices, but also to question norms of behaviour and models of self-formation that are presented to it. As Karayakali puts it aptly:

> "[A]t the heart of transformative practices is the idea of a self who confronts, at every moment, the question of whether it will continue acting in accordance with its past dispositions or whether it will attempt to transform itself and experiment with new modes of existence"

> (Karakayali 2014:13).

In the technology of professional development, certain social sentiments as well as institutions concerned with education and upbringing are subject to critique. Both lectures analysed here formulate a critique of a social arrangements which are seen as hampering development of the authentic self. An individual must carefully examine the effects these outside pressures had on her personal development. In the following excerpt, the speaker mentions such detrimental effects stemming from expectations set up for the individual by her family:

> "Your father told you that it is great to go to a college. Your mother told you that it would be good to do some sport. [...] Well, yes. But it must make sense to you. To you! So re-examine if you are not by chance going in a train full of things that you do not want to do, that are a nuisance to you."

> (PM, 14:45)

In a different excerpt, the same speaker broadens the scope of critique to encompass the educational institutions which are seen as hampering the authentic development by enforcing rules too strictly and by being based on essentially repressive model of education. The target of the critique is a disciplinary pedagogy which is seen as building a "mentality of inadequacy" in an individual:

> "I see the entire system of elementary school, high school and university as being based on [the premise], often, that people want to catch you when you are not prepared and when you make a mistake. So you are writing an essay about courage and you are putting your heart into it in that sixth grade. And the teacher is standing there and she is waiting for you to screw up. [She is seeking] where you make a grammatical mistake, where you forget to put a comma."

> (PM, 14:4)

What has to be resisted are not only influences of institutions connected to disciplinary education or strict demands pressed by the family on an individual. In the thought of the speaker, the individual should be ideally shielded from any form of external judgement and his authentic creative steps, his feelings and opinions should be applauded. What is criticised is the development of individual in accordance with externally imposed norms in general. Imposition of external norms is seen as building a "mentality of inadequacy". The individual should be critical of recommendations related to her educational and professional trajectory as well as norms of behaviour received from her social environment. Only such step is positive which is meaningful to individual herself and which is in harmony with her "authentic" self-understanding.

The lecture attacks as its normative opposition disciplinary form of power. Most importantly one of its "great instruments" (Foucault 1977:184) - normalisation - that Foucault so influentially documented in *Discipline and Punish*. Normalizing judgement, as Foucault observed, is based on suppression of non-observance, of "that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it" (Foucault 1977:178). Norms are not just created as prohibitions stemming from a normative codex. They are also based on assumption of comparability of individuals, of their results, of their performance and dynamics of their development. Through comparison between individuals, normalising judgement does not only confront an individual with a prototype of perfection but also with the group of his peers, or individuals at a similar stage of education and training. In this sense, normalisation renders "... differences useful by fitting the one to another" (Foucault 1977:184). In the discourse of professional development, as it is presented in the two lectures, such comparison is seen as detrimental to the growth of the authentic self. Comparison of the individual with external norms is understood as a source of the harmful "feeling of inadequacy" and other "self-limiting settings". Such pressures must be resisted. Not only in present, but subject is also instructed to reflect on harmful effects they could have on his formation in the past.

Discourse of professional self-development thus combines the attack on the normalising power with a critique of disciplinary effects of institutions (school, family). In this sense, it connects the technology of the self which establishes as its ethical substance "authentic" individual with a critique of disciplinary technology of power as it developed during modernity and persisted into our present. The disciplinary form and normalisation as one of its most important aspects is seen as a thing of the past - not only harmful to the practice of authentic development, but also no longer functional in the present. The disciplined, normalised individual, even if she is more successful than most of her peers (e.g. being university-educated), does not have what the present employer or economic environment demands - creativity, energy and self-determination which are all seen as results of authentic self-development.

The second speaker uses similar logic of critique of a certain epoch, its sentiments and technologies utilised for formation of proper subjectivity. However, he ties this critique more to the thought about economic and social nature of contemporary society, and to formulation of a vision of ideal society of the future that is already manifested in our present. In the following excerpt, he describes individual pursuits in entrepreneurship or employment as a joyful and creative game that listeners are invited to play. This principle (life as a game) is contrasted with life of "serious" people, who were formed by an industrial era:

> "Anything in life can be transformed into an interesting and entertaining game.... Some people do not see it that way, they are 'serious'. Their thinking is based on the industrial era which lasted so long, when it was necessary for people to be the same as others, to find stable job, to get promoted, to save some money for a retirement and most importantly, to shut up and work hard. And this is what 'serious' life has to offer."

(AV, 13:8)

Self development as a "game" which does not follow general normalising guidelines set by the industrial era fits better to the present, or perhaps more precisely to the near future:

> "Nowadays, we see more start ups being established then anytime before in the history of humanity and more people than ever before are becoming entrepreneurs. Well, now it is a trend in the US, but I foresee it becoming reality in the Czech Republic too. So, the trend is that we will work independently and we will do what we enjoy to do, what fulfils us, what helps other people and we will be paid for doing this. But we won't do that for money, we will do this because it will be meaningful. And the concept of the game plays a gigantic role in this."

(AV, 13:10)

According to the speaker's prognosis, the model based on pressures towards normality and conformity as well as general guidelines for success and material wellbeing will cease to be functional and will disappear together with the last remnants of the industrial age. The new era of knowledge economy will make space for subjects seeking success by quite a different means: through listening to their authentic self, recognising its special talents and fulfilling their individual visions. Rather than financial reward, they should seek meaning and fulfilment. Material prosperity will be a result of leading such life that is in accordance with self-actualisation, rather than from accommodating one's subjectivity to general norms. Rather than following general guidelines for successful and prosperous

life, subjects shall be playing a personalised and challenging game in accordance with their unique potential and talents. Importantly, the level of concern with one's individuality is here tied to a larger socio-political narrative and reason of the government. Particular idea of ethical substance of individuals - the authentic self - is translated into a critique of contemporary modes of government and tied to a vision of ideal society of a near future.

Conclusion

A reading of the discourse of professional self-development as technology of the self offers insights that could easily be lost in the more general accounts of workings of neo-liberal governmentality. Focus on the micro-level in which subjects are called upon as agents undertaking self-forming work allows us to see how subjects are actually addressed, what interpretation of their lives within the contemporary constellations of government of conduct are offered to them and how are the realities of contemporary society construed into an ethical problem for practice of everyday life. We can see how subjects are invited to become entrepreneurial agents seeking not only maximisation of profit and individual gain, but also searching for meaning and connection of their individual life with larger political and social narratives.

The version of subjectivity formulated within the two lectures on professional self-development shares some fundamental traits with the figure of homo economicus. The ideal subject of professional development too is a maximiser of its human capital or the entrepreneur of the self. It is asked to maximise its skills and to fully develop its individual capability understood as employability or prospects of future profits. Simultaneously, in many ways it should understand itself as an individual solely responsible for its success. However, the subject of this version of professional development is also much more than a pure reflection of homo economicus. It identifies as its ethical substance the authentic self which it seeks to uncover, protect and develop. Rather than leading subject to reject all values other than economic value, it is invited to seek authentic self-development and self-actualisation which will bring both happiness and material well-being. The concerns with authentic self-development also transcend the individual horizon. They are tied to a particular critique of technologies of domination (normalisation) and to a certain understanding of a social and economic change. More attention being paid to technologies of the self can also provide a space for reconsideration of social critique. Seeing from the perspective of the technologies of the self, we can see how contemporary governmentality incorporates values such as desire for self-actualisation and autonomy and makes them part of the government of everyday life.

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