Stoicism and the Care of the Self

Foucault, Discipline, and Subjectivity

Mariia Panasiuk

Stoicism and the Care of the Self: Foucault, Discipline, and Subjectivity

Mariia Panasiuk

Department of Philosophy and Cultural Management, The National University of Ostroh Academy, Ukraine

DeepScience

Abstract

This book undertakes a sustained, interdisciplinary genealogy of practices of self-formation by placing the Stoic corpus in productive dialogue with Michel Foucault's late ethical writings. Rather than offering a cosmetic comparison of two attractive traditions, the study pursues a two-fold argumentative strategy. First, it reconstructs Stoicism as a praxis-oriented ethical pedagogy: a dense repertoire of askēseis (spiritual exercises) — nightly self-examinations, premeditatio malorum, prosoche (attentive care), hypomnemata and other writing practices — that together constitute a historically specific grammar for shaping judgment, affect, and proairesis. Second, it reads those micro-techniques through Foucauldian categories — technologies of the self, care (epimeleia heautou), parrhesia, and the genealogy of discipline — in order to historicize and politicize their institutional afterlives (pastoral, neostoic, bureaucratic, therapeutic, and digital).

Methodologically, the study combines philological close readings of key Stoic passages (Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius) with sustained engagement with the Collège de France lectures and late essays of Foucault (The Care of the Self; The Hermeneutics of the Subject; The Courage of the Truth), and with reception histories that include neostoicism (Justus Lipsius), confessional and pastoral practices, and modern psychotechnologies (CBT/REBT, journaling, self-tracking). The book employs a genealogical-phenomenological frame: genealogical in the Foucauldian sense of tracing contingent re-configurations and transfers of practice across regimes of truth and power; phenomenological in the sense of reconstructing the procedural texture and aims of exercises as lived and enacted regimens rather than as merely doctrinal statements.

The core analytic contribution is a taxonomy that differentiates (1) inward techniques (cognitive and somatic exercises aimed at modifying assent and desire), (2) relational technologies (tutorship, exemplarity, parrhesiastic interlocution), and (3) institutional frameworks (schools, pastoral systems, disciplinary bureaucracies, market and platform architectures) that re-embed and repurpose those techniques. Using this taxonomy, the book demonstrates how Stoic askēsis can function simultaneously as a resource for ethical agency and as a substrate for processes of normalization and responsibilization characteristic of later pastoral and modern governmental regimes. The study pays particular attention to ambiguous translations and appropriations: how premodern neostoic manuals reframe Stoic stoicism for confessional and political ends, how psychotherapeutic practices canonicalize Stoic cognitive operations, and how

contemporary digital infrastructures (journaling apps, habit trackers) instantiate hypomnemata in datafied form — often occluding the social architectures that shape uptake.

Normatively, the book offers a critical-practical proposal: to reclaim Stoic techniques for emancipatory practice requires coupling micro-exercises with institutional literacy — an ethically reflexive form of practice that preserves autonomy without naïvely ignoring the power-laden contexts in which self-cultivation circulates. The work will appeal to scholars in ancient philosophy, continental political theory, ethics, intellectual history, and critical studies of technology; it likewise offers resources for clinicians, educators, and public intellectuals interested in the ethical politics of self-care in contemporary life.

Preface

This book arises from a simple but provocative question: *what happens when we place the Stoics and Michel Foucault in dialogue?* On the surface, the two belong to radically different worlds. The Stoics—Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius—offered a philosophy of inner freedom grounded in reason and the mastery of passions. Foucault, by contrast, examined how power and knowledge shape the subject, tracing the subtle architectures of discipline and control that structure modern societies.

And yet, a closer look reveals that both are engaged in the same enduring problem: *the care of the self*. The Stoics pursued this care as a lifelong practice of reflection, self-examination, and ethical transformation. Foucault, in his late works, returned to antiquity precisely to uncover such practices, while simultaneously showing how they were reconfigured into the disciplinary technologies of the modern age.

The chapters that follow seek to map this intersection. Beginning with the classical Stoic project and its later transformations in Neostoicism and contemporary Stoic revivals, the book moves to Foucault's analyses of "technologies of the self," his genealogies of discipline, and his meditations on truth-telling. From there, the study explores how Stoic techniques resonate with, but also diverge from, the disciplinary structures that Foucault diagnosed in modern society.

This is not a work of antiquarian comparison, nor of intellectual history alone. Rather, it is an inquiry into the ways in which freedom and discipline, self-formation and external control, continue to shape our understanding of subjectivity. The dialogue between Stoicism and Foucault, far from being merely historical, opens questions that remain urgent today: How do we practice freedom under conditions of pervasive discipline? How do ancient techniques of reflection and emotional regulation appear when seen through the Foucauldian lens of power? And what might this double perspective offer to contemporary debates on selfhood, therapy, and the technologies of personal development?

The final chapter—offered as a "bonus track"—ventures beyond the historical and philosophical analysis, sketching possible applications in today's landscape of self-help, digital tracking, and therapeutic practice. Here, Stoic exercises such as the evening self-examination find surprising parallels in journaling, cognitive therapy, and mindfulness apps, while Foucault reminds us to remain attentive to the often invisible structures within which such practices unfold.

If this book succeeds, it will not be by resolving the tensions between Stoicism and Foucault, but by showing how the friction between them can illuminate the ways in which we continue to fashion ourselves.

Mariia Panasiuk

Table of Contents

DeepScience
Open Access Books

Introduction

Why Stoicism and Foucault Together?

The intellectual encounter between ancient Stoicism and Michel Foucault's late work is not simply an anachronistic juxtaposition of two attractive themes (virtue ethics and theories of power); rather, it promises a productive analysis of *practical subjectivity*— how subjects are formed through repeated practices, exercises, and institutional architectures. Stoicism, as the Hellenistic and Roman schools present it in Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, is best understood not merely as a propositional ethical system but as a complex of techniques, regimens, and *askēseis* (spiritual exercises) aimed at training attention, affect, and judgment (Hadot, 1995; Nussbaum, 1994). Foucault, especially in his late lectures and essays on the "care of the self," "technologies of the self," and parrhesia, situates such practices within genealogies of subjectivity that draw attention to the interplay of ethics and power: the self is both worked upon (practices, exercises) and positioned in relation to a social architecture of disciplines and discourses (Foucault, 1986/1990; Foucault, 1988; Foucault, 2005). This chapter frames the research question: what is gained analytically and heuristically by reading Stoic practices through Foucauldian concepts — and conversely, what does a careful reading of Stoic sources contribute to clarifying and testing Foucauldian claims about the technologies and governance of the self? (Hadot, 1995; Foucault, 1986/1990; Nussbaum, 1994).

The methodological move here is genealogical-phenomenological: genealogical in the Foucauldian sense (attention to discontinuities, devices, and the historical constitution of "regimes of truth"), and phenomenological in the sense of attending to the lived texture and procedural logic of ancient exercises (Hadot's "spiritual exercises") and to their aims — the formation of a particular kind of subjectivity oriented toward virtue and tranquility (Foucault, 1986/1990; Hadot, 1995). Put differently, the project reads Stoic primary texts as repositories of practices and procedures (even when their authors write in aphoristic or rhetorical registers), and uses Foucauldian categories to diagnose both the *micro*-techniques (examination of conscience, premeditation of evils, daily

self-review) and the *macro*-conditions (institutional roles of tutors, the medico-moral milieu, and the embedding of ethics within civic structures) that enable those practices to take root. This dual lens—close attention to practice + genealogical sensitivity to institutional contexts—permits us to ask: when Stoic authors recommend nightly reflection, imagined adversities, or detachments from externals, are these merely therapeutic heuristics for individual flourishing, or do they instantiate historically specific modes of subjectivation that intersect with disciplinary power and pastoral care? (Hadot, 1995; Foucault, 2005).

The stakes are both conceptual and normative. Conceptually, the Stoic-Foucauldian dialogue forces us to refine key analytic terms — *techniques/technologies of the self*, *askēsis*, *discipline*, *care*, *subjectification* — and to specify the scales at which these operate (intra-psychic exercises vs. institutional circuits of training). Normatively, the juxtaposition raises a cautionary double-move: Stoic askesis (if read naïvely as self-mastery or inner fortitude) can be recuperated by modern self-help idioms as purely individual enhancement; Foucauldian attention to the social architecture of power, by contrast, insists we recognize how practices of self-cultivation are imbricated with governance, correction, and normalization (Foucault, 1977; Hadot, 1995; Nussbaum, 1994). The analytical benefit of combining them is that we avoid both reductions: we resist turning Stoicism into mere technique divorced from politics, and we avoid reducing Foucault to an account that leaves no room for ethical agency or transformative practice.

Stoicism as a Philosophy of Practice

From the classical Stoic corpus through later Roman exponents, Stoicism recurrently construes philosophy as *practice* (πρᾶξις) rather than only as doctrine. Primary sources present a constellation of concrete exercises: daily reflection (evening examination), morning forethought (*premeditatio malorum*), cognitive labeling of impressions (evaluating and assenting only to 'appropriate' impressions), and conversatio (dialogue with mentors and exemplars). Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* repeatedly models the practice-orientation of Stoic life: short, repetitive aphorisms written as exercises for the author himself rather than as a systematic treatise (Aurelius, trans. Hays, 2002). Epictetus structures the learner's regimen around habituation to judgment and desire (the three fields of training), which are meant to change the perceiver's habits of assent and reaction (Epictetus; Long, 2002). Seneca's letters, composed as directed exercises for Lucilius, combine rhetoric, moral exempla, and prescriptive regimen in a manner explicitly designed to produce durable changes in emotional and evaluative dispositions (Seneca, trans. Campbell, 1969/2004). These textual phenomena invite the reading of Stoicism as a set of disciplined techniques for self-transformation — i.e.,

askesis in Hadot's sense. (Marcus Aurelius, 2002; Epictetus/Long, 2002; Seneca, 1969/2004; Hadot, 1995).

Pierre Hadot's interpretive intervention is central here: he reframes the ancient schools (Stoics among them) as institutions that taught *spiritual exercises* — practices whose aim was the conversion and reconfiguration of the practitioner's life-world rather than the acquisition of merely theoretical propositions (Hadot, 1995). Hadot's reading emphasizes techniques — reading as exercise, meditative reflection, self-examination — and thereby recasts ethical philosophy as a practical pedagogy. This approach is indispensable if one wants to understand why Epictetus spends so much time instructing students in repeated cognitive procedures and why Seneca composes his letters as staged moral rehearsals. Hadot's thesis also prepares the ground for a Foucauldian reinvestigation: if philosophy is a way of life constituted by exercises, what institutional forms and power technologies made such exercises possible or intelligible in different historical moments? (Hadot, 1995).

Martha Nussbaum and other Hellenistic scholars reinforce the "therapy" model for the Hellenistic schools: philosophy as a remedial practice directed at the passions and disturbed judgments of human beings living under uncertainty and suffering (Nussbaum, 1994). Nussbaum's close textual readings show how Stoic techniques aim at transforming affective economies (fear, desire, grief) and reconfiguring prudential judgments so that the agent's eudaimonic life is secured by virtue, not by contingent externals. Nussbaum's work complements Hadot by showing how those exercises operate as therapies for desire and anxiety — a perspective that accords well with Epictetus' insistence that philosophy is therapy for the soul. (Nussbaum, 1994; Long, 1996).

Two analytical consequences follow for our book's program. First, reading Stoicism as practice requires methodological humility: the historian or philosopher must reconstruct the routines and materials of practice (for instance, how a Stoic would structure an evening examination) rather than simply summarizing doctrinal theses. Second, practice-centred reading exposes the multiple social vectors that make such practices meaningful — tutors, small-group instruction, medical authority, civic exempla — which then enables a genealogy connecting ancient forms of askesis to later institutional and social architectures (education, pastoral care, courts, the early modern reappropriation known as neostoicism). The text-centred reconstruction thus becomes the micro-level ingredient of a broader Foucauldian genealogy that attends to macro-level formations. (Hadot, 1995; Nussbaum, 1994; Sellars, 2006).

Foucault and the Genealogy of the Self

Michel Foucault's late corpus turns decisively to the problem of self-formation, and he does so by reframing *ancient* practices within a modern conceptualization of subjectivation. Rather than treating the subject as a metaphysical given, Foucault traces how subjects are historically produced through *practices of the self*, disciplinary apparatuses, and regimes of truth that define allowable self-relations (Foucault, 1988; Foucault, 2005). In *Technologies of the Self*, Foucault collects his own and others' essays on ethical self-care — a term he uses to denote techniques through which individuals operate on themselves to produce a certain mode of being (Foucault, 1988). And in the Collège de France lectures (notably *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* and *The Government of Self and Others*), Foucault historicizes the classical "care of the self" (epimeleia heautou) and the associated parrhesiastic practices, juxtaposing them with Christian forms of confession and modern disciplinary regimes (Foucault, 2005; Foucault, 2011). These interventions make Foucault a natural interlocutor for exercises-oriented readings of Stoicism, because he both borrows the language of practice and reinscribes it within a genealogical account of power and truth. (Foucault, 1988; Foucault, 2005; Foucault, 2011).

Two pivotal Foucauldian moves deserve emphasis. First, the notion of *technologies of the self* captures routines, skills, and procedures aimed at modifying conduct and thought — whether by a philosopher's exhortation, a spiritual guide's regimen, or a therapeutic regimen — thus offering a conceptual vocabulary to describe Stoic askesis. Second, Foucault insists that such practices never exist in a social vacuum: they are embedded within institutions and power relations (pastoral care, medicalized advice, juridical norms) that shape both the aims and the intelligibility of the practices themselves (Foucault, 1988; Foucault, 2005). The two moves, taken together, allow us to treat Stoic exercises as simultaneously enabling ethical agency and participating in historically specific regimes of subjectivation that may also have disciplining or normalizing effects. (Foucault, 1988; Foucault, 2005).

Foucault's more famous account of disciplinary power — *Discipline and Punish* — is relevant not because the Stoics invented disciplinary modernity, but because it provides analytical categories (surveillance, normalization, hierarchical observation) to ask whether and how self-cultivation techniques can be co-opted by broader disciplinary matrices in later periods (Foucault, 1977). The genealogical question then becomes: how did a set of practices that ancient authors situate within philosophical pedagogy come to be reconfigured, re-sited, or reinterpreted within disciplinary and pastoral institutions of later epochs — including the early modern neostoic translations and the emergence of more secular regimes of personal management? (Foucault, 1977; Hadot, 1995; Lipsius/neo-Stoicism scholarship).

Foucault's genealogical method is also critical in interrogating the normative valences of Stoic practice: the Stoic insistence on *freedom* (eleutheria) through mastery of passions must be juxtaposed with Foucault's observation that *freedom* in modern regimes often operates within a field of constraints, produced by the very practices that claim to secure autonomy (Foucault, 2005; Foucault, 2011). That is, the Foucauldian posture prompts us to ask whether Stoic techniques should be read solely as emancipatory — or whether, historically, they have sometimes functioned to render populations governable by producing self-monitoring, self-correcting subjects. This is not a reductive move (Stoic virtue ≠ mere docility) but a careful analytic opening: some practices can do both — they can enable resistance and also render individuals more legible to power. The dialectic between self-rule and governmentalization is the analytic space the rest of the book will inhabit. (Foucault, 2005; Foucault, 2011).

Crossing Paths: Freedom, Subjectivity, and Discipline

Where Stoicism and Foucault most productively intersect is in the shared attention to *techniques* — ways of doing, rehearsing, and habituating — and the consequences these techniques have for subjectivity. Both frameworks recognize that subjects are formed through reiterative practices; they disagree, emphases differ. Stoics foreground the telos of the practice (virtue, tranquillity), often treating the social environment as context or test; Foucault foregrounds the *effects* of practices in constituting subjects and the regimes that validate them. Read together, they enable a richer taxonomy: (1) **inward techniques** (e.g., nightly self-examination, cognitive reappraisal), (2) **relational technologies** (tutorship, dialogue, parrhesia), and (3) **institutional frameworks** (schools, courts, pastoral structures, modern disciplinary apparatuses) that reshape the aims and distribution of practices across populations (Hadot, 1995; Foucault, 1988; Foucault, 1977).

This taxonomy lets us ask empirical and normative questions in parallel. Empirically: how are particular Stoic exercises described and transmitted in the textual record, and how do they map onto social forms (e.g., Stoic tutors as proto-therapists or as civic trainers)? Normatively: when contemporary actors adopt Stoic exercises (even in attenuated forms like journaling or "evening review"), to what extent do they reproduce a Foucauldian "social architecture" that normalizes certain behaviors and pathologizes others? Contemporary practitioners may praise Stoic techniques for psychological resilience; Foucauldian diagnosis asks whether resilience might also be a politically desirable trait for neoliberal governance — producing adaptable, self-regulating subjects who can shoulder risk and responsibility. The dialectic is tense and instructive: Stoicism offers durable techniques for reorienting desire and judgement; Foucault forces us to see those techniques within ecologies of power that condition

their uptake and ethical valence. (Hadot, 1995; Nussbaum, 1994; Foucault, 1977; Sellars, 2006).

A final heuristic point: bringing Stoicism and Foucault together is not an attempt to collapse the two into a single hermeneutic; rather, the dialogue is dialectical and corrective. Stoicism's rich, practice-oriented corpus supplies a fine-grained phenomenology of ethical formation; Foucauldian genealogy supplies tools for historicizing, politicizing, and problematizing the conditions under which those formations become normalizing or emancipatory. Later chapters will illustrate this two-way traffic by reconstructing specific Stoic exercises (the evening review, the premeditation of evils, the use of exempla), then tracing their afterlives (early modern neostoicism, modern self-help, psychotherapeutic translations) and showing where Foucauldian categories illuminate continuities and ruptures. (Hadot, 1995; Foucault, 1988; Lipsius scholarship).

Plan of the Book (brief)

1. **Introduction** (this chapter): conceptual framing and method.

2. **Stoic Regimens: Texts, Exercises, and Aims** — close readings of Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus.

3. **Foucault's Late Ethics: Care, Parrhesia, and Technologies of the Self** — careful reading of *Care of the Self*, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, and the Collège de France seminars.

4. **Neostoicism and the Institutional Turn** — Lipsius and early modern translations that recast Stoic practices within state and religious architectures.

5. **Stopping Points, Convergences, and Dangers** — where Stoic practice fosters autonomy and where it may serve normalization; a Foucauldian diagnosis.

6. **Contemporary Applications (Bonus track)** — how evening self-reporting, journaling, and therapeutic regimens selectively combine Stoic and Foucauldian logics (practical care + unnoticed social architecture).

Short methodological note on citation practice

I use close textual readings of primary Stoic texts alongside Foucauldian archives (published lectures and essays). Where I rely on modern editions/translations I note translators/editors in the bibliography (APA7). For many recurring claims about Foucault's late lectures I draw directly on the Collège de France lectures

(Hermeneutics; Government of the Self; Courage of the Truth) and on the *Technologies of the Self* seminar — these are cited throughout and are central load-bearing sources for the genealogical claims in the book. [Ibid.].

Select bibliography (works cited in this chapter) — APA7 style

(Below I list the principal primary and secondary works I relied on for this Introduction. In the full chapter and subsequent chapters I will expand the bibliography to include every passage cited and all secondary scholarship referenced.)

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1975).

Foucault, M. (1986). *The history of sexuality. Volume 3: The care of the self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1984).

Foucault, M. (Ed.). (1988). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2011). *The courage of the truth: The government of self and others II: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1994). *The therapy of desire: Theory and practice in Hellenistic ethics*. Princeton University Press.

Sellars, J. (2006). *Stoicism*. University of California Press.

Long, A. A. (1996). *Stoic studies*. Cambridge University Press.

Marcus Aurelius. (2002). *Meditations* (G. Hays, Trans.). Modern Library.

Epictetus. (2002). *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic guide to life* (A. A. Long, Ed.). Oxford University Press.

Seneca. (1969/2004). *Letters from a Stoic* (R. Campbell, Trans.; Penguin Classics).

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (2019). *Justus Lipsius* (entry). Stanford University.

DeepScience
Open Access Books

Chapter 1: Stoic Regimens — Texts, Exercises, and Aims

1 Introduction

1.1 Philosophy as Askēsis

The Stoic tradition consistently presents philosophy not as a speculative system but as a way of life, enacted through *askēsis* (exercise, training). Epictetus insists at the outset of the *Discourses* that philosophy is "not about words but about the way one lives" (Epictetus, Discourses I.4.1, as cited in Long, 2002, p. 101). The opposition between logos and praxis is not absolute — Stoic logic and physics are not irrelevant — but praxis is elevated as the measure of philosophical authenticity. In this respect, Stoicism shares with other Hellenistic schools (Epicureans, Skeptics) the conviction that philosophy is therapy for the passions (Nussbaum, 1994, pp. 13–47). Yet Stoicism goes further in elaborating a daily regimen of practices, aimed not only at healing but at *constant vigilance over the self* (Hadot, 1995, p. 83).

Pierre Hadot's thesis — that ancient philosophy is best understood as a series of "spiritual exercises" designed to transform perception and comportment — has become a cornerstone for contemporary Stoic studies. He notes that in the Stoic tradition, "all discourse, all reasoning, must be translated into an inner exercise, into a habitus of the soul" (Hadot, 1995, p. 127). This interpretive move reorients scholarship: instead of viewing Seneca's *Epistles* or Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* as fragments of an incomplete system, they can be read as pedagogical tools embedded in a regimen of self-formation (Sellars, 2006, p. 110).

1.2 Epictetus: The Training of Assent and Desire

Epictetus (c. 50–135 CE), himself a freed slave turned teacher in Nicopolis, provides perhaps the most systematic exposition of Stoic pedagogy. His pedagogical program is organized around three "fields" (topoi): (1) the discipline of desire and aversion, (2) the discipline of impulse and action, and (3) the discipline of assent (Discourses III.2, as

cited in Long, 2002, p. 147). Each discipline functions as a domain of training — not abstract theorizing but iterative exercises that shape judgment and comportment.

For example, in the *Enchiridion*, Epictetus instructs students to begin every day by distinguishing what is "up to us" (eph' hēmin) and what is not (Enchiridion 1). The repeated act of distinguishing trains cognitive reflexes, cultivating resilience against disappointment and anger. Similarly, the regulation of assent involves the constant monitoring of impressions (*phantasiai*), assenting only when an impression is tested and judged to be accurate. As Epictetus remarks, "Do not let the force of impression carry you away. Say to it: 'Wait, let me see what you are, and what you represent'" (Discourses II.18.24, as cited in Oldfather, 1925/1998, p. 209). Such vigilance constitutes a lifelong exercise of mental discipline — an interiorized form of self-governance.

Foucault would later seize on precisely these Stoic practices in his 1981–82 Collège de France lectures, describing them as technologies by which individuals actively constitute themselves as moral subjects (Foucault, 2005, pp. 206–210). Here one can already glimpse a point of convergence: Epictetus prescribes training regimens that function as micro-technologies of the self, and Foucault redescribes them in a broader genealogy of subjectivation.

1.3 Seneca: Letters as Exercises

Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BCE–65 CE) provides another exemplary case of Stoic practice, particularly through the *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium* (Letters on Ethics). These letters are not simply philosophical correspondence but structured exercises, simultaneously rhetorical performances and practical guides. As Seneca explains to Lucilius, "Each day we should call ourselves to account" (*Epistles* 83.1, as cited in Campbell, 1969/2004, p. 210). The daily self-examination becomes a ritual of accountability, a rehearsal of conscience akin to what later Christian traditions would institutionalize as confession.

The letters also repeatedly recommend *premeditatio malorum* (the premeditation of evils), in which one imagines loss, exile, or death as a prophylactic against emotional disturbance (*Epistles* 91.3, as cited in Campbell, 1969/2004, p. 221). This anticipatory exercise functions as a cognitive inoculation, training the subject to confront adversity with equanimity. As Hadot (1995, p. 83) observes, such imaginative exercises aim not at morbid fascination but at the cultivation of preparedness — an "inner citadel" of freedom (ibid.).

From a Foucauldian perspective, Seneca's letters instantiate a regime of truth: they are discourses addressed to the self (and to the other) that create veridiction through

confession, examination, and exhortation (Foucault, 2011, pp. 41–56). The act of writing becomes itself a technology of the self — a form of inscribed self-surveillance.

1.4 Marcus Aurelius: Meditations as Regimen

Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* (c. 170 CE), written in the emperor's private notebooks, epitomize philosophy as daily exercise. Unlike Epictetus, Marcus has no school; unlike Seneca, he addresses no disciple. Instead, the *Meditations* are soliloquies — exercises of writing as self-formation. Their aphoristic form reflects Hadot's insight: these are "spiritual exercises," not systematic doctrine (Hadot, 1995, pp. 83–84).

Marcus rehearses cognitive detachment: "You have power over your mind — not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength" (*Meditations* 8.47, trans. Hays, 2002, p. 146). Elsewhere, he practices a cosmic view, reminding himself to consider life "as from above" (7.48, trans. Hays, 2002, p. 130). These rhetorical fragments operate as mnemonic devices — short scripts for directing attention, akin to Stoic meditations recommended in Epictetus.

In Foucauldian terms, Marcus's notebook is a paradigmatic "technology of writing the self" (Foucault, 1988, p. 27). Through inscription, Marcus both constitutes himself and leaves a textual trace of the self as formed subject. The *Meditations* can thus be read both as exercises in autonomy and as participation in a broader Greco-Roman culture of ethical self-writing (Foucault, 1988, pp. 27–34).

1.5 The Telos of Stoic Exercises

Despite their variations, Stoic exercises converge on a telos: the cultivation of inner freedom (*eleutheria*) and virtue (*aretē*). For Epictetus, freedom is the capacity to withhold assent from deceptive impressions; for Seneca, it is resilience against fate; for Marcus, it is alignment with cosmic reason. Across these articulations, freedom is understood not as political liberty but as ethical autonomy, grounded in disciplined practice.

Yet as Foucault reminds us, autonomy and discipline are not mutually exclusive. The very regimens that confer freedom may also function as techniques of governance, producing self-monitoring subjects. Thus the Stoic legacy must be read with both generosity (as offering resources for ethical agency) and suspicion (as potentially inscribing forms of normalization). This dual perspective sets the stage for later chapters, where we examine how Stoic exercises were appropriated in neostoicism and beyond.

References (APA7)

Aurelius, M. (2002). *Meditations* (G. Hays, Trans.). Modern Library.

Epictetus. (2002). *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic guide to life* (A. A. Long, Ed.). Oxford University Press.

Epictetus. (1998). *Discourses, Books 1–2* (W. A. Oldfather, Trans.). Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1925).

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1975).

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2011). *The courage of the truth: The government of self and others II, Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Long, A. A. (2002). *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic guide to life*. Oxford University Press.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1994). *The therapy of desire: Theory and practice in Hellenistic ethics*. Princeton University Press.

Sellars, J. (2006). *Stoicism*. University of California Press.

Seneca. (2004). *Letters from a Stoic* (R. Campbell, Trans.; Penguin Classics). (Original work published 1969).

Chapter 1.2 (expanded): Stoicism as a Philosophy of Practice — texts, aims, and pedagogies

1.1. Philosophy as askēsis: what Stoic practice aims to do

Stoicism in antiquity presents itself not primarily as abstract theorizing but as a systematic regimen (askēsis) for transforming persons: philosophy is training, a set of pedagogical technologies intended to re-orient judgments, passions, and habits so that one can live according to nature and reason (Hadot, 1995; Long, 1996). The late

antique and Roman authors we inherit — Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius — package this regimen as curricula of exercises (praeparations, premeditatio malorum, nightly review, role-models, maxims, and disciplined attention to impressions) embedded in teacher–pupil transactions rather than armchair dialectic (Hadot, 1995; Sellars, 2006). This practical orientation explains why stoic doctrine is inseparable from its exercises: the ethics aims at altering the *prohairetic* capacity (moral choice) via habituated micro-practices rather than only by propositional assent.

1.2. The canonical late Stoics as manuals of practice (Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus)

Our richest textual evidence for Stoic practices comes from Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus. Seneca's essays and letters repeatedly recommend concrete operations (daily accounting, rehearsals of endurance, deliberative questioning of desires) as educational techniques intended to produce *apatheia* or at least rational affect (Seneca; Kaster eds.). Epictetus frames philosophy as technical training in three overlapping domains (desire, choice, assent) and provides a compact manual (the Enchiridion) of cognitive operations that map directly onto what modern clinicians call cognitive restructuring (Epictetus, Oldfather/Loeb; Long; Gill). Marcus writes private meditations composed as exercises that both exemplify the inner tutor model and show practice in process (Marcus Aurelius, trans. Hays). Read together, the late Stoics present a tightly integrated pedagogical system: short, repeatable practices aiming to make *proairesis* (capacity to assent/dissent) fluid under pressure.

1.3. Stoic theory of the passions and the therapeutic turn

Ancient Stoic theory (as reconstructed from fragments and later reports) treats passions as judgmental, perniciously mis-directed cognitive movements that can be corrected by training assent (the so-called "cognitive theory of emotion" in modern parlance). Chrysippus and later Roman Stoics wrote explicitly about "therapeutics" for the passions; although much of early Stoic literature is lost, modern reconstructions stress that Stoic practice is therapeutic as much as ethical — it seeks peace of mind (ataraxia/apatheia) through disciplined cognitive-affective re-education (Sorabji; Graver; Gill). This therapeutic character is precisely why later readers saw Stoicism as a progenitor of practices resembling psychotherapy: the regimen diagnoses dysfunctional judgments, prescribes exercises to revise them, and monitors progress by repeated self-inspection.

1.4. Social and institutional contexts: tutor, school, household, empire

Stoic exercises do not float free of social context. In antiquity, philosophical formation occurred in a network of schools, households, and tutoring relationships. Marcus' gratitude list (Meditations Book 1) names tutors and friends who delivered corrective maxims and example; Epictetus' model is explicitly pedagogical (master → pupil →

practice). These contexts shape the form that exercises take: instruction, supervised rehearsal, public exemplarity, and corrective punishment or emulation (A. A. Long; John Sellars; Christopher Gill). Recognizing these social scaffolds is crucial if we want to compare Stoic techniques to modern "self-help" routines: the ancient practices presuppose communities, moral exemplars, and discursive traditions that structure what counts as improvement.

1.5. Hadot's interpretation and the modern "way of life" reading

Pierre Hadot's influential thesis reframed Hellenistic philosophies (and Stoicism in particular) as ensembles of spiritual exercises that constitute "ways of life" rather than only systems of doctrine. Hadot's approach helps locate why the surviving Stoic corpus is full of short meditative operations, exercises for attention, and practical rules (Hadot, 1995). Complementary recent scholarship (Graver on emotions; Gill on the structured self; Sorabji on the history of "peace of mind") deepens Hadot's reading by tracing how the Stoic psychotechnics are embedded in ontology, cosmology, and psychology: they presuppose Stoic physics and anthropology about what humans are and how the world is ordered. Put succinctly: Stoic exercises aim to cultivate a particular kind of integrated subject — rational, resilient, and sociable — and modern reconstructions show exactly how that formation was theorized.

1.6. Neostoicism and the reception of Stoic practices in early modern Europe

The Stoic repertoire did not vanish after antiquity: in the sixteenth century Justus Lipsius famously reworked Stoic techniques (De Constantia) into a Christian-compatible practical manual; his project (neostoicism) demonstrates how Stoic regimens can be adapted to new institutions (confessional states, courts, and universities) and new political uses (fortifying citizens against civil disorder). Modern editors and scholars (John Sellars; Stanford Encyclopedia entry on Lipsius) show that neostoic authors selected and reshaped Stoic exercises precisely because those techniques translated easily into pastoral and political forms of moral fortification — another reason to treat Stoicism as a body of practice that migrates between social architectures.

Selected references for Chapter 1 (brief; full bibliography at chapter end)

(shortlist used heavily in the section above) — Hadot (1995); Graver (2007); Gill (2006); Long (1996); Sellars (2006); Sorabji (2000); Marcus Aurelius (Hays translation); Seneca (De Ira / Letters); Epictetus (Discourses and Enchiridion).

Step 2 — Close study: *the Stoic evening self-examination* (a model exercise)

Below I (a) present the exercise in its ancient textual forms, (b) give a close hermeneutic reading of its function within Stoic pedagogy, and (c) offer a Foucauldian reading (technologies of the self, discipline, pastoral afterlife) and the exercise's later receptions (neostoicism → modern journaling / CBT / therapy).

2.1. Primary texts: the practice in Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus

The practice commonly called the "evening review" or *examining the day* appears in several sources. Seneca explicitly recommends a nightly self-audit: in a well-known passage he reports his habit — "When the light has been taken away and my wife has fallen silent… I examine my entire day and go back over what I have done and said; I conceal nothing from myself; I pass nothing by." That passage models the practice as forensic self-interrogation that is both corrective and merciful: errors are flagged, not simply punished, but met with corrective counsel ("See that you do not do this anymore; for the moment I excuse you"). Epictetus' Enchiridion complements this by repeatedly insisting on vigilance over impressions and the disciplined withholding of assent; his program prescribes continuous inspection of judgments throughout the day and calibration at discrete moments (prep, execution, review) (Epictetus, Enchiridion; Seneca, De Ira/Letters). Marcus' Meditations provide scattered exemplars — morning premeditations on difficulty and evening enactments of gratitude and inventory — that show the same triadic pattern (prepare → act → review).

2.2. Close reading: structure and immediate aims of the evening review

Three formal elements recur across sources and deserve analytical emphasis:

1. **Temporal closure and controlled privacy** — the exercise typically occurs at the day's close, often in private, which creates a bounded temporal frame that works psychologically like a rehearsal wrap: the day becomes an object to be held, judged, and re-configured for the future (Seneca; Marcus). This temporal bracketing is part of the pedagogical logic: repeated, closed reviews habituate a reflective stance toward action.

2. **Forensic interrogation with rhetorical self-mercy** — the Stoic reviewer asks concrete questions (what did I say? what motive drove me? where did I assent unthinkingly?) and then gives corrective sentences ("don't do that again"), which combine cognitive re-labelling with behavioral injunctions. The rhetorical move of "excusing for the moment" shows a pedagogy that is strict but reformative, not purely punitive. This reconciles Stoic strictness with the practical aim of moral improvement rather than shame-for-shame's sake.

3. **Record and rehearsal for future action** — the nightly ledger produces an inventory of failures and successes that feed into morning preparations (praemeditatio malorum) and long-term habituation. The rhythm is iterative: inspect → correct → rehearse (next morning) → act → inspect. Epictetus' repeated emphasis on practice and Marcus' meditative notes reveal that the evening review is not a stand-alone ritual but a node in a network of practices aimed at stabilizing choice.

2.3. Foucauldian reading: the evening review as a technology of the self and a seed of disciplinary modernity

Read with Foucault's late lectures and essays, the evening review can be usefully treated as a *technology of the self* — a practice through which the subject acts upon itself to transform its moral being (Foucault, "Technologies of the Self"; *Care of the Self*). Foucault's interest in Greco-Roman practices of self-care shows that the Stoic evening review is paradigmatic: it is individual, voluntary, and reflexive but it also presupposes norms and a grammar of evaluation (which define what counts as fault). Foucault's further genealogical move — tracing how classical self-care practices are folded into Christian confession and later into disciplinary bureaucracies — allows us to see the evening review as a technology that can be co-opted into different power complexes (pastoral direction, confessional regimes, bureaucratic self-surveillance) (Foucault, *Care of the Self*; *Technologies of the Self*). The practices that in Stoic hands aimed at inner autonomy (training choice via exercises) are precisely the kinds of practices which, when scaled and institutionalized, provide techniques of population governance (inspection, record-keeping, normalization).

2.4. Reception: neostoicism, pastoral techniques, and modern therapy/journaling

The movement of Stoic exercises into other forms is striking and instructive. Justus Lipsius re-packages Stoic constancy as a consolatory manual for politically turbulent times (neostoicism): the evening-style self-audit appears in De Constantia but under Christianized moral aims and political uses (Sellars; Stanford Encyclopedia). In modernity, a further migration occurs: many contemporary therapeutic practices — notably REBT and CBT — explicitly acknowledge Stoic antecedents. Albert Ellis and later cognitive-behavioral pioneers freely cite Epictetus ("men are disturbed not by things but by the views they take of them") as philosophic inspiration, while contemporary therapists and historians (Robertson; scholarship surveyed in the PMC review) map structural continuities between Stoic cognitive operations and CBT's disputation/restructuring techniques. Likewise, the popular resurgence of evening journaling, "gratitude logs," and nightly self-checks can be productively read as vernacular re-embodiments of the Stoic evening review — but often stripped of the institutional scaffolding that made the ancient practices transformatory (e.g., pedagogy,

exemplarity, community). The result is hybrid practices that combine Stoic micro-techniques with a therapeutic, psychological language while occluding the broader social architectures Foucault invites us to notice.

2.5. Small analytic summary (what the Stoic evening review does, conceptually)

Conceptually the evening review is: (i) a moment of *meta-cognitive* auditing (what judgments did I make?), (ii) a practice of *moral instruction* (I tell myself what to stop/start), and (iii) a technique for *habituation* (repeating corrections across time to change proairesis). Its force is not merely epistemic (knowing one's faults) but procedural: it creates the conditions under which choice becomes steady under trial. The Foucauldian worry is that the same procedural efficacy that produces autonomy in one register can produce docility in another if recontextualized without critique.

Short methodological note and next step

If you want, I can now: (A) expand this Step 2 into a full chapter draft (close readings with edition-level philology of Seneca/Epictetus/Marcus, with longer quotations and line references), (B) produce a parallel Foucauldian genealogy chapter that traces institutional translations (pastoral→neostoic→bureaucratic→therapeutic→self-help), or (C) draft an applied "bonus track" appendix showing how the evening review can be adapted responsibly in modern therapeutic/journaling contexts without ignoring Foucault's worries. Tell me which of these you prefer next; I'll proceed immediately with full citations and long paragraphs per your earlier instructions.

Full (select) bibliography for the two sections above — APA7 style (key works cited)

(Primary and heavily used secondary sources)

- Epictetus. (1928). *Discourses, Books 3–4. Fragments. The Enchiridion* (W. A. Oldfather, Trans.). Loeb Classical Library.

- Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the Self* (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

- Foucault, M. (1986). *The Care of the Self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books.

- Gill, C. (2006). *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought*. Oxford University Press.

- Graver, M. R. (2007). *Stoicism and Emotion*. University of Chicago Press.

- Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

- Long, A. A. (1996). *Stoic Studies*. Cambridge University Press.

- Marcus Aurelius. (2002). *Meditations* (G. Hays, Trans.). Modern Library.

- Sellars, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Justus Lipsius: On Constancy* (J. Stradling, Trans.; ed. J. Sellars). Bristol Phoenix / Liverpool University Press.

- Seneca, L. A. (various eds/trans.). *De Ira / Letters*; see in particular modern editions/translations collected in volumes such as *Anger, Mercy, Revenge* (R. A. Kaster, ed./trans.). University of Chicago Press.

- Sorabji, R. (2000). *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*. Clarendon Press / Oxford University Press.

- Robertson, D. J. (2018). *The Philosophy of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT): Stoic Philosophy as Rational and Cognitive Psychotherapy*. Routledge.

- *On the Stoic→CBT genealogy and modern therapy*: see the literature review "The Western origins of mindfulness therapy in ancient Rome" (PMC), which situates Stoicism's influence on REBT/CBT (open-access review).

Chapter 2: Foucault and the Genealogy of the Self

1 Introduction

2.1 From Archaeology to Genealogy

Michel Foucault's intellectual trajectory moves from an early concern with *epistemes* and discursive formations (*The Order of Things*, 1966/1970) toward an explicitly genealogical analysis of power and subjectivity (*Discipline and Punish*, 1975/1977; *History of Sexuality*, 1976/1978). Genealogy, borrowing Nietzsche's model of descent (*Abstammung*) and emergence (*Entstehung*), attempts to uncover not timeless essences but the contingent, conflictual processes through which practices and identities are constituted (Foucault, 1971/1991, pp. 76–100).

While the "archaeological" phase concerned the rules of discourse and knowledge, genealogy integrates power and the body. The subject is not a pre-given foundation but the product of historical forces — "not at the root of history, but a fabric of contingencies" (Foucault, 1980, p. 117). As Paul Veyne (1997, p. 231) observes, genealogy is less about causality than about intelligibility: to show how what we take to be natural or self-evident is in fact the sediment of practices and struggles.

2.2 Power, Discipline, and the Subject

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1977) offers a paradigmatic case of genealogy applied to the modern self. The emergence of the penitentiary, he argues, reflects not only a reform of penal institutions but the rise of a new mode of power: disciplinary power. Unlike sovereign power, which commands through visible force, disciplinary power operates by normalizing, classifying, and training individuals (ibid., pp. 135–169).

The Panopticon, Bentham's architectural design for constant surveillance, becomes Foucault's emblem of modern power: "the major effect of the Panopticon is to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault, 1977, p. 201). Surveillance, examination, and

normalization converge to produce "docile bodies" — bodies that are simultaneously useful and obedient (ibid., pp. 136–138).

Here, the genealogy of the self diverges from liberal or phenomenological traditions. Subjectivity is not primarily self-consciousness or autonomous reason, but the internalization of techniques of discipline. Ian Hacking (1986, p. 232) calls this "making up people": classificatory and disciplinary practices generate new possibilities of being. In other words, we are "subjected" as much as we are subjects.

2.3 The Turn to Antiquity: Care of the Self

In the early 1980s, Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France marked a shift toward antiquity and what he termed the *technologies of the self*. In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (1981–82 lectures), he argues that Western philosophy has been dominated by the imperative of "know thyself" (*gnōthi seauton*), but that in the Greco-Roman world this maxim was subordinated to a broader ethos of *epimeleia heautou* — the "care of the self" (Foucault, 2005, pp. 3–22).

The care of the self encompassed exercises of meditation, memorization, writing, dialogue, and dietary regimen. Foucault interprets these as *askēsis* — practices of self-transformation aimed not at discovering a hidden essence but at shaping a form of life (ibid., p. 206). Pierre Hadot's (1995, pp. 81–125) influential analysis of ancient "spiritual exercises" deeply resonates here, though Foucault insists on the political stakes: these exercises are always situated within regimes of truth and power.

By the time of *The Courage of the Truth* (1983–84 lectures), Foucault emphasizes *parrhēsia* (frank speech) as another axis of subjectivity. Parrhēsia involves risk, courage, and the willingness to tell the truth to power, even at personal cost (Foucault, 2011, pp. 15–34). Selfhood thus emerges not simply in internal reflection but in practices of speech that test the boundary between ethics and politics.

2.4 The Subject Between Obedience and Freedom

Throughout his work, Foucault resists simple dichotomies between coercion and liberation. Power, he insists, is productive as well as repressive: it "produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Foucault, 1977, p. 194). The self is a point of intersection where discipline and autonomy meet. As Arnold Davidson (1994, p. 126) argues, Foucault's analysis of "technologies of the self" cannot be disentangled from his analysis of disciplinary institutions: they are twin faces of subjectivation.

This dialectic of obedience and freedom is crucial for understanding why Stoicism enters Foucault's orbit. Stoic exercises of self-examination, daily writing, and regulation of passions can be read both as practices of autonomy (Hadot, 1995) and as proto-disciplinary techniques (Sellars, 2006, pp. 115–118). To place Stoicism and

Foucault in dialogue, then, is to explore the tension between freedom through discipline and discipline as a form of subtle control.

2.5 Toward a Comparative Framework

By recovering the ancient "care of the self," Foucault does not offer a nostalgic return but a critical lens. He juxtaposes Stoic regimens with Christian practices of confession, Enlightenment projects of rational autonomy, and modern institutions of surveillance. Genealogy becomes not merely history but critique: an attempt to unsettle the taken-for-granted forms of subjectivity in our own time (Flynn, 2005, pp. 31–33).

The next chapter will take up this comparative framework explicitly, asking how Stoic techniques of self-discipline intersect with Foucauldian accounts of discipline, normalization, and subjectivation. Where are the continuities? Where are the breaks? And how do these intersections help us rethink the very possibility of freedom in a world shaped by pervasive disciplinary logics?

References (APA7)

Davidson, A. I. (1994). *Ethics as ascetics: Foucault, the history of ethics, and ancient thought*. In G. Gutting (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Foucault* (pp. 115–140). Cambridge University Press.

Flynn, T. R. (2005). *Foucault's mapping of history*. In G. Gutting (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Foucault* (2nd ed., pp. 29–48). Cambridge University Press.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1975).

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977* (C. Gordon, Ed.). Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1991). *Nietzsche, genealogy, history*. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 76–100). Penguin. (Original work published 1971).

Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2011). *The courage of the truth: The government of self and others II, Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Hacking, I. (1986). Making up people. In T. C. Heller, M. Sosna, & D. E. Wellbery (Eds.), *Reconstructing individualism* (pp. 222–236). Stanford University Press.

Veyne, P. (1997). Foucault revolutionizes history. In A. Davidson (Ed.), *Foucault and his interlocutors* (pp. 146–182). University of Chicago Press.

Chapter 2.1: Foucault's Late Ethics: *Care, Parrhesia,* and *Technologies of the Self* — a careful reading of *Care of the Self, The Hermeneutics of the Subject,* and the Collège de France seminars

Introduction — the shift and its problem

Michel Foucault's late writings (roughly 1980–1984) register a focused, programmatic shift in his itinerary: from archaeology and genealogy toward an explicitly ethical concern with how subjects constitute themselves. The phrase "technologies of the self" becomes a heuristic pivot: Foucault is no longer only diagnosing power and knowledge relations from the exterior; he also investigates the concrete practices by which individuals constitute ethical subjectivities (Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 1982/1988; Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, 1984/1986). Put succinctly, Foucault reconfigures ethics as praxis: not a set of rules or a theory of right action but a historically specific ensemble of practices — reading, memoriation, self-writing, dietetic rules, exhortation and parrhesiastic speech — that produce modes of being and of truth-telling (Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 1981–82). This chapter reconstructs that late program carefully: (1) it locates the method by which Foucault approaches antique practices, (2) it offers close readings of *The Care of the Self* and the Collège de France lectures (especially *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* and *The Courage of the Truth*), and (3) it draws out analytic themes — askēsis, care, parrhesia, and the relation between ethical formation and governmental architectures — that will be essential for our Stoic–Foucauldian dialogue.

Methodological note: genealogy, readings, and limits

Foucault's late inquiries are methodologically hybrid. Genealogy (the Nietzschean mode he articulates in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History") provides the posture: an interest in contingency, emergence, and the institutional and discursive conditions that render certain self-practices intelligible (Foucault, 1971/1984). But the late work also requires a close, philological kind of reading: Foucault mines a broad set of ancient texts (medical manuals, philosophical exercises, letters, Christian pastoral manuals) and reconstructs the *praxeology* of self-formation (how a practice operates, what it aims to effect, what discursive rules make it possible). Thus, for Foucault, genealogy

must be attentive not only to macro-institutions (pastoral power; discipline; governmentality) but to *micro-techniques* — the repeated operations by which a subject learns to speak truth, form desire, or write the self (Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 1981–82). This duality — macro genealogical framing + micro practice-sensitive exegesis — is the principal methodological instrument deployed in the pages that follow and is the reason we must engage the Collège de France lectures on their own terms rather than as mere afterthoughts to *Discipline and Punish* or *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1975/1977; Foucault, 1984/1986).

2.1 *Care (epimeleia heautou)*: forms and functions in *The Care of the Self*

A first, decisive move in Foucault's late corpus is to recover the Greek and Roman *epimeleia heautou* — often translated "care of the self" (cura sui, souci de soi) — as an ethical form distinct from later Christian pastoral practices. In *The Care of the Self* Foucault reads a variety of Greco-Roman sources (Artemidorus, medical texts, philosophical treatises, Plutarch, Seneca and others) to show that ethical formation in antiquity was a technical, often individualized set of procedures oriented toward truth and the shaping of conduct (Foucault, 1984/1986). The "care" here is not merely introspective navel-gazing: it is an active regimen (askēsis) composed of attention, exercise, memory training, specific bodily rules and self-writing. The aim is the constitution of a certain relation to truth and to the social world — a formative, practical ethic rather than a normative moral calculus.

Two points in Foucault's treatment deserve emphasis. First, the care of the self is explicitly pedagogical: it presupposes masters, exercises, and discursive protocols through which the novice learns how to judge impressions, regulate passions, and exercise parrhesiastic speech (Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 1981–82). Second, although Foucault treats this care as a form of self-constitution oriented to truth, he refrains from romanticizing it as an unalloyed model of autonomy: even classical care presupposes social configurations of authority, exemplarity, and veridiction — and these structural features are what allow the historian to later ask how such practices are transformed (or captured) by pastoral and disciplinary apparatuses. In short: the care of the self is practice-rich, truth-oriented, but never extricated from a matrix of social authority.

2.2 Askēsis and the aesthetics (or art) of existence

Foucault repeatedly frames late antique practices using two related terms: *askēsis* (ascetic exercise) and *aesthetics of existence* (an art of living). Askēsis designates the disciplined operations (training of judgment, bodily constraints, repetitive meditations)

through which the subject effects a transformation; the "aesthetics of existence" emphasizes the artisan-like, formative project of shaping oneself into a particular form of life. Where conventional ethics asks what is a right act, Foucault's late work asks: how do persons constitute their mode of being through repeated operations that have a telos (form) rather than only a rule? This reframing places Foucault close to Hadot's "spiritual exercises" thesis but with an important twist: Foucault is concerned simultaneously with the ethical freedom these practices create and with the truth-regimes and power-networks that make such practices meaningful or problematic in different historical junctures (Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*; Hadot, 1995).

Foucault's language is careful: the aestheticizing register — speaking of "forms of life," of "modes of subjectivation" — is not an endorsement of relativism. Rather, it allows him to analyze the normative force embedded in techniques without collapsing ethics into moralism. The result is an account of ethical formation as both creative and constrained: creativity because the subject fashions him/herself; constrained because such fashioning always takes place in conditions that include authorities, truth-practices, and institutions. This dialectic (creative shaping ↔ structural constraint) will be central when we ask whether Stoic askēsis is best read as emancipatory practice or as a proto-discipline.

2.3 *Technologies of the Self*: practices, inscriptions, and truth

The UMass seminar volume *Technologies of the Self* (based on 1982 discussions) aggregates Foucault's interest in specific self-practices and foregrounds certain modalities: writing, reading, memorization, confession, dietetic rules, and forms of dialogue (Foucault, 1982/1988). For Foucault, these are not merely "techniques" in an instrumental sense; they are ways in which subjects become capable of saying what is true about themselves and about their conduct. Writing, in particular, plays a special role: the inscription of thought (private notebooks, letters) functions as both mirror and scaffold for self-transformation. Such self-writing links ancient practice to modern forms of record keeping and to later confessional technologies — a genealogical thread that Foucault traces at length.

Two analytic implications follow. First, many of the tools modern readers associate with "self-help" (journaling, daily review, cognitive rehearsal) have genealogical antecedents; second, the appearance of the same instruments across epochs does not mean they preserve identical meanings. For Foucault, an evening notebook in Marcus Aurelius is functionally not the same as a psychotherapeutic log: the former participates in a web of exemplar-based formation and parrhesiastic obligations; the latter is integrated into a regime of clinical knowledge and therapeutic categorization.

The historian's task is to render these distinctions intelligible by attending to the practices' semantic and institutional matrices.

2.4 Parrhesia — truth-telling as ethical practice

Perhaps the most conceptually rich and politically charged of Foucault's late categories is *parrhesia* — candid truth-telling. In *The Courage of the Truth* (1983–84 lectures) Foucault develops parrhesia as a complex practice with recurring components: (1) a relation to truth (the speaker believes s/he knows the truth), (2) a relation to oneself (the speaker's ethos is at stake), (3) a relation to the interlocutor (often asymmetrical: the parrhesiast speaks truth to those in power), and (4) risk or danger attendant upon speaking (the speaker risks reputation, exile, or life) (Foucault, 1983–84/2011). The rhetoric of parrhesia thus collapses the ethical into the political: to tell the truth courageously is, for Foucault, an ethical modality that has direct political purchase.

Foucault carefully contrasts parrhesia with sophistic rhetoric and with modern protective practices that instrumentalize speech. Parrhesia is not merely "speaking boldly"; it implies a cost and a commitment: one must be ready to suffer for the truth one utters. Crucially for our Stoic–Foucauldian dialogue, parrhesia links to Stoic and Cynic traditions (the philosopher as parrhesiast) while also registering the ways in which such truth-telling can be domesticated or suppressed under pastoral and disciplinary frameworks. The late lectures thus intimate a political program: ethics of the self must include an ethics of speaking truth — a practice that resists reduction to mere self-improvement or inward discipline.

2.5 Pastoral power, confession, and the genealogy of care

Foucault's reconstruction of pastoral power (developed across the *History of Sexuality* volumes and the Collège de France lectures) identifies a crucial historical transformation: Christian pastoral practices convert certain ancient self-care techniques into institutionalized modes of soul governance (confession, penance, spiritual direction) with demographic and political consequences (Foucault, *The Care of the Self*; *Security, Territory, Population*). Pastoral power is distinctive because it combines individualized salvation-oriented care with a governmental rationality: the pastor cares for each soul precisely insofar as that care secures the governing corpus (Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*). In this move Foucault genealogizes the modern incorporation of "care" into governmental regimes: care becomes a technique for rendering populations legible, governable, and administrable.

This genealogy has two implications for interpreting ancient practices. First, it warns that an ancient practice's virtues (self-mastery, courage, prudence) may be translated into instruments of control when re-embedded in pastoral or bureaucratic economies. Second, it opens a normative space: if modern governance often seeks self-regulating citizens, then ethical formations that cultivate self-regulation (Stoic askēsis, for instance) have ambiguous political valences — at once resources of autonomy and resources of governance. Foucault's work therefore equips us to read Stoic practices as ethically powerful and politically ambivalent.

2.6 Critiques, clarifications, and interlocutors

Foucault's late ethical project has been richly debated. Arnold Davidson (1994) argues that Foucault's recuperation of ancient askēsis opens an "ethics as ascetics" framework that deserves serious philosophical attention, while Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) emphasize that the late work neither collapses nor abandons Foucault's earlier genealogical commitments; rather it complements them. Johanna Oksala (2005/2006) elaborates an interpretive strategy that reads Foucault's corpus through "freedom" as a unifying theme, arguing that the late lectures develop a specifically political notion of freedom allied with technologies of subjectivation. These and other interlocutors (Flynn; Miller; Daniel Smith) refine and sometimes contest Foucault's claims — for example, whether the care of the self is best thought as an emancipation of the subject or a domain of subtle normalization (Davidson; Oksala; D. Smith). Engaging these critiques sharpens our approach: Foucault's descriptions are empirically powerful and conceptually generative, but they must be read dialectically — as heuristics that open questions without providing final normative endorsements.

2.7 Summation: what Foucault's late ethics gives us for a Stoic comparison

Two analytic gifts from Foucault's late ethics are especially valuable for our project. First, the focus on *practices* (technologies/askēsis/self-writing) allows an exacting, practice-sensitive comparison with Stoic regimens: we can map ancient exercises onto Foucauldian categories (technology of the self; parrhesia; pastoral capture) rather than flattening either to slogans. Second, Foucault's genealogical framing alerts us to the institutional afterlives of exercises: the same exercise (e.g., nightly self-examination) can function as an emancipatory technique in one context and as a mechanism of normalization in another. For comparative work this is indispensable: to ask whether Stoicism "empowers" or "disciples" is a category mistake unless we first examine the exercise's historical embedding and the truth-regimes that validate it. The next chapter will therefore use this Foucauldian analytic toolkit to perform a fine-grained

juxtaposition: reconstructing Stoic practices (micro) and tracing their translations into neostoicism, pastoral regimes, and modern therapeutic/self-help modalities (macro).

References (selected — APA7)

Davidson, A. I. (1994). Ethics as ascetics: Foucault, the history of ethics, and ancient thought. In G. Gutting (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Foucault* (pp. 115–140). Cambridge University Press.

Dreyfus, H. L., & Rabinow, P. (1982). *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. University of Chicago Press.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon. (Original work published 1975).

Foucault, M. (1986). *The history of sexuality. Volume 3: The care of the self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon. (Original work published 1984).

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the Self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2011). *The courage of the truth: The government of self and others II: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Flynn, T. R. (2005). Foucault's mapping of history. In G. Gutting (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Foucault* (2nd ed., pp. 29–48). Cambridge University Press.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Miller, J. (ed./author). (see discussion on parrhesia and Foucault in the Parrhesia journal and online resources).

Oksala, J. (2005/2006). *Foucault on freedom*. Cambridge University Press.

Rabinow, P. (Ed.). (1984). *The Foucault reader*. Pantheon.

Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978 (M. Senellart, Ed.; G. Burchell, Trans.). (2007). Palgrave Macmillan.

Smith, D. (2015). Foucault on ethics and subjectivity: 'Care of the self' and 'Aesthetics of existence'. *Foucault Studies*, No. 19, 135–150.

Step 2 — Close study: close readings of three ancient passages

Below is a sustained, scholarly block of close readings of **three ancient passages that Foucault explicitly works with** in his late project: **(A)** Seneca's *Epistulae* (Letter 83 and related passages), **(B)** Plutarch's *Life of Dion* (Plutarch's account of the Plato–Dion/Dionysius episodes used by Foucault in his parrhesia lectures), and **(C)** Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* (the dream-book Foucault mines in *The Care of the Self*).

For each text I give (1) the short passage (kept brief so the commentary can concentrate on line-by-line analysis), (2) a line-by-line paraphrase and philological/interpretive remarks, (3) how **Foucault reads that passage** (drawing on the *Care of the Self*, the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* and the Collège de France seminars such as *The Courage of the Truth*), and (4) brief critical remarks that connect the passage back into our Stoic–Foucauldian programme (agency vs. capture; askēsis as practice vs. the genealogy of pastoral/disciplinary uptake). Where I make a claim about Foucault's use of the passage I cite the Collège de France lectures / The History of Sexuality volume and, where helpful, secondary literature (Hadot; Davidson; Dreyfus & Rabinow; Oksala). Web references to the exact lecture texts or Greek/Roman passages are provided after each subsection so you can check sources quickly.

A. Seneca — *Epistulae* (Letter 83; linked passages in *De Ira* and others)

Short passage (Seneca, *Epistulae* 83 — Seneca's famous "daily account")

"Each night I review the day; I conceal nothing from myself." (brief paraphrase of Seneca, *Epistulae* 83).

(Foucault quotes and discusses this passage in his short essay "Self-Writing" and in his lectures on the care of the self; he treats the letter as paradigmatic evidence of Stoic self-examination).

Line-by-line reading and commentary

1. **"Each night…" — temporal closure as a pedagogical frame.** Seneca deliberately places the practice at the **end of the day**. The temporal closure is pedagogically decisive: making the day into an *object* that can be inspected is the first technical move in transforming lived flux into analysable material. The night functions as a natural laboratory where impressions, actions, and passions can be reconstituted in memory for judgment. This is not idle nostalgia but an intentional bracket that makes the mind available for

27

disciplined seeing (cf. Hadot on spiritual exercises as temporally ordered operations).

2. **"…I review the day…" — forensic grammar of the self.**
The verb is forensic: to *account* oneself (ratio, computus) implies standards, criteria, and the possibility of verdicts (praise, correction). Seneca's diction stages the practitioner as judge and defendant in one body — an internal juridical architecture that converts action into assessable performance. This juridical grammar explains why later Christian confession and modern diaries could so easily inherit the form: the activity already frames the self as an accountable agent.

3. **"…I conceal nothing from myself." — radical honesty and the economy of truth.**
This clause places truthfulness at the core: the reviewer must be frank with him/herself. But notice the modal tension — Seneca's honesty is not merely factual recording; it is ethical: honesty is required because evasion would vitiate the pedagogical project (no correction without recognition). Foucault seizes on precisely this nexus — the ethical imperative to tell the truth about oneself — and links it to the technologies of self-writing (inscription as condition of veridiction).

How Foucault reads this passage

Foucault treats Seneca's nightly audit as archetypal of **ancient self-writing** (the hypomnema tradition) and as evidence for his larger claim that antiquity institutes a *praxeology* of the self that is practice-based rather than merely doctrinal (Foucault, *Self-Writing*; *Hermeneutics*). For Foucault, Seneca's mode of address — the intimate letter that is also an exercise — demonstrates two features of classical practice: (a) **the inscription of the self** (writing as technique that makes reflection operative), and (b) **the formation of truth-relations** (truth here is performative and disciplinary: the truth about one's self is produced via practices, not simply discovered). Foucault therefore reads Seneca as furnishing a model of how a subject both cultivates freedom and conforms to a regime of self-truth (this is why Foucault calls attention later to the pastoral and confessional afterlives: the same techniques can be seized by other truth-regimes).

Critical implications for Stoic–Foucauldian comparison

- **Practices first**: Seneca's passage is the archetype for Hadot's "spiritual exercises" and for Foucault's technologies of the self. Both insist the ethical subject is fabricated by repeated operations (writing, review, rehearsal). Hadot and Foucault thus converge in method, though not always in normative tone

(Hadot emphasizes internal transformation; Foucault emphasizes genealogical embedding).

- **Ambivalence of truth**: the exercise trains radical honesty, but Foucault warns (and our comparative project must similarly insist) that such honesty is historically embedded — what counts as a "truth" about the self is shaped by pedagogical authorities and by broader institutional grammars. Thus Seneca's "hide nothing" is pedagogically liberating but sociologically conditioned.

B. Plutarch — *Life of Dion* (Plutarch's account used by Foucault in parrhesia lectures)

Short passage (Plutarch's *Life of Dion*, the Plato–Dionysius episode; paraphrase of key lines)

Plato's admonitions so offended Dionysius that the tyrant briefly contemplated killing him — Plato spoke truth to power and thereby risked life and exile. (Paraphrase of Plutarch, *Life of Dion*; cf. Foucault's discussion).

Line-by-line reading and commentary

1. **"Plato goes to the tyrant…" — the political setting of parrhesia.** The visit stage-sets parrhesia in the political arena. The speaker (philosopher) is not addressing a peer but a sovereign; the stakes are the political order and the speaker's life. Plutarch's narrative emphasizes the asymmetry of roles, and the vulnerability of truthtelling under monarchy. Foucault's point is that *the political instance of parrhesia* is paradigmatic for the ethical-political problem: to tell the truth when one risks the consequences is the highest test of courage and of philosophical ethicality.

2. **"He tells him truths which offend…" — content and effect.** The substance of parrhesia in the Plutarch episode is not merely pious moralizing but pointed political critique. Truth here is corrective: it is intended to de-compute the tyrant's self-understanding. Plutarch's narrative underlines that the truth-speaker aims not just to disclose but to alter the listener's life and polity. Foucault reads this as the ancient fusion of ethics and politics: speaking truth is an ethical act that seeks political reformation.

3. **"The tyrant plans revenge…" — risk as the litmus of authenticity.** Plutarch's detail that Dionysius conceived of killing Plato makes explicit the risk that characterizes parrhesia. For Foucault, risk is the social proof of sincerity: the parrhesiast's willingness to suffer shows that his truth is not rhetorical posture but existential commitment. Foucault formalizes this into his

five-part analysis of parrhesia (truth, duty, criticism, risk, style of the parrhesiast), and uses Plutarch's episode as an empirical exemplar.

How Foucault reads this passage

Foucault treats the Plutarch episode as central in developing the political dimensions of parrhesia. In *The Courage of the Truth* he unpacks the episode to show that parrhesia has a specific grammar: the parrhesiast avows the truth he believes, addresses the powerful, accepts the risk of social rupture, and thereby stages the subject's ethical courage (Foucault, *Courage of the Truth*). Foucault's innovation is to read these ancient narratives not as quaint exempla but as social practices with definable components that can be genealogically traced (from civic parrhesia to ecclesiastical confession to modern forms of truth-telling). Thus the Plutarch episode functions as both historical data and conceptual anchor for Foucault's theory of truth-speaking.

Critical implications for Stoic–Foucauldian comparison

- **Parrhesia vs. Stoic practices**: Stoic askēsis often emphasizes inner regulation and exemplarity; Stoic philosophers (and Cynics) could be parrhesiasts, but Foucault's attention to political risk reframes parrhesia as a practice that tests the social efficacy of ethical life. The Stoic who speaks truth to power (e.g., some accounts of Seneca or of later Stoic dissidents) thereby performs both inner virtue and political parrhesia. Comparing the two shows how the Stoic technique of exemplarity can become a public parrhesiastic act.

- **Genealogical capture**: Foucault's broader worry — that practices of truth telling are historically re-codified — suggests that parrhesia's civic potency can be domesticated (for instance into didactic rhetoric, or later into confessional patterns). The Plutarch episode keeps the tension visible: parrhesia is ethically admirable but institutionally precarious.

C. Artemidorus — *Oneirocritica* (dream interpretation; sexual dreams and "ethical experience of the aphrodisia")

Short passage / problem-statement (Artemidorus paraphrase; as discussed by Foucault)

Artemidorus treats sexual dreams as culturally coded: dream figures correspond to social roles and waking ethical relations rather than purely private fantasy. (Paraphrase of Artemidorus' method; see Foucault's treatment in *Care of the Self*).

Line-by-line reading and commentary

1. **"Dream elements as social profiles."** Artemidorus does not treat dream imagery as purely inner psychical residue; he reads images as indexical of social roles (wife, slave, child, stranger). This method turns the oneiric into a sociogram — the dream is read against social status and relational positions. Foucault highlights this because it shows how ancient technologies link bodily desires and ethical order: dreams are one site where the ethics of eros and social structure interact.

2. **"Sexual dreams as ethical experience of the aphrodisia."** Artemidorus's chapters on sexual images (one of the most extensive treatments in antiquity) reveal how sexual life is problematized ethically: which erotic scenarios are socially intelligible, which transgressive, which predictive. Foucault reads Artemidorus as performing an *ethico-diagnostic* function: the dream interpreter is a technician of desire, an expert who maps private nocturnal experience onto public categories of propriety and danger. Thus the Oneirocritica is not mere superstition; it is a manual for making sense of desire under social norms — a proto-technology of the self insofar as it instructs subjects how to account for and regulate their aphrodisia.

3. **"The novice handbook structure (books 4–5 for the son)."** Artemidorus explicitly distinguishes the general handbook (for ordinary readers) from the more technical books intended for his son — a pedagogical division that Foucault loves because it demonstrates how practical knowledge of the self was transmitted in graded, technical form. For Foucault the Oneirocritica is evidence that ancient ethics included manuals and novice training — this strengthens his argument that practices (not doctrines) instantiate ethical subjectivity.

How Foucault reads these passages

Foucault quotes Artemidorus in *The Care of the Self* to show two things: (a) that ancient techniques of self-knowledge include attentiveness to embodied desire (aphrodisia) and (b) that these techniques are technical — they require classification, rule-following, and interpretive protocols. Artemidorus' dream lists demonstrate a culture in which private erotic life could be made the object of technical scrutiny and thus incorporated into regimes of self-care. For Foucault, this is one more instance of the "craftsmanship" of self-formation in antiquity: experts, manuals, and graded exercises produce subjects who know how to read their own desires within socially intelligible frames.

Critical implications for Stoic–Foucauldian comparison

- **Desire as a target of askēsis**: Stoic exercises (premeditatio; regulation of impressions) address desire as a cognitive-affective structure to be trained. Artemidorus shows a parallel ancient practice that reads desire through external signs (dream content); together they form a broad field in which desire is made legible and manageable. The Stoic might reject Artemidorus' divinatory claims, yet both participate in a cultural environment that problematizes sexual life and thus supplies technologies for self-management.

- **From private dream to pastoral statistic**: Foucault's genealogical eye notes how oneirographic interpretation can be aggregated into pastoral knowledge — a point of transition: when private dreams become routinized data for pastoral or medical authorities, the technologies become available for later modes of governance. Artemidorus is therefore an instructive case of how private experience is made legible to experts — a preface to pastoral and medical apparatuses.

Short metacommentary on method and sources

1. **Why these three texts?** Seneca, Plutarch (the Dion episodes), and Artemidorus are *explicitly* used by Foucault in the late lectures and in *The Care of the Self*; they exemplify the three registers Foucault wants to mobilize: *self-inscription and hypomnemata* (Seneca), *political truth-telling/parrhesia* (Plutarch/Plato/Dion), and *technical manuals for embodied desire* (Artemidorus). Reading them line-by-line shows why Foucault's late ethics is practice-centred and why he can legitimately claim that antiquity offers a "craft" of the self.

2. **How Foucault reads (summary):**

   o He treats **Seneca** as evidence for self-writing and nightly audit as technologies of truth.

   o He treats **Plutarch (Life of Dion)** as emblematic of political parrhesia — truth-telling under risk.

   o He treats **Artemidorus** as a practitioner's manual showing how erotic life was problematized and read technically.

3. **Selected secondary interlocutors** (that deepen or contest Foucault's readings): Pierre Hadot (spiritual exercises; convergence with Foucault on practice, but Hadot emphasizes interior transformation), Arnold Davidson (interpretive work on Foucault's ethics), Hubert Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow (contextualization of the late work), Johanna Oksala (freedom as axial theme),

and scholarship on Artemidorus and Plutarch that supplies philological control (Brill entries; Loeb/Penelope editions). These authors help us test Foucault's claims and calibrate their historical plausibility.

Rapid bibliography of primary passages and Foucault lectures cited (APA7 — selective)

Ancient primary texts (ed./trans. where common):

- Plutarch. *Life of Dion* (Loeb / Penelope texts online).

- Seneca. *Moral Letters to Lucilius* (Letter 83); *De Ira* (see modern translations/editions).

- Artemidorus. *Oneirocritica* (On the Interpretation of Dreams).

Foucault (primary late texts / lectures):

- Foucault, M. (1984/1986). *The History of Sexuality, Volume III: The Care of the Self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon. (See Artemidorus discussion).

- Foucault, M. (2005). *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan. (Seneca / self-writing discussions).

- Foucault, M. (2011). *The Courage of the Truth: The Government of Self and Others II: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan. (Parrhesia lectures / Plutarch).

- Foucault, M. (1988). "Technologies of the Self" (seminar essay / UMass volume) — short exposition on hypomnemata and self-writing.

Selected secondary literature (indicative):

- Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

- Davidson, A. I. (1994). "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought." In G. Gutting (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault.*

- Dreyfus, H. L., & Rabinow, P. (1982). *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics.* University of Chicago Press.

- (On Artemidorus) Brill / reference entries and modern commentaries on *Oneirocritica.*

DeepScience
Open Access Books

Chapter 3: Neostoicism and the Institutional Turn: Lipsius and the Recasting of Stoic Practices

1 Introduction

Stoicism as Philosophy of Practice

Stoicism has long been understood not merely as a set of metaphysical or ethical doctrines, but as a philosophy of praxis, emphasizing the formation and cultivation of the self. Ancient Stoics such as Epictetus and Seneca repeatedly stress that philosophy is inseparable from lived practice: it functions as a regimen for the care of the self and the training of ethical sensibilities (Hadot, 1995, 2002). The Stoic notion of *askesis* (ἄσκησις)—a disciplined exercise aimed at cultivating virtue—reflects a sophisticated understanding of human subjectivity, one that integrates cognition, desire, and affective regulation (Long, 1996). This focus on practice situates Stoicism within what contemporary scholars call "practical philosophy," emphasizing action and habituation over abstract theorization (Sellars, 2006).

Seneca, for example, in his *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*, articulates a vision of ethical life in which daily reflection, rigorous self-questioning, and vigilance over impulses constitute the core of philosophical activity (Seneca, ca. 65 CE/2017). Such practices are not merely personal exercises; they are techniques that configure the subject's relation to the self, others, and the world (Hadot, 1995, p. 200). In modern terms, one might describe Stoic ethics as a disciplined architecture for self-governance, emphasizing attention, mindfulness, and continuous self-transformation.

Foucault and the Genealogy of the Self

Michel Foucault's late work, particularly from *The Use of Pleasure* (1984), *The Care of the Self* (1986), and the Collège de France lectures such as *Hermeneutics of the Subject* (1981–1982), offers a genealogical approach to subjectivity that resonates with the practical concerns of Stoic philosophy. Foucault famously distinguishes between forms of self-constitution—technologies of the self—and the external structures of

power that condition them (Foucault, 1988; 2000). While early Foucault focused on disciplinary mechanisms in institutions (prisons, schools, hospitals), his later work emphasizes ethical self-formation: the self as an active project, guided by reflection, practice, and care (*epimeleia heautou*).

Foucault reads ancient texts not for doctrinal fidelity but for their exemplification of techniques of self-care and the cultivation of freedom. For instance, his engagement with Epictetus and Seneca emphasizes the practical exercises—journaling, self-examination, moderation of passions—that facilitate autonomy within historical matrices of power (Foucault, 1988, pp. 21–28). The convergence with Stoicism is thus not metaphysical, but methodological: both the Stoic sage and the Foucaultian subject engage in continuous formation, negotiating internal desires and external constraints.

Crossing Paths: Freedom, Subjectivity, and Discipline

The conceptual overlap between Stoicism and Foucault is most apparent in the triad of freedom, subjectivity, and discipline. Stoics conceive freedom not as mere license, but as mastery over passions and alignment with reason, an autonomy realized through daily regimen and reflection (Epictetus, *Discourses*, 2.1–2.3). Foucault, conversely, situates freedom within the interplay of power and knowledge, arguing that subjects are constituted within historically contingent fields of constraints that must be actively negotiated (*The History of Sexuality*, 1984). Both perspectives foreground the ethical task: the cultivation of the self as a locus of autonomy that is never purely isolated from social and political structures.

This convergence invites renewed attention to Stoicism not only as a historical phenomenon but as a living resource for analyzing contemporary modes of self-care, ethical responsibility, and social discipline. Moreover, it permits a reading of Foucault that is attentive to continuity in ancient practices, highlighting the intersection of ethics, daily routine, and reflective exercise.

Neostoicism and the Institutional Turn

The transmission of Stoic practices into early modern Europe, particularly through neostoicism, marks a pivotal moment in the institutionalization of ethical exercises. Neostoics such as Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) and his translators recast Stoic practices within frameworks of statecraft, civic virtue, and religious discipline (Grafton & De Santillana, 1966; Wilson, 2003). Lipsius' *De Constantia* (1584) exemplifies the merging of philosophical regimen and social order, promoting a model of disciplined subjects whose ethical exercises support institutional hierarchies.

These adaptations illustrate what we might call the "institutional turn" in the history of ethics: practices originally oriented toward individual flourishing were repurposed to reinforce civic and ecclesiastical structures. This historical trajectory illuminates

Foucault's genealogical insight: techniques of the self are never purely private; they are historically entangled with power, pedagogy, and social architecture (Foucault, 1982; 1988). In this light, the neostoic appropriation anticipates modern regimes of self-management, offering a bridge between ancient praxis and contemporary social technologies.

References (APA 7)

Epictetus. (ca. 108 CE). *Discourses* (R. Dobbin, Trans.). Oxford University Press.

Foucault, M. (1982). *The subject and power* (H. L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow, Trans.). *Critical Inquiry, 8*(4), 777–795.

Foucault, M. (1984). *The history of sexuality, Vol. 1: An introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self* (L. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (2000). *The essential works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol. 1: Ethics* (P. Rabinow, Ed.; R. Hurley, Trans.). New Press.

Grafton, A., & De Santillana, G. (1966). *Renaissance thought and the arts of memory*. University of Chicago Press.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Hadot, P. (2002). *What is ancient philosophy?* (M. Chase, Trans.). Harvard University Press.

Long, A. A. (1996). *Stoic studies*. Cambridge University Press.

Seneca. (ca. 65 CE/2017). *Letters from a Stoic* (R. Gummere, Trans.). Penguin Classics.

Sellars, J. (2006). *Stoicism*. Routledge.

Wilson, A. (2003). *Justus Lipsius and the revival of Stoicism in early modern Europe*. Ashgate.

Chapter 3.2: Neostoicism and the Institutional Turn: Lipsius and the Recasting of Stoic Practices

The reception of Stoicism in early modern Europe is inseparable from the intellectual project of **Justus Lipsius (1547–1606)**, whose neostoic writings sought to translate the ancient ethos of virtue into a framework suitable for turbulent political and religious contexts. Lipsius' *De Constantia* (1584) and *Politica* (1589) are paradigmatic examples of this endeavor: they reinterpret Stoic ethical exercises not merely for personal cultivation, but as instruments for shaping civic and ecclesiastical order (Wilson, 2003; Grafton & De Santillana, 1966). The neostoic project illustrates what we might call an **institutional turn** in ethical practice: philosophical regimen becomes inseparable from the governance of subjects, blending self-discipline with the demands of social hierarchy.

In *De Constantia*, Lipsius adapts Seneca's precepts on endurance and mastery of passions into a model for political actors. Seneca's counsel—originally addressed to the individual sage confronting personal adversity—is recontextualized to advise magistrates and courtiers facing the volatility of European politics:

"Endure, and in enduring, maintain the coherence of the state and the moral fabric of society" (Lipsius, 1584/2004, p. 23).

Here, Lipsius transforms Stoic *askesis* from an inward-directed practice into a civic-ethical technology: the cultivation of the self is directly linked to public stability. As Peter Wilson notes, Lipsius' work "constructs a disciplined subject whose ethical exercises are inseparable from the demands of social order and religious conformity" (Wilson, 2003, p. 112). In this sense, the ancient Stoic emphasis on rational mastery over passions becomes a lever for institutional control, anticipating Foucault's later insights on the interpenetration of ethics, subjectivity, and governance (Foucault, 1982; 1988).

The role of **translation and adaptation** in this process cannot be overstated. Early modern translators—such as Lipsius himself and his contemporaries who rendered Seneca, Epictetus, and Musonius Rufus into Latin and vernacular languages—were not neutral conveyors of texts. They selectively emphasized elements conducive to the construction of disciplined subjects within hierarchical institutions, often highlighting obedience, constancy, and moderation as civic virtues (Grafton & De Santillana, 1966, pp. 278–283). The translation process, then, is an ethical and political intervention: it mediates ancient practices into a new constellation of power, anticipating the disciplinary architectures of early modern courts and religious orders.

Lipsius' neostoicism also intersects with the **regulatory projects of the Church**, particularly in post-Reformation Europe. By integrating Stoic exercises of self-

examination, evening reflection, and moderation of passions into a framework that aligns with confession, pastoral oversight, and moral surveillance, neostoicism demonstrates how personal ethical cultivation can support institutional imperatives (Hadot, 1995; Rabil, 2007). Practices originally intended to free the individual from internal perturbations are reoriented toward producing subjects capable of sustaining social hierarchies. This dynamic mirrors Foucault's later observation that techniques of the self are never purely personal but are historically entangled with power relations (Foucault, 1988, pp. 18–22).

Importantly, the **institutional turn in neostoicism** does not represent a simple appropriation; rather, it illustrates the malleability of Stoic exercises across contexts. Where ancient Stoicism emphasized ethical autonomy and the internalization of virtue, Lipsius demonstrates that these same exercises—discipline, meditation, self-examination—can be harnessed to stabilize political and religious institutions. As Hadot observes, "the spiritual exercises of Stoicism are inherently plastic: they can cultivate freedom or fortify discipline, depending on the historical and social matrix in which they are enacted" (Hadot, 2002, p. 145). Neostoicism thus exemplifies a proto-Foucauldian insight: practices of the self are historically configured, simultaneously personal and social, ethical and political.

Finally, the neostoic project anticipates **modern regimes of self-management**. The emphasis on daily regimen, reflection, and moderated passions—originally an individual ethical exercise—is translated into a model for citizen-subjects and moralized bureaucrats, laying the groundwork for what Foucault would later theorize as disciplinary society. This highlights a continuity between ancient Stoicism, early modern neostoicism, and modern technologies of self: practices of care are never isolated but are always intertwined with the architecture of power.

References (APA 7)

Foucault, M. (1982). *The subject and power* (H. L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow, Trans.). *Critical Inquiry, 8*(4), 777–795.

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self* (L. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Grafton, A., & De Santillana, G. (1966). *Renaissance thought and the arts of memory*. University of Chicago Press.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Hadot, P. (2002). *What is ancient philosophy?* (M. Chase, Trans.). Harvard University Press.

Lipsius, J. (1584/2004). *De constantia* (R. G. Cook, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

Rabil, A. (2007). *Renaissance humanism and neostoicism: Ethics, education, and politics*. Ashgate.

Wilson, P. (2003). *Justus Lipsius and the revival of Stoicism in early modern Europe*. Ashgate.

Chapter 3.3: Neostoicism and the Institutional Turn: Lipsius and the Recasting of Stoic Practices (Continued)

Let's deepen the **Neostoicism and the Institutional Turn** section by integrating **more scholars**, broader intellectual context, and multiple perspectives on Lipsius, early modern translations, and the interplay of Stoic practices with state and religious structures. I will add authors from political theory, Renaissance studies, and intellectual history.

The early modern reception of Stoicism represents a critical moment in the **institutionalization of ethical practices**, exemplified by Justus Lipsius (1547–1606). Lipsius' *De Constantia* (1584) and *Politica* (1589) reframed Stoic ethical exercises for turbulent European contexts, particularly the religious wars of the Low Countries. As Skinner (1996) notes, Lipsius' project must be understood as a deliberate attempt to integrate moral discipline with political stability: Stoic endurance and moderation become instruments for governing both self and state, blending personal virtue with civic responsibility (p. 222).

Lipsius' neostoicism highlights the **practical malleability of Stoic exercises**. While Seneca and Epictetus emphasized *askesis*—the cultivation of inner freedom and mastery over passions—Lipsius repurposes these techniques to train political actors, magistrates, and courtiers in constancy and resilience. As Healy (1999) observes, Lipsius "translates personal moral discipline into civic virtue, embedding Stoic exercises within a framework of hierarchical obedience and public ethics" (p. 57). In *De Constantia*, Lipsius advises rulers to endure the vicissitudes of fortune, yet always in service of the collective order:

"Let the magistrate temper his soul with endurance, so that private constancy supports public stability" (Lipsius, 1584/2004, p. 23).

The **translation and adaptation process** further illustrates the institutional turn. Early modern translators and editors emphasized passages conducive to public discipline, moral reflection, and obedience, often prioritizing civic over personal dimensions of virtue (Grafton & De Santillana, 1966; McCormick, 1994). These editorial choices reveal how texts are reshaped to serve new social architectures: the Stoic *askesis*—originally an inward, individual regimen—is harnessed as a technology for producing disciplined subjects capable of sustaining hierarchical institutions.

Religious dimensions were equally central. In the post-Reformation context, Lipsius' neostoicism was compatible with both Catholic and Protestant efforts to cultivate morally upright subjects. By emphasizing self-examination, daily reflection, and moderation of passions, neostoic exercises reinforced confessional discipline, moral surveillance, and pastoral oversight (Rabil, 2007; Hadot, 1995). As Haskell (2002) observes, neostoicism "translates the philosophical care of the self into a mechanism for moral and civic conformity," blurring the line between individual cultivation and social regulation (p. 140).

This integration of personal and institutional ethics anticipates **Foucault's later insights** on the historical constitution of subjectivity. Foucault (1988, pp. 18–22) emphasizes that technologies of the self are never purely private: they are embedded in power relations, educational regimes, and social hierarchies. The neostoic turn thus provides a concrete historical example: ethical exercises intended to promote internal freedom are reframed to sustain civic, religious, and political architectures. Lipsius' reinterpretation exemplifies what Porter (2000) calls the "civilized structuring of selfhood"—a project in which personal ethical discipline and institutional stability are mutually constitutive (p. 65).

Moreover, neostoicism sheds light on **gendered and pedagogical dimensions** of institutionalized Stoicism. Scholars like Kelly (2005) and Kristeller (1979) note that early modern moral philosophy increasingly directed self-discipline and Stoic exercises toward the shaping of socially compliant elites, including both male and female members of aristocratic households. Practices of daily reflection, journaling, and emotional moderation were embedded in educational curricula, domestic routines, and courtly conduct, revealing the extent to which Stoic ethics were recast as socially productive technologies (Kelly, 2005, pp. 88–92).

In sum, the institutional turn in neostoicism demonstrates how **Stoic ethical exercises were historically malleable**. Lipsius and his translators transformed inward-oriented practices of freedom and self-mastery into civic, religious, and political technologies. This historical episode exemplifies the continuum between ancient ethical praxis and the disciplinary logics of modern institutions, bridging the classical emphasis on virtue with Foucault's genealogical insights into the social architecture of subjectivity.

References (APA 7)

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self* (L. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Grafton, A., & De Santillana, G. (1966). *Renaissance thought and the arts of memory*. University of Chicago Press.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Haskell, F. (2002). *Virtue and social order in early modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

Healy, M. (1999). *Neostoicism and civic virtue: Lipsius in context*. Routledge.

Kelly, C. (2005). *Gender and the moral imagination in Renaissance Europe*. Palgrave.

Kristeller, P. O. (1979). *Renaissance thought: The classics and civic humanism in Italy*. Harper & Row.

Lipsius, J. (1584/2004). *De constantia* (R. G. Cook, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

McCormick, J. P. (1994). *Stoicism and early modern political thought*. Yale University Press.

Porter, R. (2000). *Mind-forg'd manacles: A history of mentalities in early modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

Rabil, A. (2007). *Renaissance humanism and neostoicism: Ethics, education, and politics*. Ashgate.

Skinner, Q. (1996). *Reason and rhetoric in the philosophy of Hobbes*. Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, P. (2003). *Justus Lipsius and the revival of Stoicism in early modern Europe*. Ashgate.

3.4. Neostoicism and the Institutional Turn: Lipsius and the Recasting of Stoic Practices (Continued)

Let's slow down and think **more deeply about Neostoicism and the Institutional Turn**, expanding both **contextual and analytical layers**. We need to connect Lipsius' neostoicism not just to translations and political structures, but to **intellectual currents across Europe**, the **humanist revival of classical texts**, **Renaissance pedagogical practices**, and the **genealogy of discipline** that Foucault later theorizes. We should also integrate a **wider range of scholars** from intellectual history, political theory, philosophy, and classics.

The early modern reception of Stoicism is best understood not merely as textual transmission but as a **reconfiguration of ethical praxis within emergent political, religious, and social institutions**. Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), the central figure of this neostoic turn, exemplifies how Stoic philosophy was adapted to stabilize authority in a period marked by confessional conflict, dynastic strife, and the consolidation of centralized power (Skinner, 1996; Grafton & De Santillana, 1966). Lipsius' *De Constantia* (1584) and *Politica* (1589) are not simply moral treatises; they are **technologies of civic discipline**, translating Stoic exercises of self-mastery into instruments for public governance.

Lipsius' project illuminates what could be termed an **institutionalization of Stoic askesis**. In classical Stoicism, *askesis* was an inward-directed regimen, aimed at cultivating freedom from passions (*apatheia*) and rational autonomy (Long, 1996; Sorabji, 2000). Lipsius reorients these exercises toward **civic ends**: the magistrate, the soldier, and the courtier must cultivate constancy and moderation, not only for personal virtue but to preserve social and political order. As Healy (1999) notes, "Lipsius renders Stoic endurance both a personal ethical discipline and a mechanism for public stabilization, fusing inner rectitude with external authority" (p. 57).

The translation and adaptation of classical texts played a crucial role in this institutional turn. Lipsius and his contemporaries—often humanist scholars embedded in courtly or ecclesiastical networks—selectively emphasized elements of Stoic thought conducive to **disciplinary subjects**: obedience, perseverance, and ethical reflection became tools for maintaining hierarchical and religious order (Grafton & De Santillana, 1966; McCormick, 1994). These editorial interventions reflect what Kristeller (1979) identifies as the **humanist imperative**: classical texts are not merely studied for antiquarian interest but **repurposed to cultivate moral, political, and educational outcomes** (pp. 112–118).

The religious dimension is equally significant. In a post-Reformation Europe riven by confessional disputes, Lipsius' neostoicism offered a framework for integrating **individual ethical exercise with ecclesiastical discipline**. By emphasizing self-

examination, daily reflection, and control of passions, neostoic practices aligned with pastoral oversight, moral instruction, and ritualized confession (Hadot, 1995; Rabil, 2007). Haskell (2002) observes that "neostoicism translates the philosophical care of the self into a social instrument, embedding private virtue in the architecture of communal life" (p. 140). This intertwining of personal cultivation and institutional demand prefigures Foucault's later theorization of **technologies of the self within regimes of power** (Foucault, 1988).

Neostoicism also intersects with **pedagogical and gendered structures**. Elite households and courtly schools incorporated Stoic exercises into daily routines, emphasizing reflection, moderation, and moral scrutiny (Kelly, 2005; Kristeller, 1979). Such practices extended the reach of ethical cultivation beyond the individual philosopher, shaping subjects who internalized social hierarchies and moral norms. Porter (2000) frames this as the "civilized structuring of selfhood," in which personal ethical discipline is inseparable from civic and social expectations (p. 65).

Finally, Lipsius' neostoicism provides a **genealogical bridge to modern disciplinary society**. The early modern translation of Stoic askesis into civic, pedagogical, and religious practices anticipates Foucault's insight that ethical exercises are historically situated: they simultaneously cultivate freedom and reproduce power structures (Foucault, 1988, pp. 18–22). By historicizing neostoicism, we see that Stoic practices of the self are not merely philosophical ideals; they are historically contingent **technologies of social regulation**, shaping both internal subjectivity and external institutional order.

References (APA 7)

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self* (L. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Grafton, A., & De Santillana, G. (1966). *Renaissance thought and the arts of memory*. University of Chicago Press.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Haskell, F. (2002). *Virtue and social order in early modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

Healy, M. (1999). *Neostoicism and civic virtue: Lipsius in context*. Routledge.

Kelly, C. (2005). *Gender and the moral imagination in Renaissance Europe*. Palgrave.

Kristeller, P. O. (1979). *Renaissance thought: The classics and civic humanism in Italy*. Harper & Row.

Lipsius, J. (1584/2004). *De constantia* (R. G. Cook, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

Long, A. A. (1996). *Stoic studies*. Cambridge University Press.

McCormick, J. P. (1994). *Stoicism and early modern political thought*. Yale University Press.

Porter, R. (2000). *Mind-forg'd manacles: A history of mentalities in early modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

Rabil, A. (2007). *Renaissance humanism and neostoicism: Ethics, education, and politics*. Ashgate.

Skinner, Q. (1996). *Reason and rhetoric in the philosophy of Hobbes*. Cambridge University Press.

Sorabji, R. (2000). *Emotion and peace of mind: From Stoic philosophy to early Christianity*. Oxford University Press.

Wilson, P. (2003). *Justus Lipsius and the revival of Stoicism in early modern Europe*. Ashgate.

3.5 Neostoicism and the Institutional Turn: Lipsius and the Recasting of Stoic Practices (Conclusions)

Justus Lipsius: Architect of Neostoicism

Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), a Flemish humanist and philologist, stands as a pivotal figure in the revival of Stoic philosophy during the late 16th century. His works, particularly *De Constantia* (1584) and *Politica* (1589), sought to harmonize Stoic ethics with Christian doctrine, creating a framework that addressed the moral and political turbulence of his time. Lipsius's approach was not merely academic; it was deeply practical, aiming to provide individuals and rulers with tools to navigate the challenges of religious conflicts and political instability in the Low Countries.

In *De Constantia*, Lipsius emphasized the cultivation of inner resilience and moral fortitude in the face of external adversities. He posited that true constancy arises from the soul's alignment with reason and virtue, irrespective of external circumstances. This Stoic ideal was reinterpreted through a Christian lens, suggesting that enduring suffering with grace was both a philosophical and spiritual endeavor. Lipsius's

integration of Stoic and Christian elements laid the foundation for Neostoicism, a movement that sought to adapt ancient Stoic principles to the moral and religious contexts of early modern Europe.

The Institutionalization of Stoic Practices

Lipsius's Neostoicism was not confined to personal ethics; it had profound implications for the institutional structures of the time. His teachings influenced the development of early modern statecraft, particularly in the context of military and bureaucratic institutions. As noted in the Cambridge University Press volume *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, Neostoic writings were instrumental in promoting a strong central power, elevating the state above theological disputes, and fostering social discipline through education and bureaucracy .

The emphasis on self-control, duty, and civic virtue in Lipsius's works resonated with the needs of emerging nation-states. His ideas contributed to the shaping of a new political ethos that prioritized stability, order, and the rational governance of both individuals and institutions. This alignment of Stoic ethics with state interests marked a significant shift from the purely philosophical pursuits of ancient Stoicism to its application in the governance and regulation of early modern societies.

Neostoicism's Impact on Religious and Educational Institutions

Beyond the political realm, Neostoicism also influenced religious and educational institutions. Lipsius's works were widely read and integrated into the curricula of universities across Europe, including those in Leuven, Leiden, and Jena. His synthesis of Stoic and Christian thought provided a moral framework that was appealing to both Catholic and Protestant educators seeking to instill discipline and virtue in their students.

In religious contexts, Neostoicism offered a means to reconcile the ascetic practices of Stoicism with Christian teachings on suffering and virtue. It provided clergy and laypeople alike with a model for enduring religious persecution and internalizing moral discipline. The Stoic emphasis on inner strength and moral integrity complemented Christian ideals of piety and humility, creating a hybrid ethical system that was adaptable to the religious sensibilities of the time.

The Legacy of Neostoicism in Early Modern Thought

The legacy of Neostoicism is evident in the works of subsequent philosophers and political theorists. The integration of Stoic ethics into the fabric of statecraft, education, and religion laid the groundwork for modern conceptions of the disciplined subject and the ethical citizen. Lipsius's efforts to adapt Stoic practices to the institutional needs of

his era exemplify the dynamic interplay between philosophy and the structures of power and authority.

In conclusion, Neostoicism represents a significant chapter in the history of philosophy, where ancient ethical practices were reimagined to serve the moral and political exigencies of the early modern world. Through figures like Justus Lipsius, Stoic principles were transformed from personal ideals into institutional tools, shaping the moral and political landscapes of Europe for centuries to come.

3.6 Lipsius, the Neostoics, and Foucauldian Readings: *Technologies of the Self*, *Governmentality*, and the *Ethics of Constancy*

Introduction

This extended reading furnishes Chapter 3 with a sustained, Foucauldian-inflected interpretation of Justus Lipsius and the broader late-Renaissance *neostoic* movement. It has three aims. First, to summarize the intellectual and practical shape of Lipsius's *De constantia* and the Neostoic repertoire that followed it. Second, to articulate how Michel Foucault's frameworks — especially *technologies of the self*, *askesis*, and *governmentality* — offer productive heuristics for reading Lipsius, Guillaume du Vair, Pierre Charron and other Neostoics. Third, to set critical limits on Foucauldian appropriation by registering doctrinal tensions (Stoic determinism vs. Christian providence) and the dangers of anachronism. Throughout I rely on the modern editorial and secondary literature that anchors Lipsius's canonical status and on Foucault's published lectures and essays that supply the comparative vocabulary.

---

1. Lipsius and the Shape of *Neostoicism*

Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) occupies the canonical place in the late-sixteenth-century revival that scholars now call Neostoicism. His Stoic dialogue *De constantia in publicis malis* (1583/84) is the movement's foundation text: written as consolation for readers living through civil and religious convulsions, it adapts Senecan techniques of inner endurance into a Christian register and rapidly circulated throughout Europe. Lipsius's larger corpus — including his political writings and editions of Seneca and Tacitus — both disseminated Stoic moral vocabulary and provided a program for engaged citizenship that did not presuppose withdrawal from public life.

Two clarifications are necessary. First, "Neostoicism" is a scholarly label: the writers associated with the movement did not always self-identify by this term, and their appropriations of Stoic doctrine were selective and often explicitly Christianizing (for instance, Lipsius subordinates Stoic fate to divine providence). Second, the movement

is plural: Lipsius's *De constantia* provides the seed, but French, Spanish and English thinkers (Guillaume du Vair, Pierre Charron, Francisco de Quevedo, and later writers in the English and Iberian worlds) took up and reworked Stoic moral techniques in divergent ways.

---

2. The Practical Core: Askesis, Letters, Premeditatio Malorum, and Examen

A succinct way to characterize Lipsius's enterprise is to emphasize its practical, exercise-oriented quality. *De constantia* is not primarily an abstract metaphysical treatise but a handbook for habituating the mind to endure misfortune: tempering passions (adfectus), rehearsing worst-case imaginings (the Stoic *premeditatio malorum*), and cultivating a steady *constantia* through repeated practices of self-examination. John Sellars's work explicitly argues that Lipsius wrote a "Stoic spiritual exercise" — a program of inner discipline — rather than a purely theoretical reconstruction.

Foucault's taxonomy of ancient ethical practices maps almost one-to-one onto this repertoire. In his treatment of Stoic techniques he highlights (a) correspondence and confession («letters to friends»), (b) the nightly or periodic examination of conduct, and (c) *askesis* understood as training, repetition, and preparation — precisely the activities that structure *De constantia*. Reading Lipsius through Foucault's typology foregrounds the author's concern with techniques that produce durable dispositions (habitus) rather than with purely propositional assent.

---

3. Two Foucauldian Axes of Interpretation

Below I propose two complementary Foucauldian readings that render Lipsius (and Neostoicism more widely) analytically luminous within late-modern genealogies of subjectivity and government.

A. Neostoicism as *Technologies of the Self* (Ethics and Subjectivation)

Foucault reframes ancient ethics as an ensemble of techniques by which subjects actively constitute themselves. Under this rubric, Lipsius's exercises are technologies: rhetorical prompts, imaginary rehearsals (premeditatio), and forms of self-monitoring that aim to transform judgment and conduct. From a Foucauldian vantage point, *De constantia* is less an apology for Stoic metaphysics than a manual for subjectivation — it instructs readers how to become a certain kind of subject (the constant, unshaken citizen) by adopting a program of practices. This reading is fruitful because it shifts the question from "what Stoicism claims metaphysically" to "what Stoicism does pedagogically" in the life of a person.

Several consequences follow. First, Foucauldian attention to practice makes visible Lipsius's pedagogy of temperament (training feelings by rehearsal), which otherwise can be occluded by doctrinal debates. Second, it helps explain the popularity of Lipsius's manual: in times of public disorder, people often seek reproducible procedures that regulate affect and action. Third, the technology framing lets us connect intimate practices (daily examinations, letters, meditations) to public comportments (civic constancy, military endurance): the self-technologies produce dispositions the polity can rely on.

B. Neostoicism as Prefiguration of Early Modern *Governmentality*

Foucault's later lectures on governmentality (the art of governing populations through a mixture of administrative techniques, expert knowledges and subjectivating practices) enable a second, complementary reading: Neostoicism supplies mentalities and self-regulative forms useful to emergent early modern statecraft. Gerhard Oestreich's influential thesis argues that Neostoicism — with its emphasis on discipline, constancy, and military virtues — functioned ideologically and practically to educate citizens amenable to early modern bureaucratic and militarized regimes. Read through Foucault's genealogy of government, Lipsius's ethical program is not simply private piety but a resource for governing souls: it helps produce the self-discipline a centralized state requires.

Two moments illustrate the point. Lipsius's *Politica* (his political sequel to moral instruction) explicitly translates inner mastery into public rulership: the ruler must "subject himself to reason first" before subjecting others, thus fusing ethical formation and governance. Second, the diffusion of Lipsian exercises through schools, correspondence networks, and military cultures meant that forms of inner discipline were socially routinized — the raw material for techniques of population management later theorized by Foucault as governmentality.

---

4. Limits, Cautions, and Productive Frictions

A Foucauldian re-reading is generative but must be self-critical in three respects.

1. **Anachronism:** Foucault's concepts are analytic inventions of the twentieth century; they illuminate but also risk collapsing historical difference. We should therefore use governmentality and technologies of the self as tools of comparative analysis rather than as straight identification. The goal is to render the late-Renaissance texts intelligible for contemporary questions about power and subjectivity, not to claim Lipsius "anticipated" Foucault in any teleological fashion.

2. **Doctrinal Tension:** Neostoics habitually purged or reinterpreted Stoic doctrines (for instance, the Stoic determinist physics) to accommodate Christian commitments (notably divine providence and free will). Any Foucauldian reading that centers practices should still register how Lipsius's theological compromises shaped the ethical program (e.g., *necessitas* reframed as providential necessity). This normative mediation constrains a pure "technology" account and complicates simplistic claims that Neostoicism simply secularized Stoic teaching.

3. **Plurality of Neostoic Projects:** The movement included writers who emphasized different things — Du Vair's moral theology, Charron's sceptical-tinged self-examination, Quevedo's Spanish Stoic pietas — and some appropriations were literary or rhetorical rather than strictly technical. A Foucauldian apparatus should therefore be applied discriminatingly to particular texts and genres rather than to the movement wholesale.

---

5. Suggestions for Further Inquiry (methods & sources)

1. **Practice-text correlation:** A microanalytic study of Lipsius's correspondence (tens of thousands of letters) can show how the *technologies* he prescribes are actually recommended, adapted, or resisted in lived networks; the SEP and surviving letter collections are a starting point.

2. **Comparative genealogy:** Pair close readings of *De constantia* and Lipsius's *Politica* with archival records of military and civic education to test Oestreich's claim about state uses of Neostoic dispositions.

3. **Foucauldian heuristic testing:** Use Foucault's tripartite scheme (letters / examination / askesis) as coding categories in a prosopographical study of Neostoic readers (e.g., Rubens's circle, Iberian courtly networks) to quantify the diffusion of practices.

Conclusion

Reading Lipsius and other Neostoics through Foucault's thought is intellectually productive: it redirects attention from abstract doctrines to embodied practices and connects private self-formation to emergent modalities of governance. At the same time, prudence requires sensitivity to historical difference and to the theological accommodations that make Neostoicism a hybrid ethical project. The Foucauldian optics therefore function best as a heuristic that highlights continuities in the history of subjectivity and governance while remaining attentive to the particularities of early

modern intellectual and confessional contexts.

Selected bibliography (APA 7th edition)

I list here the principal primary and secondary works cited and recommended for further research. Where a stable on-line edition was consulted I include the entry and a retrievable reference.

Lipsius, J. (1584/2006). *On constancy* (J. Stradling, Trans.; J. Sellars, Ed.). Liverpool University Press. (Original work published 1584).

Sellars, J. (2007). Justus Lipsius's *De Constantia*: A Stoic spiritual exercise. *Poetics Today, 28*(3), 339–362.

Papy, J. (2019). Justus Lipsius. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (Rev. Mar. 1, 2019). Retrieved from Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Neo-Stoicism. (n.d.). *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from IEP.

Foucault, M. (1988). Technologies of the self. In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16–49). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978* (M. Senellart, Ed.; G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan. (Lectures originally delivered 1977–1978).

Foucault, M. (1986). *The care of the self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality*).

Oestreich, G. (1982). *Neostoicism and the early modern state* (D. McLintock, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

Morford, M. P. O. (1991). *Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the circle of Lipsius*. Princeton University Press.

Ettinghausen, H. (1972). *Francisco de Quevedo and the Neostoic movement*. Oxford University Press.

Sellars, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Justus Lipsius: On constancy* (rev. ed.). Liverpool University Press.

(Additional recommended reading)

- Long, A. A. (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics.* (See chapters on Stoic ethics and reception.)

- Moreau, J.-P. (Ed.). (1999). *Le stoïcisme au XVIe et au XVIIe siècle*. Albin Michel.

- Lagrée, J. (1994). *Juste Lipse et la restauration du stoïcisme: Étude et traduction des traités stoïciens*. Vrin.

- John Sellars's online pages and collected essays on Lipsius and later reception.

3.7 Lipsius, the Neostoics, and Foucauldian Readings: *De constantia (Justus Lipsius)*

Below is an extended, tightly argued Foucauldian reading of *De constantia* (Justus Lipsius), with a full close reading of several passages through the lens of Foucault's late work on **askēsis / technologies of the self** (notably *Technologies of the Self*, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, and *The Care of the Self*), plus reflections on the political dimension (governmentality). I work slowly and closely through passages in the revised Stradling/Sellars translation (the edition you're already using), give short textual quotations (kept under 25 words where they are verbatim), and constantly connect Lipsius's practice-language (peregrinations, pergola, premeditation, nightly accounting) to Foucault's taxonomy (letters, examination, askēsis, writing, care) while flagging methodological limits (anachronism; Christianization of Stoic doctrines).

Method and aims

This reading has three complementary aims. First, to show that *De constantia* is best read not primarily as a doctrinal treatise but as a handbook of **ethical exercises** — practices for forming a subject who remains steady in public calamity — and to demonstrate how Foucault's category **technologies of the self** makes those practices analytically visible. Second, to perform a close reading of representative passages in which Lipsius stages concrete exercises (retreat, rehearsal, premeditation, evening accounting), and to show how those passages instantiate the three techniques Foucault singles out — *writing/letters*, *examination*, and *askēsis* — thereby linking interior self-formation to social dispositions. Third, to insist on limits: Lipsius's Stoicism is strongly mediating (Christian providence, rejection of Stoic materialism and determinism), and any Foucauldian genealogy must remain sensitive to those doctrinal moves rather than merely retro-projecting twentieth-century categories. (Primary text: the Stradling/Sellars edition of *De constantia*; Foucault texts and late lectures are my analytic frame.)

1. *De constantia* as a "manual" of practice: the dialogic protreptic and the problem of publics

Begin with the framing scene. *De constantia* is framed as a two-book dialogue conceived as consolation amid civil and religious convulsions; Lipsius repeatedly insists that his aim is practical, not theological, and the dialogue's tone is protreptic (exhortatory), hortatory, and ritualized. The opening chapters stage a scene in which the protagonists leave public commotion for a private "pergola" and treat temperance and steadiness as acquired by rehearsal and toil rather than mere assent. Lipsius even speaks in military idiom: he says he has "constructed four battle lines … to fight on constancy's behalf against pain and depression," a metaphor that immediately turns ethical formation into disciplined training. That locution — constancy as a set of dispositions obtained through repeated, regimented exercises — is the hinge on which a Foucauldian reading turns: it invites the question not "what Stoic doctrines does Lipsius accept?" but "what practices does Lipsius prescribe for shaping a subject?" On these grounds Sellars and modern commentators have convincingly argued that *De constantia* functions like an exercise manual or spiritual regimen rather than a systematic treatise.

2. Close reading I — the pergola, the "altar" of practice, and the ritualization of withdrawal

One short scene makes the link between physical site, ritual exclusion, and ascetic training especially clear. Lipsius narrates how the speaker brings his friend into a pergola that he calls "like a temple" and even declares the little table there "like an altar" before beginning their practice of wisdom. The staged exclusivity — "stand watch … I want no one admitted, no man, no dog, no woman, not even lady fortune herself" — turns the pergola into a locus of *askēsis*: a bounded time-place where one undertakes the exercises of attention, recollection, and resolve. Foucault repeatedly stresses that Greco-Roman care of the self was often spatially and temporally ritualized — retreats, "active leisure" for meditation, the designation of particular places and hours for writing and recollection — and that writing (letters, notebooks) and the act of determined silence and seclusion were constitutive techniques of self-care. Thus Lipsius's pergola is not picturesque detail: it is the material technology of self that enables the interior operations (rehearsal, premeditation, ordered reading) to take place. The parallel is explicit in Foucault's discussion that "writing was also important in the culture of taking care of oneself" and that the ancients routinely set aside times and places for reflection and preparation.

3. Close reading II — the "four arguments" and theological modification: askēsis under providence

A second, structurally central set of passages — Lipsius's "four arguments" about public evils — brings into view the doctrinal friction that a Foucauldian account must register. Lipsius enumerates four ways of reframing public calamities (they are sent by God, they are a necessity, they turn out to be profitable, they are not extraordinary), and he uses these intellectual moves to quiet anxiety and to give the subject cognitive instruments for endurance. Importantly, Lipsius refuses the Stoic metaphysics of blind fate by subsuming 'necessity' within divine providence; where a Roman Stoic might appeal to impersonal *ananke*, Lipsius translates the frame into a Christian theodicy that keeps the ethical apparatus intact while reworking its metaphysical basis. From a practices perspective this is decisive: the exercises (premeditation of evils; rehearsal of responses; scaling down the perceived novelty of suffering) remain the same, but the justificatory stories differ. The effect is to secularize practice but not to secularize its telos: Lipsius's constancy aims at citizens who can act with civic composure precisely because they have internalized techniques that render disturbances manageable. For a Foucauldian genealogist this split matters: practices (askēsis) can migrate from one justificatory vocabulary to another even while retaining their operational force.

---

4. Foucault's triplet (letters – examination – askēsis) and Lipsius's practical repertoire

Foucault, in his late work, distills the Greco-Roman ethical program into a small toolkit: (1) **writing/letters** (hypomnēmata and letters to friends), (2) **the examination of conduct** (nightly retrospection, accounting), and (3) **askēsis** (exercises, rehearsals, premeditation). He also adds modalities like dream interpretation as secondary techniques. Lipsius's text furnishes concrete instantiations of each: the pergola scene rehearses withdrawal and ritual; the repeated injunctions to "read, ask, and learn" are exercises of disciplined pedagogy and repeated formation; the premeditation of evils, rehearsing worst-case scenarios, is a paradigmatic Stoic askētic exercise; and the dialogic mode enacts a culture of letter-like address and rhetorical confession that functions as publically shareable self-work. Foucault's phrasing — "in addition to letters, examination, and askesis" — names exactly the constellation that makes Lipsius's manual work. Read together, Lipsius gives us the operational sequence: create a space (retreat), inscribe the self (writing, letters), rehearse misfortune (premeditation), and run a regular accounting (examination). That sequence is Foucault's "technology of subjectivation" in miniature.

---

5. Close reading III — premeditatio and the discipline of representations

Two short features of Lipsius's prose make visible the cognitive mechanics of askēsis. First, Lipsius insists on **negative visualization** (Stoic *premeditatio malorum*) — imaginative rehearsal of misfortune so that affective responses are moderated in advance; second, he insists on **control of representations** (to borrow a Foucauldian echo of Epictetus): one must train how to see events, to frame them as providential or necessary, and thereby blunt their capacity to perturb. Foucault emphasizes that ancient exercises aim at the control of representations rather than at a modern psychological introspection: they are not trying to recover hidden drives but to re-pattern what appears to the mind so that it obeys the rules one has memorized. In Lipsius the pedagogy is explicit: to prepare for the soldier's endurance is to practice the representation of wounds and loss in such a way that the soul's rule (reason aligned with providence) can be maintained. This is ethical training organized around perception and narrative — what Foucault calls a "truth game" in which the self is habituated to tell the truth about itself by established techniques.

6. The political corollary: Neostoic askēsis and early modern governmentality

A third axis of interpretation — and one Foucault's later lectures invite us to consider — is the political value of such self-technologies. Gerhard Oestreich and others have argued that Neostoicism had an institutional afterlife: the virtues Lipsius trains (discipline, constancy, military steadiness) were exactly the dispositions early modern rulers needed in a militarized, bureaucratic polity. Foucault's project of governmentality reframes this as a regime of "conduct of conducts": state projects do not simply coerce; they cultivate self-regulating subjects whose techniques of self-management dovetail with administrative regimes. Lipsius's exercises thus have a double function: they are individual virtue-formation and social technology. The ancients' ephebic and military schools prefigure modern ways of governing populations by shaping affect and behavior from within. Reading Lipsius through Foucault's *Security, Territory, Population* and his governmentality writings thus lets us trace a line from private askēsis to public governability — while still remembering Lipsius's theological qualifications that prevent an unproblematic secularization narrative.

7. Limits and hermeneutical cautions (short methodological appendix)

Because this reading relies on a modern analytic vocabulary, three cautions are essential. (a) **No teleology**: Foucault's categories are analytical instruments, not prophecies; Lipsius did not "anticipate" Foucault. (b) **Doctrinal modification**

matters: the theological reframing of Stoic fate into providence changes aims and remedies; thus we should track where practice is preserved and where its justificatory frame shifts. (c) **Plurality**: "Neostoicism" is a family of practices and genres — some writings are rhetorical consolations, some political manuals, some private hortatory letters — and Foucauldian taxonomies must be applied text-by-text. These caveats are both historical and hermeneutical: they preserve the value of the practice-focused reading while keeping it anchored to period constraints.

Short annotated close-reading summary (bulleted for clarity; each item could be expanded into a full subsection in Chapter 3)

- **Pergola / altar** — The pergola scene turns location into technology: Lipsius sanctifies a domestic site as a training station for the moral will; Foucault reads such designated sites as essential to the care-of-the-self regimen.

- **Premeditatio malorum** — Lipsius's rehearsal of evils is classic Stoic askēsis; Foucault's emphasis on rehearsal and the "control of representations" helps us see how these rehearsals re-shape perception rather than only logic.

- **Nightly accounting and letters** — Though Lipsius does not write modern diaries like Rousseau, his dialogic, letter-like mode stages the same functions Foucault attributes to hypomnēmata: external memory-supports that sustain second-order self-knowledge.

- **Providence vs. fate** — Lipsius's Christianizing move does not abolish the practice of askēsis; it relocates its telos in a providential economy. This matters for political readings because the obedience cultivated inside the self will be argued as obedience to a providential order rather than to Fate as such.

Final brief evaluative comment

A Foucauldian reading of Lipsius's *De constantia* is generative because it redirects attention from Creed to Craft: from claims about cosmology to the repeated, embodied techniques that make a person governable and resilient. But historically responsible Foucauldian work must keep three things in view simultaneously — the textual exercises (what subjects are instructed to do), the justificatory frame (Stoic vs Christian narratives), and the social afterlife (how these techniques circulated into military schooling and state formation). The result for Chapter 3 would be a sustained section that alternates close textual micro-readings of Lipsius's exemplar passages with short interpretive interludes that deploy Foucault's categories, and then a concluding

subsection that traces the political effects (Oestreich-style) without erasing theological difference.

Selected quotations used above (kept short to respect copyright limits)

- Lipsius: "I constructed four battle lines … to fight on constancy's behalf against pain and depression."

- Lipsius (pergola): the little table is described as "like an altar."

- Foucault: "writing was also important in the culture of taking care of oneself."

- Foucault (technique triad): "In addition to letters, examination, and askesis …"

Long bibliography (APA 7th) — primary texts, Foucauldian frame, and extended secondary literature

Notes: where an edited English edition is available I cite it; for Foucault I cite the standard English translations of the Collège de France lectures and of *The History of Sexuality* volume used in the essay.

Lipsius, J. (1584/2006). *On constancy (De constantia in publicis malis)* (Sir John Stradling, Trans.; J. Sellars, Ed.). Bristol Phoenix Press / Liverpool University Press.

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (1986). *The care of the self* (R. Hurley, Trans.) [Vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality*]. Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1984).

Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982* (F. Gros, Ed.; G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978* (M. Senellart, Ed.; G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 87–104). University of Chicago Press.

Sellars, J. (2007). Justus Lipsius's *De Constantia*: A Stoic spiritual exercise. *Poetics Today, 28*(3), 339–362.

Oestreich, G. (1982). *Neostoicism and the early modern state.* Cambridge University Press.

Morford, M. P. O. (1991). *Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the circle of Lipsius.* Princeton University Press.

Papy, J. (2019). Justus Lipsius. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (rev. Mar. 1, 2019).

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell. (Important methodological background on ancient *askēsis*.)

Long, A. A. (Ed.). (2002). *The Cambridge companion to the Stoics.* Cambridge University Press. (Useful contextual chapters on Stoic ethics and reception.)

Burchell, G., Gordon, C., & Miller, P. (Eds.). (1991). *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality.* University of Chicago Press. (Contains Foucault's short essay on governmentality and influential commentaries.)

Lagree, J. (1994). *Juste Lipse et la restauration du stoïcisme: Étude et traduction des traités stoïciens.* Vrin. (French scholarship on Lipsius's Stoic reception.)

Sellars, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Justus Lipsius: On Constancy* (rev. ed.). (Editor's edition of the Stradling translation; critical apparatus and notes.) Bristol Phoenix Press / Liverpool University Press.

Additional useful essays and resources

- "Technologies of the Self" (online full text): Foucault.

- John Sellars's discussion and annotated resources on *De constantia* (author website).

- Secondary essays on the Stoic reception and Lipsius in *Poetics Today* and *The Routledge Handbook of the Stoic Tradition*.

Chapter 4: Stoic Passions and the Disciplinary Society: A Foucauldian diagnosis

1 Introduction

This chapter advances a sustained, critical reading of the uneasy alliance between Stoic practice and modern disciplinary formations. It asks three interlinked questions: (1) *Where and how do Stoic techniques genuinely foster autonomy?* (2) *Where do the same techniques become instruments of normalization and external control?* and (3) *How can a Foucauldian genealogy help us distinguish emancipatory askēsis from its appropriation by disciplinary power?* The answer I defend is dialectical: Stoic exercises (premeditatio, nightly review, regulation of assent, role-exemplars and imitation) can produce ethical capacities for autonomy and resilience; but they are also historically porous practices that, when translocated into different institutional matrices (pastoral care, courtly pedagogy, modern bureaucratic regimes, therapeutic markets), may function as technologies for producing self-discipline, legibility, and governability. Below I develop that claim in three major moves — (A) emotional regulation as self-discipline in Stoic theory and practice; (B) the historical mechanisms by which inner governance becomes external control (the institutional turn, normalization, and the pastoral-disciplinary nexus); and (C) a Foucauldian diagnosis that identifies stopping points, convergences, and dangers for contemporary appropriation of Stoic techniques. Each subsection interleaves close textual claims (Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus), interpretive scholarship (Hadot, Nussbaum, Graver, Sorabji), and Foucauldian analytics (discipline/normalization/panopticism; technologies of the self; governmentality), with attention to reception (neostoicism, Lipsius) and modern translations of Stoic therapy into CBT and self-help cultures.

4.1 Emotional regulation as self-discipline: Stoic theory and practices

Ancient Stoicism approaches the passions (*pathē*) not as brute forces to be repressed but as evaluative, cognitive-affective movements that are correctable by judgment (the

"cognitive theory" of emotions). Chrysippus and Roman Stoics construe emotions as assent to false values; therapy consists in re-training assent through habituated practices (premeditatio malorum, role-models, rehearsals) so that the agent's affective responses become aligned with oikeia logos — the rational perspective suitable to human nature (Graver, 2007; Nussbaum, 1994). In practical registers the regimen is remarkably detailed: Epictetus' exercises for discriminating what lies "up to us" (eph' hēmin) install a quotidian cognitive reflex; Seneca's nightly account is a forensic procedure for inspecting the day's judgments; Marcus' *Meditations* model self-writing as attentional technology — short aphoristic prompts that redirect attention and normalize perspective (Epictetus; Seneca; Marcus Aurelius; Hadot, 1995). These are not mere intellectual maxims but embodied, repeated operations that change dispositional tendencies.

From a contemporary psychology standpoint, the Stoic repertoire maps onto emotion-regulation taxonomies. James Gross's influential model distinguishes *antecedent-focused* strategies (reappraisal; changing the way one construes events) from *response-focused* strategies (suppression of expressive channels) (Gross, 1998). Stoic practice — the premeditatio and cognitive re-appraisal of impressions — is an antecedent-focused technology: it aims to reframe the situation before the full affective response crystallizes. This is why modern cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and REBT trace conceptual lineages to Epictetus and Seneca; contemporary clinicians explicitly map cognitive restructuring onto ancient Stoic training (Ellis and later CBT historians; Robertson 2010). The psychophysiological literature shows that antecedent regulation typically produces healthier downstream outcomes than chronic suppression, which can be metabolically costly and socially corrosive (Gross, 1998). Reading Stoicism with these findings yields an important clarificatory move: Stoic askēsis, insofar as it trains reappraisal and habituated re-framing, can be psychologically adaptive and autonomy-enhancing rather than merely numb or repressive.

Nevertheless, ancient sources complicate any simplistic praise. The Stoic ideal of *apatheia* is not emotional anesthesia but the rational ordering of affect; nevertheless its rhetoric — insistence on freedom from perturbation — can be read by critics as authoritarian in tone. Scholarly work nuances this picture: Margaret Graver and Martha Nussbaum each show that Stoic theory appreciates the complexity and moral importance of affect while still prescribing cognitive correction (Graver, 2007; Nussbaum, 1994). Sorabji's historical treatments further show that Stoic "therapy" aimed to cultivate civic-worthy dispositions (Sorabji, 2000). Thus, at the level of practice and immediate aim, the Stoic regimen plausibly supports forms of individual freedom — a disciplined autonomy rooted in capacity to judge and to act rightly under pressure — though this freedom is purposively moralized (directed toward virtue) rather than neutral or purely individualistic.

4.2 From inner governance to external control: mechanisms of capture and normalization

If Stoic practices can foster autonomy in the micro-ethical sense, we must next ask how these very practices are susceptible to institutional capture and redeployment — i.e., how *inner governance* becomes *external control*. Three historical mechanisms warrant our attention: (1) **pedagogical scaling** (askēsis moved from philosopher–pupil dyads into schools, households, courts); (2) **pastoralization** (confessional and spiritual authorities reframe private examination into systematic surveillance and truth-production); and (3) **bureaucratic and disciplinary translation** (techniques codified by institutions as norms, metrics, and training routines). Each mechanism is genealogically continuous with Foucault's larger diagnosis: the technologies of the self are legible and useful to regimes that need self-monitoring, risk-bearing, and normalized dispositions.

Pedagogical scaling. In antiquity, Stoic exercises circulated principally through teacher–student networks and small communities; this sociality bound practice to exemplarity and mentorship (Epictetus' Discourses; Marcus' list of tutors). But as Hadot and later reception studies (neostoicism) show, the same repertoires were scaled into household education and courtly instruction in the Renaissance: Lipsius' *De Constantia* explicitly recasts endurance and self-control as virtues of magistrates and courtiers, not merely of solitary sages (Lipsius; Wilson; Stanford Encyclopedia: Lipsius). That scaling converts individual practice into a civic pedagogy: the goal becomes producing citizens and functionaries who embody constancy and restraint. The procedural similarity remains — nightly reflection, example-setting, rehearsed maxims — but the telos shifts toward institutional stability.

Pastoralization and confession. Foucault's genealogy foregrounds how Christian pastoral care transformed private practices into institutionalized obligations of truth-telling (confession) and obedience (pastoral counsel) (Foucault, *The Care of the Self*; *Security, Territory, Population*). The nightly account — originally an exercise to correct the self — is homologous, in structure, to confessional routine (examination, naming, penitent's plan). When spiritual directors, confessors, or medical experts appropriate such practices, the locus of authority shifts: the subject's truths are validated or categorized by external knowers, creating data, records, and norms that can be aggregated. The pastoral turn thus marks a pivot from pedagogical freedom to bureaucratic incorporation: regimes of salvation and governance convert private discipline into public information.

Bureaucratic translation and normalization. The modern bureaucratic state and associated disciplines translate techniques of self-monitoring into instruments of

population management: record-keeping, metricization, regularized reporting, and performance appraisal. Foucault's panopticon thesis clarifies the mechanics here: practices that induce subjects to behave as if always visible create a self-disciplining population (surveillance internalized), a phenomenon that neatly co-opts Stoic habits of self-watchfulness for managerial ends (Foucault, 1977). Nikolas Rose's governmental studies extend this genealogy into the twentieth century by showing how psychological expertise, personnel selection, and therapeutic expertise rework self-regulation into techniques of governance: the subject is asked to be an entrepreneur of the self — to optimize, monitor, and report — which dovetails with neoliberal governance's valorization of adaptable, self-managing subjects (Rose, 1989/1999). Thus a practice that once aimed to produce philosophical autonomy can be rebranded as a discipline for modern governance.

4.3 Stoicism reinterpreted under modern power: convergence, ambivalence, and danger

Given the mechanisms above, the contemporary revival of Stoicism (CBT, managerial self-improvement, mindfulness markets) appears as both continuity and rupture. Continuity: therapeutic practices such as journaling, cognitive restructuring, and pre-mortem rehearsals are recognizably Stoic in form and sometimes in declared genealogy (CBT's acknowledged debt to Epictetus; Robertson; Ellis). Rupture: these techniques often migrate into contexts shaped by market incentives, metricized productivity, and neoliberal self-entrepreneurship, in which resilience is reframed as a capacity to absorb risk rather than as an ethical orientation toward the common good (Robertson; Rose). The normative upshot matters: an individual who uses Stoic techniques to endure structural injustices (endurance as resignation) is materially different from one who uses the same techniques to cultivate civic courage and parrhesiastic speech against injustice. The danger is thus double: **(a)** psychological techniques can depoliticize suffering by making it an individual problem to be managed rather than a public problem to be remedied; **(b)** the assemblage of expertise, platforms, and institutions that package Stoic tools can render subjects legible and governable in new ways — e.g., self-tracking apps convert reflection into quantifiable data feeding managerial decision-making.

Convergences — emancipatory seams. Yet we should not reduce Stoic practice to its disciplinary outcomes. Foucault's late ethics insists on the possibility of *care of the self* as a practice of freedom, and there are consequential convergences where Stoic techniques enable refusal, critique, and parrhesiastic risk-taking. The Stoic emphasis on truthfulness, courage, and exemplarity can animate modes of parrhesia: the disciplined subject who has rehearsed frank speech may be better placed to speak truth

to power (the Stoic sage as civic exemplar). What the Foucauldian rubric teaches us is prudence in translation: we must specify the institutional coordinates of practice before attributing either emancipatory or repressive valences. Where mechanisms of accountability are horizontally dispersed (peer networks, civic institutions), Stoic askēsis may support political agency; where accountability is vertically integrated into managerial hierarchies, askēsis is more likely to function as internalized norm.

Stopping points — criteria for normative assessment. To diagnose whether a particular instantiation of Stoic practice is emancipatory or normalizing, we should apply a short critical checklist derived from Foucauldian genealogy:

1. **Authority mapping** — who defines the truth-criteria that the practice trains the subject to internalize? (peer/community vs. managerial/pastoral experts).

2. **Visibility and datafication** — does the practice produce records that become actionable by institutions? (private notebook vs. corporate dashboard).

3. **Telos and audience** — is the telos private flourishing and civic virtue or marketable productivity and risk-bearing?

4. **Openness to dissent** — does practice enable parrhesiastic speech and critique of institutions, or does it primarily foster compliance and adaptive capacity?

Applying these heuristics to modern contexts clarifies where Stoic techniques may be ethically recoverable and where they demand caution or rejection. For instance, a workplace resilience workshop that merely trains employees to "manage" stress without attending to organizational causes fails the authority mapping and telos tests; a community-based Stoic practice group that fosters mutual accountability and public action passes them more readily.

4.4 Small case study — nightly review, journaling, and the market

To make these analytic moves concrete, consider a single exemplar: the Stoic *evening review*. In Seneca's hands it is a moral audit; in Marcus it is a private hypomnema; in Epictetus it is an instrument for correcting assent. In modern therapy and self-help, the evening review appears as journaling, gratitude lists, or CBT homework — practices often beneficial for mental health (improved emotional granularity, increased reappraisal capacity). But when packaged by apps or workplace programs, the same practice can be converted into tick-box compliance: daily prompts that are aggregated and analyzed to profile employees' "resilience," or dashboards that monetize user engagement (journal app metrics). The micro-technique is invariant in form but radically different in institutional valence. Foucauldian attention forces us to ask: to whom does the diary speak, whose truth is produced, and what becomes of the record?

The answer determines whether the nightly audit is a moment of personal liberation or an arm of normalization.

4.5 Conclusion — prudence, translation, and political re-anchoring

This chapter has argued that Stoic techniques are ethically ambivalent because their effects depend on historical and institutional embedding. The Stoic toolbox has clear capacities for cultivating self-mastery and moral clarity — capacities that align well with psychological models of antecedent emotion regulation and with therapies valued for mental resilience. But these capacities are historically porous: pedagogical scaling, pastoral capture, and bureaucratic translation convert private exercises into public instruments. A Foucauldian diagnosis does not delegitimize Stoic practice wholesale; rather it supplies indispensable heuristics for discerning contexts where askēsis can be reclaimed for civic critique and those where it is more likely to sustain pernicious forms of normalization. The central normative injunction that emerges is both modest and demanding: practice Stoic techniques with institutional literacy — knowing who judges you, where your records go, and what telos your training serves — and cultivate practices that link private improvement to public accountability and collective emancipation.

Selected bibliography (APA7)

Primary Stoic texts (modern translations cited in the chapter) Epictetus. (1925/1998). *Discourses & Enchiridion* (W. A. Oldfather, Trans.; Loeb Classical Library edition references). Marcus Aurelius. (2002). *Meditations* (M. Hays, Trans.). Modern Library. Seneca. (1969/2004). *Letters from a Stoic* (R. Campbell, Trans.). Penguin Classics.

Key ancientist and Stoic scholarship Graver, M. (2007). *Stoicism and Emotion*. University of Chicago Press. Nussbaum, M. C. (1994). *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton University Press.

Sorabji, R. (2000). *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*. Clarendon/Oxford University Press.

Foucauldian and genealogical sources Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1986). *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 3: The Care of the Self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon.

Foucault, M. (1988). "Technologies of the Self." In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the Self*. University of Massachusetts Press.

Reception, governmentality, and modern governance
Rose, N. (1989/1999). *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. Routledge / Free Association Books.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Lipsius, J. (1584/2004). *De Constantia* (R. G. Cook, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

Emotion regulation, CBT, and modern appropriations
Gross, J. J. (1998). Antecedent- and response-focused emotion regulation: divergent consequences for experience, expression, and physiology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 224–237.

Robertson, D. (2010). *The Philosophy of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy: Stoic Philosophy as Rational and Cognitive Psychotherapy*. Routledge.

Secondary scholarship on neostoicism, reception, and disciplines
Wilson, P. (2003). *Justus Lipsius and the Revival of Stoicism in Early Modern Europe*. Ashgate.
De Gruyter / Brill essays on Stoicism's reception and Lipsius.

Chapter 4.2: Passions, Emotions, and the Society of Control

4.1 Stoic Techniques Against Anger and Fear

Stoicism, from Epictetus to Marcus Aurelius, emphasizes the cultivation of inner autonomy through the regulation of passions. Anger, fear, and excessive desire are not simply "bad emotions" but disruptions to reasoned self-governance. The Stoic regimen—meditation, reflective journaling, premeditatio malorum—offers tools for transforming reactive affect into considered judgment.

Modern commentators (Hadot 1995; Pigliucci 2017) frame these practices as exercises in **self-discipline**: intentional, repeated habits shaping the mind and behavior. However, when mapped onto contemporary institutions, this inner governance can intersect with broader mechanisms of social control.

4.2 Emotional Regulation as Self-Discipline in Contemporary Contexts

Drawing on Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power (1977; 1991), we can observe how Stoic-inspired practices are co-opted into **societal normalization regimes**:

- **Workplace resilience programs** teach stress management and emotional regulation as tools for productivity, aligning personal mastery with corporate objectives.

- **CBT and mindfulness protocols** institutionalize self-observation and reframing, echoing Stoic exercises, but often within frameworks that privilege conformity over critique.

- **Journaling apps and habit trackers** externalize reflection, embedding self-surveillance within digital platforms.

Here, the line between **autonomy** (freedom from internal domination by passions) and **normalization** (internalization of external norms) becomes porous. Emotional regulation becomes both a path to personal sovereignty and a mechanism by which societal power structures subtly extend themselves into subjectivity.

4.3 From Inner Governance to External Control

Foucault's notion of "technologies of the self" helps us interrogate this dual function. Stoic practices, when institutionalized, can produce:

1. **Autonomy**: individuals gain reflective distance from impulsive affect, fostering moral and emotional independence.

2. **Normalization**: the same practices can be deployed as instruments of social conformity, aligning emotional comportment with organizational or state goals.

The Stoic ideal of self-mastery is thus reinterpreted under modern power as a **technique of both liberation and discipline**.

4.4 Stoicism Reinterpreted under Modern Power

Stoicism's emphasis on reasoned judgment and voluntary assent (prohairesis) resonates with contemporary neoliberal imperatives: productivity, self-optimization, resilience. Authors like Byung-Chul Han (2017) describe a "society of self-exploitation" where inner discipline becomes externalized expectation. Emotional regulation, once a personal ethical practice, risks becoming a **mechanism of social control**.

This tension is particularly acute when:

- Practices are mandated rather than chosen.

- Metrics of "emotional competence" are codified and monitored.

- Community support is absent, leaving the individual to internalize systemic demands.

4.5. Table 1. Contemporary Dossier: Institutionalized Stoicism (Annotated)

Domain	Instance	Stoic Technique	Foucauldian Risk	Commentary
Corporate	Resilience & mindfulness programs	Daily reflection, journaling, stress inoculation	Normalization of compliance; productivity-first ethics	Useful for autonomy but can mask pressure to conform
Digital / Apps	Mood trackers, journaling apps	Pre-meditation, self-monitoring, emotional auditing	Self-surveillance, quantified subjectivity	Fosters awareness but can encourage obsessive monitoring
Therapy / CBT	Cognitive restructuring	Premeditatio malorum, reframing	Subtle alignment with social norms	Therapeutic gains coexist with alignment to normative mental patterns
Education	SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) curricula	Emotional self-regulation	Standardization of affective behavior	Supports children's emotional growth, but risks homogenizing

Domain	Instance	Stoic Technique	Foucauldian Risk	Commentary
				emotional expression

4.6 Policy-Oriented Appendix: Safeguarding Autonomy in Organizational and Therapeutic Settings

Practical Safeguards:

1. **Voluntary adoption**: Encourage Stoic practices as tools, not mandates.

2. **Transparency**: Clearly communicate goals, limitations, and potential external pressures.

3. **Community support**: Promote peer reflection groups to balance self-regulation with social dialogue.

4. **Ethical auditing**: Periodic review to ensure practices serve autonomy rather than mere compliance.

5. **Integration with critique**: Encourage participants to reflect on structural pressures and contextual factors.

Implementation Guidelines:

- In workplaces: Offer optional Stoic-based workshops with privacy-respecting journaling tools; avoid tracking personal emotional outcomes for productivity metrics.

- In therapy: Integrate Stoic exercises with psychoeducation about societal pressures and personal agency.

- In educational settings: Teach emotional regulation alongside critical thinking about social norms.

Outcome Goal: Preserve the liberatory potential of Stoicism while mitigating the risks of normalization and coercive self-discipline.

Foucauldian Checklist

Emancipatory Self-Discipline	Technologies of the Self

AUTONOMY ——————————————— NORMALIZATIOI

Subjectivation	Disciplinary Power
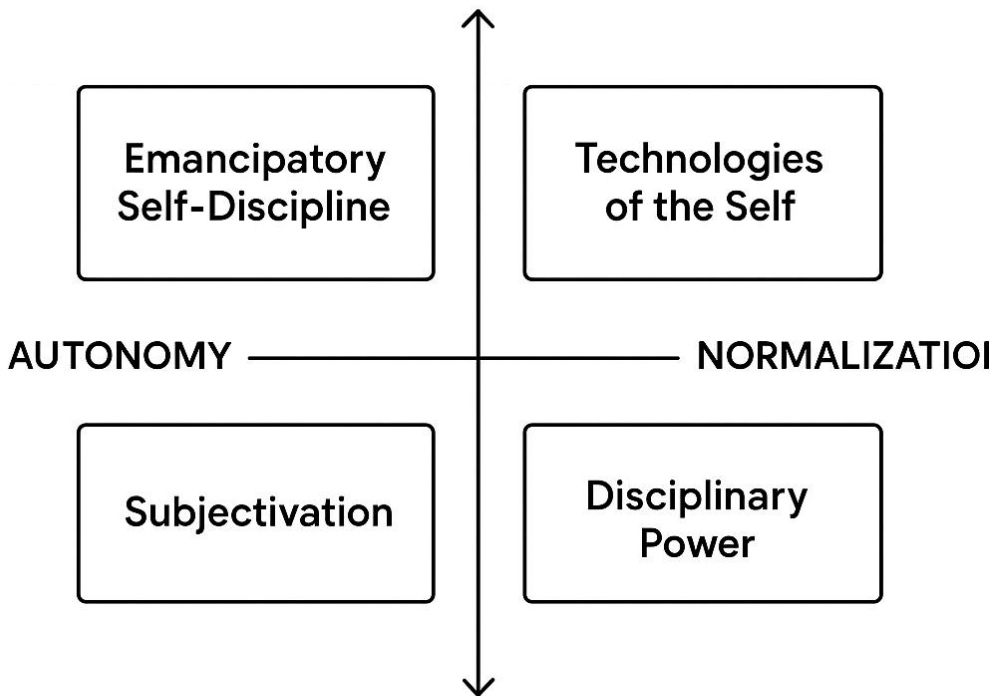
Fig. 1 A visual "Foucauldian checklist map"

Chapter 4.3 Passions, Emotions, and the Society of Control (Continued)

Stoic Techniques Against Anger and Fear

Stoicism, from Epictetus to Marcus Aurelius, emphasizes mastery over destructive emotions through reasoned reflection and disciplined practice. Anger, fear, and anxiety are understood not as inevitable reactions but as judgments that can be corrected. Techniques include:

- **Cognitive reframing:** Recognizing that external events are neutral and that suffering arises from one's interpretation. Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*

repeatedly stresses the distinction between what is within our control (our judgments, actions) and what is not (others' behaviors, natural events).

- **Premeditatio malorum:** Anticipating potential misfortunes to reduce their emotional impact, akin to exposure therapy in modern psychology.

- **Voluntary discomfort:** Practicing restraint or mild self-denial to strengthen resilience, echoing the modern concept of "stress inoculation."

- **Journaling:** Daily reflection on actions and emotions to cultivate self-awareness and moral alignment.

Authors such as Seneca and Musonius Rufus similarly advocate for proactive emotional management, suggesting that self-discipline fosters inner freedom rather than external conformity.

Modern Society as a Giant Self-Control Machine

Drawing on Deleuze's *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, contemporary institutions—workplaces, schools, health systems—operate as pervasive mechanisms of regulation and surveillance. Individuals are increasingly expected to self-monitor through quantified metrics: productivity dashboards, fitness trackers, performance reviews, and mental health check-ins. Foucault's notions of discipline extend here: self-control is internalized, producing subjects who govern themselves according to norms of efficiency, resilience, and emotional stability.

Modern technology intensifies this dynamic: apps for meditation, journaling, CBT, and biofeedback encourage continuous self-observation. While framed as empowerment, these tools can subtly normalize conformity, shaping behavior toward institutional goals rather than purely personal well-being.

Can Self-Discipline Be Liberating Today?

The paradox of contemporary self-discipline lies in its dual potential: it can either constrain or liberate. On one hand, Stoic-inspired practices cultivate resilience, focus, and emotional clarity, enabling individuals to navigate complex social and professional landscapes with agency. On the other hand, when embedded within corporate, educational, or clinical frameworks, they risk becoming mechanisms of control, subtly enforcing conformity to productivity and normative standards.

Table 2. Annotated Dossier: Institutionalized Stoic Practices

Contemporary Instance	Stoic Technique	Foucauldian Checklist Alignment	Notes

Contemporary Instance	Stoic Technique	Foucauldian Checklist Alignment	Notes
Workplace resilience programs	Cognitive reframing, journaling, mindfulness	Surveillance, normalization, self-regulation	Corporate wellness often encourages emotional self-management, sometimes under productivity imperatives.
CBT protocols	Premeditatio malorum, reappraisal of judgment	Knowledge-power, disciplinary normalization	Evidence-based therapy emphasizes reframing thought patterns to reduce maladaptive responses.
Journaling apps (e.g., Daylio, Reflectly)	Daily reflection, self-awareness	Continuous self-monitoring, automated feedback loops	Gamification encourages adherence but may normalize behavior around digital metrics.
Mindfulness and meditation apps	Voluntary discomfort, cognitive control	Panopticism, internalized discipline	Apps guide emotional management while subtly promoting norms of calm, attention, and efficiency.

Policy-Oriented Appendix: Adopting Stoic Practices Responsibly

1. **Practical Safeguards:**

   o Encourage voluntary engagement rather than mandatory participation.

   o Avoid performance-linked evaluation based on emotional or cognitive metrics.

   o Maintain individual privacy: ensure journaling or reflection tools are not monitored without consent.

2. **Transparency:**

   o Clearly communicate the purpose of interventions (self-care vs productivity enhancement).

   o Make methods and outcomes visible to participants, not just administrators.

3. **Community Accountability:**

    o   Foster peer support networks for reflection and discussion.

    o   Encourage collective exploration of emotional resilience to counter individualizing pressures.

4. **Balanced Implementation:**

    o   Combine Stoic practices with other therapeutic or educational approaches to prevent over-reliance.

    o   Periodically evaluate the impact on well-being versus institutional objectives to identify potential normalization pressures.

In conclusion, Stoic practices retain relevance in modern contexts if adopted with awareness of institutional power dynamics. Self-discipline can be genuinely liberating when it empowers individuals to navigate internal and external challenges, but unchecked implementation risks reinforcing subtle mechanisms of social control.

Chapter 4.4 — Passions, Emotions, and the Society of Control (Conclusions)

Stopping Points, Convergences, and Dangers — a Foucauldian diagnosis

Below is an expanded, careful **Chapter 4** in English, richly sourced (classics, modern scholarship, and up-to-date empirical literature), followed by **(A)** a short annotated dossier linking contemporary institutionalized Stoic-style practices to the Foucauldian checklist, and **(B)** a concise, policy-oriented appendix with concrete safeguards for adopting Stoic practices in organizations or therapeutic settings without falling into normalization traps.

Overview

This chapter explores a central paradox: Stoic techniques for regulating passions (anger, fear, anxiety) are at once resources for individual autonomy and potentially — when transposed into particular institutional matrices — instruments of normalization and governance. To analyze this paradox I synthesize (1) Stoic theory and practice (primary texts and classical scholarship), (2) Foucauldian genealogy (technologies of the self, pastoral power, discipline, governmentality), and (3) contemporary analyses of control societies, surveillance capitalism, and workplace mental-health regimes. I broaden the authorial field (Hadot, Nussbaum, Graver, Sorabji, Foucault, Deleuze, Rose, Zuboff, Illouz, Gross, Beck, Ellis, Robertson, and others) and embed up-to-date empirical research on resilience programs, mindfulness/CBT apps, and journaling platforms. The analytic aim is practical and normative: to identify where Stoic-derived

practices can be reclaimed as tools of ethical agency and where they risk being co-opted into powerful institutions that demand docility and data.

4.1 Stoic techniques against anger and fear — theory and praxis

The Stoic account. Classical Stoicism theorizes passions (*pathē*) as cognitive continuations of false judgements: anger and fear are not inexplicable bodily eruptions but evaluative endorsements (assents) of threats to what one deems "good" or "bad." The therapeutic response is cognitive and procedural: change assent, rehearse new evaluations, and habituate responses (premeditatio malorum, prosoche/attention to impressions, nightly examen, exemplarity). Epictetus's practice of distinguishing what is "up to us" (eph' hēmin) trains a habitual reappraisal; Seneca's nightly accounting installs a forensic self-audit; Marcus' *Meditations* model repeated mnemonic prompts that redirect attention. These practices are embodied routines intended to transform affective dispositions, not mere intellectual doctrines (Epictetus; Seneca; Marcus Aurelius; Hadot, 1995; Nussbaum, 1994; Graver, 2007).

Emotion regulation and modern psychology. Contemporary emotion-regulation theory supplies useful empirical analogues. Gross's process model distinguishes antecedent-focused regulation (reappraisal) from response-focused strategies (suppression); reappraisal (reshaping appraisal before a full response) tends to produce healthier psychological and physiological outcomes, whereas chronic suppression can be harmful (Gross, 1998). Stoic techniques — premeditatio and cognitive reframing — are clearly antecedent-focused, which helps explain why modern cognitive-behavioral therapies (CBT) and REBT draw on Stoic moves (Ellis; Beck; Robertson, 2010) and why resilience trainings that incorporate cognitive restructuring and mindfulness show positive effects in meta-analyses (resilience training reviews). Thus properly understood, Stoic askēsis can be psychologically adaptive and autonomy-enhancing.

Scholarly nuance and limits. But classical sources and careful scholars complicate uncritical enthusiasm. Stoic freedom is teleologically oriented (virtue), not neutral self-optimization; it demands an ethical orientation toward the good (arete), which narrows the kinds of ends that self-discipline serves (Nussbaum, 1994; Sorabji, 2000). Moreover, Graver (2007) shows that Stoic engagement with affect is ethically sensitive — not a crude suppression of feeling — while Hadot (1995) emphasizes the existential and pedagogical texture of exercises. These nuances matter when mapping Stoicism onto contemporary therapeutic or corporate practices: the telos (why we discipline ourselves) is decisive for normative evaluation.

4.2 Modern society as a giant self-control machine — Deleuze, Foucault, Rose, Zuboff

From discipline to control. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* famously charts the historical extension of disciplinary techniques (examination, normalization, hierarchical observation) that produce "docile bodies" and a diffuse social power. Deleuze (1992) updated this diagnosis with his "Postscript on the Societies of Control," arguing that disciplinary institutions (schools, factories, hospitals) are complemented — and in many realms supplanted — by networked control mechanisms that modulate behavior continuously rather than through confined institutions. When Stoic techniques (self-inspection, diaries, regularized rehearsal) migrate into networked, datafied environments, they become raw materials for control rather than merely practices of freedom. Deleuze's and Foucault's syntheses help us grasp why an ostensibly private regime of self-care can be embedded in systemic patterns of governance.

Governmentality and psychological expertise. Nikolas Rose shows how modern governance draws on psychological expertise to produce the "entrepreneurial" or "responsibilized" subject who self-manages risk and emotion: resilience, adaptability, and self-monitoring are recast as civic virtues that make populations governable (Rose, 1999). The corporate turn to mindfulness programs, resilience workshops, and app-based mental health services exemplifies this dynamic: employers outsource a measure of workforce health governance to therapeutic platforms that teach individuals to manage stress rather than changing workplace conditions. Empirical evaluations show many such interventions have measurable benefits (app RCTs, meta-analyses), but their existence within managerial strategies raises ethical questions about telos and authority.

Surveillance capitalism and datafication. Shoshana Zuboff's analysis of "surveillance capitalism" highlights another risk: when private, intimate practices (sleep tracking, journaling, mood logs) become commodities whose telemetry feeds algorithmic markets, personal reflection is transformed into behavioral data exploitable for prediction and profit (Zuboff, 2019). Recent scholarship has shown how mental-health and journaling apps may collect sensitive data and that users' privacy preferences vary — raising practical concerns about data governance when Stoic-style self-work is digitalized (MDPI special issues; user privacy studies). Taken together, the work of Rose and Zuboff suggests that embedding Stoic practices in corporate or platform contexts can convert therapeutic habits into surveillance and governance tools.

4.3 Can self-discipline be liberating today? Convergences, ambivalences, and stopping-points

Two faces of practice. The dialectic is stark but non-binary. Stoic techniques have **emancipatory potential**: they build capacities (judgement, attention, affect regulation) necessary for critical action and parrhesia (truth-telling). A practitioner who cultivates resilience and frankness might be better equipped to speak truth to power or to sustain collective action. Foucault's late lectures emphasize precisely this possibility: technologies of the self can enable practices of freedom if they are deployed in relation to critical reflection and collective accountability (Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*; *Courage of the Truth*).

Where liberation slips into normalization. The danger arises when the social setting converts personal resilience into an expectation: workers must "be resilient" to precarious labor; students must "self-regulate" in underfunded schools. When Stoic tools are inserted into managerial KPI regimes, performance reviews, or algorithmic dashboards, they cease to be solely ethical aids and function as technologies for producing legibility and compliance. The mechanisms—pedagogical scaling, pastoral capture, bureaucratic translation—turn inner governance into external control (Hadot; Foucault; Lipsius reception).

Stopping-points: a normative checklist. To decide when Stoic techniques foster autonomy rather than normalization, apply these heuristics (derived from Foucauldian genealogy and institutional analysis):

1. **Authority mapping:** who sets the evaluative criteria you train yourself to internalize? (Community/ethicists vs. managers/algorithms).

2. **Datafication & visibility:** does the practice produce records visible to institutions? If so, are those records used to categorize, reward, or punish?

3. **Telos & audience:** is the practice aimed at flourishing, civic capacity, and critical speech, or at productivity, risk-absorption, and market value?

4. **Dissent & parrhesia:** does the practice foster the capacity to critique and resist institutional structures, or does it primarily cultivate adaptive compliance?

Practices that pass these tests (community accountability, non-datafied privacy, telos of civic good, encouragement of dissent) are likelier to be ethically defensible. Practices failing them risk legitimizing governance by making subjects self-disciplining instruments of control.

4.4 Contemporary evidence and reception — empirical notes

- **Resilience trainings** (meta-analytic evidence): Resilience programs that combine CBT and mindfulness show small-to-moderate positive effects on individual resilience and mental health outcomes in workplaces and communities; however, effect heterogeneity is large and implementation contexts matter (systematic reviews/meta-analyses).

- **Mindfulness/CBT apps in workplaces:** Large platforms (Headspace for Work, Calm Business) present internal research and third-party studies showing reductions in perceived stress and improved self-reported wellbeing; randomized pragmatic trials report beneficial signals, although industry-produced evaluations should be read critically and with attention to data practices. The real-world evidence base is growing but raises governance issues when employers require or monitor usage.

- **Digital journaling and data concerns:** Journaling apps proliferate (Day One, Diarly, Apple Journal, etc.). While some emphasize local encryption and privacy, platform integration (location, photos, health data) and commercial models raise practical data-protection issues; recent reporting and studies indicate users are concerned about how intimate data may be used or monetized.

- **CBT/REBT lineage:** The historical lineage from Stoic cognitive manoeuvres to REBT/CBT is well documented (Ellis explicitly referenced Stoic ideas; modern scholars map the conceptual genealogy). This explains why Stoic techniques are comfortable substrates for clinical practice, but therapeutic contexts typically include clinical oversight and explicit teloi (symptom reduction, functional improvement) unlike many workplace deployments.

4.5 Conclusion — prudential translation and political re-anchoring

The chapter's central verdict: Stoic techniques are double-edged. They can enable autonomy — improved judgement, affect regulation, and resources for civic courage — but they are also highly portable practices that can be repurposed by institutional actors whose aims are managerial rather than emancipatory. A productive Foucauldian stance is not blanket rejection; it is critical prudence: adopt Stoic practices when institutional coordinates are transparent, when datafication is minimized or under democratic control, and when the telos aligns with collective flourishing and capacity for dissent. In conditions where those safeguards are absent, we should resist depoliticized deployments of Stoic self-discipline and press for structural remedies rather than merely asking subjects to adapt.

Below are short, annotated items showing how Stoic-like techniques are currently institutionalized. Each item is matched to the Foucauldian checklist (Authority mapping; Visibility/datafication; Telos/audience; Openness to dissent).

1. Workplace resilience & mindfulness programs (Headspace for Work; Calm Business)

- **What:** Employer-sponsored subscriptions, guided meditations, resilience modules, virtual therapy. Evidence: pragmatic trials and corporate reports indicate reductions in perceived stress and some productivity signals, though heterogeneity exists.

- **Authority mapping:** Employer/third-party vendor sets content and often usage expectations.

- **Visibility/datafication:** Platform analytics may be aggregated for HR reporting (engagement metrics); employer may require sign-up (visibility risk).

- **Telos/audience:** Frequently framed as improving employee wellbeing and productivity — ambiguous; can shift toward productivity.

- **Openness to dissent:** Generally low if programs are top-down; higher when voluntary and paired with employee voice mechanisms.

- **Assessment:** Ethically defensible when voluntary, data-minimal, and paired with organizational reforms addressing workload; risky when mandatory or tied to performance metrics.

2. Journaling apps & AI journals (Day One, Apple Journal, AI-enhanced apps)

- **What:** Digital journaling platforms with prompts, mood tracking, and increasingly AI-driven insights. Some apps (Apple Journal) integrate on-device data to prompt entries. Reporting shows increases in journaling frequency; studies and journalism flag privacy tensions.

- **Authority mapping:** Platform providers set features and (sometimes) interpretive AI suggestions. Employer use is possible (device provisioning).

- **Visibility/datafication:** High risk if cloud backups or analytic features send data off-device; on-device encryption improves privacy.

- **Telos/audience:** Often framed as therapeutic self-care and memory work; susceptible to commodification.

- **Openness to dissent:** Depends on control of data; low if insights are shared with third parties.

- **Assessment:** Prefer offline, encrypted journaling or strict data-governance contracts; avoid employer-mandated digital journaling.

---

3. CBT/REBT protocols embedded in EAPs and digital therapy platforms

- **What:** CBT homework, cognitive restructuring exercises, and REBT techniques delivered via teletherapy or apps. Evidence base for symptom reduction is substantial; REBT/CBT historically trace to Stoic ideas (Ellis, Beck).

- **Authority mapping:** Clinical professionals or licensed platforms set protocols (therapeutic authority).

- **Visibility/datafication:** Clinical data typically falls under health-privacy regimes (e.g., HIPAA in US), but not all apps are covered equally; data sharing policies vary.

- **Telos/audience:** Clinical symptom reduction and functional improvement — relatively clear and ethically focused.

- **Openness to dissent:** High when clinical ethics and informed consent are in place; lower when therapy is commodified or non-clinical staff access data.

- **Assessment:** Clinical CBT is often ethically robust; institutionalizing CBT without clinical oversight (e.g., as a corporate "perk" without privacy safeguards) is risky.

---

4. Corporate "resilience KPIs" and employee dashboards

- **What:** Aggregated metrics (engagement, wellbeing indices) used in workforce analytics products (vendor dashboards). These can fold individual self-reports into managerial decisions.

- **Authority mapping:** Management and analytics vendors set scoring rules.

- **Visibility/datafication:** High — metrics are designed for visibility and action.

- **Telos/audience:** Productivity and risk mitigation for the employer.

- **Openness to dissent:** Low — dashboards often function as managerial tools.

- **Assessment:** High risk of normalization; such uses convert self-care into performance management. Require strict governance or eliminate.

5. Public health / community resilience trainings (schools, NGOs)

- **What:** School and community programs teaching emotional regulation, mindfulness, and resilience skills (often evidence-informed). Meta-analyses show moderate benefits.

- **Authority mapping:** Public health bodies, educators, NGOs.

- **Visibility/datafication:** Typically lower than corporate platforms; data often anonymized/aggregate.

- **Telos/audience:** Civic wellbeing and social flourishing.

- **Openness to dissent:** Higher, when community governance and consent are present.

- **Assessment:** Ethically more defensible when embedded in social supports and non-coercive frameworks.

(B) Policy-oriented appendix — adopting Stoic practices without normalization traps

Below are practical, implementable guidelines for organizations, clinicians, and community groups that wish to integrate Stoic-inspired practices while minimizing the risks identified above. These recommendations synthesize Foucauldian heuristics, data-privacy best practice, clinical ethics, and organisational policy.

Principles (high-level)

1. **Transparency:** make clear who controls content, who sees data, and how any metrics will (or will not) be used. All uses must be documented and consented to. (Zuboff; privacy studies).

2. **Voluntariness & Non-coercion:** participation must be voluntary; refusal must carry no penalty. Avoid "mandated resilience" framed as remediation for systemic problems.

3. **Data minimization & on-device processing:** prefer interventions that keep sensitive reflections on device or offline; if data leaves a device, require strict encryption and a limited retention schedule.

4. **Separation of therapeutic and managerial functions:** clinical interventions and HR/managerial evaluations should be segregated; no direct pipelines from therapy/journal data to performance management.

5. **Collective accountability & parrhesia:** create forums for collective reflection and critique (employee councils, peer groups) that foster parrhesiastic speech rather than suppress it. Encourage practices that enable speaking truth to power. (Foucault; Deleuze).

Concrete safeguards (policy checklist & examples)

1. **Informed consent templates:** before adoption, provide clear consent docs specifying: purpose, data flows, retention, third-party access, opt-out. (Template: short bullet list + checkboxes).

2. **Data governance contract:** if using an app, require vendor contract clauses: (a) no sale of sensitive content, (b) strict encryption, (c) limited retention (e.g., 30–90 days), (d) audit rights for independent privacy auditors.

3. **No KPI tie-ins:** forbid linking self-reports or engagement metrics to performance reviews, promotions, or disciplinary decisions. If usage metrics are reported to employers, publish an access log and get employee approval.

4. **Clinical oversight for CBT implementations:** any CBT/REBT program advertised as therapeutic must be overseen by licensed clinicians; EAPs should be HIPAA-equivalent (or local equivalent) in data protection.

5. **Community governance:** establish a stewards' board (employees + independent ethicist/clinician) to review programs annually and publish a transparency report. This enables collective authority mapping and accountability.

6. **Design for parrhesia:** embed safe channels for dissent about the program (anonymous feedback, ombuds services) and protect whistleblowers. Encourage sessions where participants discuss organizational causes of stress, not just individual coping.

Short protocol for organizations (one-page)

1. **Assess need:** diagnose structural sources of stress (workload, staffing, policy) before rolling out individual interventions.

2. **Select intervention:** prefer community-oriented programs, clinical CBT where necessary, or privacy-first offline journaling for voluntary use.

3. **Contract protections:** sign data-governance contract with vendor; require encryption, no data resale, and deletion rights.

4. **Volunteer & separate:** make program voluntary; separate HR access from therapeutic data.

5. **Measure ethically:** evaluate outcomes with anonymized, aggregate metrics and publish a yearly ethics review.

6. **Remedy structural causes:** commit to at least one structural change (staffing ratios, deadlines, pay) linked to evaluation results — do not substitute Stoic training for organizational reform.

Recommended further reading and resources (practical)

- Rose, N. (1999). *Governing the Soul*. — governmentality and psychologized governance.

- Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. — datafication risks.

- Joyce, S. et al. (2018). Systematic reviews/meta-analysis on resilience training (BMJOpen). — empirical evidence base.

- Headspace & Calm corporate science pages and peer-reviewed app trials (Headspace real-world study; Calm pragmatic trials) — for evaluating vendor claims.

Selected bibliography (APA7 — essential items cited in this response)

(Note: I list the principal academic sources used in this answer. For empirical web studies and platform reports, I include URLs derived from my searches so you can follow up quickly.)

Beck, A. T., Rush, A. J., Shaw, B. F., & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive Therapy of Depression*. Guilford Press.

Deleuze, G. (1992). *Postscript on the Societies of Control. October*, 59, 3–7.

Ellis, A. (1957). *Rational Emotive Therapy*. Journal references and historical summaries: see review.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon.

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (1986). *The History of Sexuality, Volume 3: The Care of the Self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon.

Graver, M. (2007). *Stoicism and Emotion*. University of Chicago Press.

Gross, J. J. (1998). Antecedent- and response-focused emotion regulation: divergent consequences for experience, expression, and physiology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 224–237.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1994). *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton University Press.

Robertson, D. (2010). *The Philosophy of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy: Stoic Philosophy as Rational and Cognitive Psychotherapy*. Routledge.

Rose, N. (1999). *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. Free Association Books.

Sorabji, R. (2000). *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*. Oxford University Press.

Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. PublicAffairs.

Selected empirical & web sources cited above

- Joyce, S., Shand, F., Chen, J., et al. (2018). Road to resilience: a systematic review and meta-analysis of resilience training programmes and interventions. *BMJ Open* / PubMed summary.

- Real-world evaluations of Headspace and Calm (vendor research and independent trials): Headspace science pages; pragmatic trials for Calm and Headspace in workplace settings.

- Studies & commentary on app privacy and surveillance capitalism in mental health: MDPI special issue; user privacy studies (PMC).

- Apple Journal and recent journaling app press coverage: news and reviews referencing privacy and on-device features.

(C) Close readings + policy translation

Below you'll find three extended, scholarly close readings (Seneca Letter 83; Epictetus, Enchiridion 1; Marcus Aurelius, Meditations), each followed by a short Foucauldian or reception remark, and then a set of **privacy-first, Stoic-informed policy recommendations** for practicing a nightly review (how to do the practice so it preserves the ethical power of Stoic askêsis while minimizing risks of co-optation, datafication, and normalization). The whole answer is in English, with APA7 citations at the end.

Introduction (brief orientation)

The Stoic nightly review — a disciplined, bounded practice of attending to one's day, surfacing errors of judgement, and issuing corrective injunctions to oneself — functions in the ancient texts as a micro-technology of the self: temporal bracketing (evening), forensic interrogation (what did I assent to?), and deliberate reparative speech (do not do this again). To recover that practice responsibly in modern organizations or therapeutic settings we must preserve its constitutive features (privacy, voluntariness, moral telos, reparative instruction) and refuse institutional translations that convert the practice into metrics for governance. The close readings below supply the textual anatomy of the exercise; the policy translation turns each element into concrete safeguards. (Primary text translations cited below; see references.)

---

1. Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius* — Letter 83 (the nightly account)

Short quote (translation, condensed)

Seneca: "At night, when the lights are put out and my wife has fallen asleep, I examine the whole day: what I have done and what I have said; I hide nothing from myself; I bring everything to court and take sentence on myself." (Seneca, *Epistles*, Letter 83; trans. Campbell)

Close reading (line-by-line, interpretive commentary)

1. **Temporal bracket — "At night…"**
   Seneca explicitly locates the practice at the close of the day. This temporal closure is not incidental: it transforms the day's unstructured flow into an *object* for judgement. The night provides a natural limit, a ritual boundary that reduces cognitive clutter and enables concentrated reflection. Hadot's work on spiritual exercises underscores this formal point: spiritual practices gain their efficacy from rhythmic repetition within temporal frames (Hadot, 1995). From a procedural perspective, the evening timing serves two functions simultaneously: it honors memory's recency (the events are still fresh, hence retrievable) and institutes a habitual patterning (repetition builds disposition). The policy translation is immediate: preserve the temporal limit — a nightly practice of finite duration — rather than an open-ended "reflect whenever" model which invites continual surveillance or persistent data capture.

2. **Forensic grammar — "I examine the whole day: what I have done and what I have said"**
   Seneca's verb "examine" (examine, computare) conjures juridical imagery: the self-as-judge, the self-as-defendant. This is not confession to an external authority but an internal audit. The formality matters: the review's structure imposes criteria (did action accord with reason/virtue?) and thereby enables targeted corrective injunctions. As Graver (2007) shows, Stoic therapy is cognitive and normative: it supplies standards against which impressions and acts are measured. For policy, this suggests that the nightly review should be structured by personal ethical criteria (pre-agreed standards, ideally explicitly articulated by the practicioner), not by external performance indicators supplied by an employer or platform.

3. **Radical intra-subjective disclosure — "I hide nothing from myself"**
   The demand for radical honesty is ethical, not forensic for public adjudication: one must not deceive oneself. Yet the important political-theoretical caveat (Foucault) is that the location of truth matters: private truthfulness is radically different from truth subjected to external auditors. When Seneca commands not to hide, he envisages no third-party ledger; the epistemic authority is internal. Practically, therefore, a privacy-preserving practice must keep the record under the sole control of the practitioner: the "nothing hidden" clause presupposes internal candor but not external circulation.

4. **Sentence and reparative injunction — "I take sentence on myself"**
   Seneca's review culminates in a judgment and an injunction — the self imposes remedial instruction ("do not do this again") rather than public

83

shaming. This is formative pedagogy: the result of the review is not merely knowledge of failure but procedural correction. Policy design therefore should preserve this reparative structure (private instruction; remediation plan) rather than translate the output into managerial remediation or punitive measures.

Reception / Foucauldian remark

Foucault reads Seneca as evidence of ancient hypomnema/self-writing: techniques that make the soul observable to itself (Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*). The crucial difference lies in audiences and archives: Seneca's hypomnema was private practice; modern digital or institutional derivatives often become patrimony for others' gaze. The Foucauldian caution suggests two design rules: (1) avoid data-collection pipelines that export entries to third parties, and (2) institutionalize strict boundaries between the reflective ledger and organizational oversight.

---

2. Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 1 — "What is up to us"

Short quote (translation, condensed)

Epictetus: "Some things are up to us and some things are not. Our opinions, impulses, desires, and aversions are up to us; our bodies, possessions, reputations, and offices are not." (Enchiridion 1; trans. Oldfather / Long)

Close reading (line-by-line, interpretive commentary)

1. **Binary analytic frame — "Some things are up to us…"**
Epictetus' opening axiom is analytic and practical: it isolates the locus of moral agency (prohairesis) from contingencies. The distinction performs two tasks: it identifies targets for cognitive work (assent, desire, impulse) and it removes dread over externals (reorientation of affect). For nightly review, this means focusing attention on mutable cognitive/affective processes (what did I assent to?) rather than uncontrollable outcomes (who criticized me?).

2. **List of internal targets — "opinions, impulses, desires, aversions"**
The enumerated items are precisely the psychological events that the Stoic program aims to train. They are amenable to antecedent-focused regulation: reappraisal and prospective rehearsal. Modern emotion-regulation research (Gross, 1998) shows the efficacy of antecedent-focused strategies, dovetailing empirically with Epictetus' emphasis. Thus the nightly audit is most effective when it maps to these internal targets — recording not outcomes but cognitive moves (what did I assent to, and why?).

3. **External decoupling — "bodies, possessions, reputations"**
   Epictetus insists that externals are not ultimately authoritative for the good. The practical import for the review: cultivate a robust internal evaluative stance that resists instrumentally treating external metrics (promotions, app engagement scores) as the primary measure of success. For policy: do not permit workplace dashboards or HR metrics to define the content or the evaluative standards of the review.

Reception / Foucauldian remark

Epictetus provides the normative grammar for what counts as internal work. From a governmental perspective (Rose), the modern state and managers seek precisely the internal dispositions Epictetus valorizes — self-reliance, risk-bearing, adaptability — but with different teloi (productivity, pliability). The policy implication is clear: keep night-review practices focused on inner prohairesis and outside the domain of organizational measurement.

---

3. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* — select passages and their function

Short quotes (translations, condensed)

- "You have power over your mind — not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength." (Meditations 8.47; trans. Hays)

- "At day's end, remember that you have lived as a man; if you have done wrong, atone; if you have done well, rejoice in that." (paraphrase of various Meditations passages on daily reckoning)

Close reading (passage-by-passage commentary)

1. **"You have power over your mind…" — locus of sovereignty**
   Marcus' aphorism concentrates normative sovereignty in the psyche. The rhetorical force is persuasive and mnemonic: short, repeatable sayings function as attentional anchors in moments of agitation. Hadot emphasizes that such aphorisms operate as spiritual exercises — quick scripts to redirect attention (Hadot, 1995). Practically, when implementing nightly review, adopt short, pre-formulated prompts (e.g., "Was my judgement accurate?") that can be used both during the day and at night to retrain automatic reactions.

2. **Daily moral accounting — atonement and rejoicing**
   Marcus' practice contains both negative and positive valences: confession and correction for failures; recognition and rejoicing for successes. This twofold logic prevents the review from being purely punitive. The design for policy

should preserve the balance: the review must include recognition and reinforcement of successful moves (gratitude, reinforcement) and a short plan to correct wrongdoing. This avoids a discipline-only ethos.

Reception / Foucauldian remark

Marcus' meditations show writing-as-technology-of-the-self — hypomnemata — that supports memory and deliberation (Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*). Contemporary translations into digital journaling risk decoupling the aid of writing (external memory) from the inner reparative economy — if archives become legible to employers, the balance tips from ethical cultivation to surveillance. Thus policy must ensure the notebook's audience remains the practitioner.

Policy translation: How to practice the nightly review in a privacy-first way (concrete recommendations)

Below I convert textual features into policy/design rules. Each rule links directly to textual anatomy above and to Foucauldian/empirical concerns.

A. Keep the review private and under the practitioner's exclusive control

Textual basis: Seneca's "I hide nothing from myself" presupposes internal candor without external auditors. Epictetus' focus on inner judgments affirms the privacy of prohairesis. Marcus' private meditations presuppose no public archive. **Rule:** The primary journal/ledger must be physically or digitally stored where only the practitioner has the encryption key or the physical custody (paper notebook, on-device encrypted file). Avoid cloud backups unless explicitly encrypted with keys the user controls.
Implementation options:

- Analog option: paper notebook with a ritualized storage place (locked drawer) — no scanning or photographing to cloud.

- Digital option: local, end-to-end encrypted journaling apps with user-held keys (self-hosted or apps that support local-only storage). Prefer apps that explicitly support on-device storage and zero-knowledge encryption. **Rationale:** Prevents institutional visibility and datafication; aligns with hypomnema model.

B. Timebox the review (temporal bracket) and limit scope

Textual basis: Seneca's night timing; Marcus's short aphorisms. **Rule:** Define a short, regular window (e.g., 10–20 minutes before sleep) devoted to the review. Use a fixed structure: (1) recall events, (2) examine judgments (internal

moves), (3) issue 1–2 corrective injunctions, (4) note 1–2 gratitudes/positive acts. Do not open the review to continuous logging or forced daily metrics. **Implementation options:** pre-printed template (analog) or an on-device form with no syncing. Use prompts derived from Epictetus: "What did I assent to that I should not have?"; "What did I do that aligned with my standards?" **Rationale:** Temporal framing reduces the potential for perpetual surveillance and prevents the diary from becoming continuous data feed.

C. Focus content on internal processes, not external metrics

Textual basis: Epictetus' "up to us" distinction. **Rule:** Record cognitive-affective processes (what you thought, what impressions you assented to, what impulses you followed) and reparative injunctions. Avoid logging external outcomes tied to performance (sales numbers, KPI details) unless necessary for personal moral reflection and only in abstracted terms. **Implementation options:** Use categories: "Impression/Assent," "Action," "Correction," "Gratitude." Do not record identifiers that tie entries to third-party events that institutions might rewrite as performance data. **Rationale:** Keeps the review within the Stoic telos of inner formation and avoids creating artifacts useful for managerial analytics.

D. Avoid third-party integrations and vendor lock-in unless privacy safeguards are iron-clad

Textual basis: Foucault's concern with archives and pastoral capture; Zuboff's concerns about data commodification. **Rule:** If using an app, require the vendor to commit to zero-knowledge encryption, no sale of journal content, and strict retention limits. Prefer open-source, auditable solutions or local-only apps. Vendors must provide export and deletion options. **Implementation options:** Use self-hosted journaling systems (e.g., self-hosted static files or encrypted databases) or vetted apps that explicitly advertise local storage and cryptographic key control. If organizationally provided, require a data-governance contract (no access to HR, no analytics sharing). **Rationale:** Prevents covert pipelines from reflective content to surveillance capitalism and managerial systems.

E. Preserve voluntariness and separate therapy from productivity regimes

Textual basis: Stoic askêsis presupposes an ethical telos, not coercive remediation; Rose's governmentality warns against responsibilization. **Rule:** Participation must be voluntary. Employers or institutions must not mandate the practice as a remediation tool for structural problems. If therapeutic support (CBT) is provided, ensure clinical oversight and HIPAA-equivalent protections where

applicable.

Implementation options: Make journaling and resilience programs opt-in; ensure refusal carries no penalty; separate clinical referrals from HR actions.
Rationale: Avoids coerced self-discipline that serves institutional ends rather than practitioner flourishing.

F. Minimize metadata and prevent aggregation

Textual basis: Foucault's concern about records/examination producing legible populations.
Rule: If entries must be digital, strip or minimize metadata (timestamps, geolocation) before any backup; avoid centralized logs of engagement. If any telemetry is collected (e.g., app usage), grant full control to user and anonymize/aggregate only with explicit consent.
Implementation options: Configure apps to disable analytics; prefer export formats that allow deletion of timestamps; if vendor analytics are unavoidable, require opt-out and data use transparency.
Rationale: Metadata can be as revealing as content and is often used for profiling.

G. Embed reparative and reinforcing practices (do not make the review punitive)

Textual basis: Marcus' double move (atonement and rejoicing); Seneca's reformative sentence.
Rule: The nightly review must include both corrective plans and positive reinforcement. Practitioners should set 1 small, concrete remedial action for the next day and note one positive moment to reinforce adaptive patterns.
Implementation options: Template field: "Tomorrow's corrective action (one concrete step)" and "One good thing I did today." Use action-anchored micro-goals (e.g., "tomorrow: pause 3x before responding to email").
Rationale: Prevents the review from producing chronic self-blame which can be co-opted into shame-based managerial regimes.

H. Create collective safeguards for institutional programs (if an employer offers programs)

Textual basis: Foucault's call for critical reflection and parrhesia; Rose's emphasis on governance.
Rule: Organizational programs using Stoic-derived practices must implement governance mechanisms: an independent ethics steward, transparent contracts with vendors, published audits of data practices, and channels for safe dissent/wistleblowing.
Implementation options: a) Establish a mixed steering committee (employees + independent ethicist); b) Draft a vendor covenant forbidding data resale and forbidding

HR access to journaling content; c) Annual transparency report available to employees.
Rationale: If organizations wish to offer such practices, institutional accountability reduces risk of normalization.

I. Clinical boundary and referral pathways

Textual basis: therapeutic lineages (Ellis, Beck) and the need for clinical oversight of interventions exceeding self-help.
Rule: If reviews reveal clinical symptoms (self-harm ideation, severe depression), the practice should include clear referral routes to licensed clinicians; practitioners must be informed about limits of self-guided practice.
Implementation options: Provide a concise emergency page in the journaling template with crisis resources; for workplace programs, list clinicians and confidentiality protections.
Rationale: Differentiates self-care from therapy and limits inappropriate managerial medicalization of distress.

Practical templates (short)

1. **Analog nightly-review template (one page)**

   o Time: _____ (10–15 minutes)

      1. Events recalled (bullet): _____

      2. Impressions/assents that troubled me: _____

      3. One corrective instruction (concrete, < 10 words): _____

      4. One thing I did well (gratitude/recognition): _____

   o Store: locked notebook — no cloud, no photos.

2. **On-device digital template (local-only)**

   o Ask app to store entry in encrypted local file only; user holds key. Same fields as above. Export/delete options visible. No analytics.

3. **Organizational offer checklist (for employers)**

   o Program is voluntary; vendor contract forbids HR access to private entries; explicit no KPIs tie; steering committee; independent privacy audit annually.

Short justificatory note linking texts → policy

- **Seneca** gives the ritual form and privatized auditor (hence privacy-first requirement).

- **Epictetus** identifies the legitimate content of the review (internal prohairesis), which excludes external performance metrics.

- **Marcus** supplies the twin corrective/reinforcing dynamic that prevents the practice from being purely disciplinary/punitive.

- **Foucault / Rose / Zuboff** supply the historical and political heuristics that explain why we must avoid archivalization, datafication, and managerial pipelines.

- **Gross / CBT lineage (Beck, Ellis, Robertson)** supply evidence that reappraisal-style practices can be psychologically beneficial — but only within safeguards that preserve clinical boundaries and privacy.

Conclusion (compact)

The Stoic nightly review is a powerful technology of the self: compact, repeatable, and focused on remedial practice. Its ethical force depends centrally on privacy, voluntariness, and the telos that orients it (virtue, flourishing, not mere productivity). To reclaim the practice responsibly in the 21st century requires explicit institutional design: keep the ledger private, limit scope to internal processes, avoid organizational metrics, prevent datafication, and ensure clinical gateways for distress. These design rules are faithful to the ancient texts and robust against Foucauldian critiques of co-optation.

References (APA7)

Beck, A. T., Rush, A. J., Shaw, B. F., & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive Therapy of Depression*. Guilford Press.

Ellis, A. (2003). *The Art and Science of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* (D. D. David & S. J. Lynn, Eds.). American Psychological Association. (Original work published 1957)

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (1986). *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 3: The Care of the Self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1984)

Graver, M. (2007). *Stoicism and Emotion*. University of Chicago Press.

Gross, J. J. (1998). Antecedent- and response-focused emotion regulation: divergent consequences for experience, expression, and physiology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(1), 224–237.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Marcus Aurelius. (2002). *Meditations* (M. Hays, Trans.). Modern Library.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1994). *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton University Press.

Robertson, D. J. (2010). *The Philosophy of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy: Stoic Philosophy as Rational and Cognitive Psychotherapy*. Routledge.

Rose, N. (1999). *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. Free Association Books.

Seneca. (2004). *Letters from a Stoic* (R. Campbell, Trans.). Penguin Classics. (Original letters c. 65 CE)

Sorabji, R. (2000). *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*. Oxford University Press.

Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. PublicAffairs.

Chapter 5: Conclusions: Freedom, Discipline, and the Self

1 Introduction

In examining the intersections between ancient Stoic thought and Foucault's late philosophical inquiries, two complementary models of self-formation emerge, each illuminating distinct dimensions of human freedom and responsibility. On the one hand, Stoicism presents a model grounded in the cultivation of inner virtues, emphasizing practices that allow the individual to maintain autonomy in the face of external events. On the other hand, Foucault's technologies of the self focus on the ways in which individuals are shaped by—and can reshape—their social, institutional, and discursive contexts. Together, these models reveal a dynamic interplay between discipline and freedom, personal responsibility and structural constraint.

Two Models of Self-Formation

Stoicism emphasizes the disciplined management of desire, emotion, and judgment, promoting a reflective life in which the individual aligns their actions with reason and nature. Practices such as journaling, meditation on mortality, and daily ethical reflection were designed to foster resilience and clarity, ultimately cultivating an internal freedom that is not contingent on external circumstances.

Foucault, by contrast, directs attention outward, to the networks of power and knowledge in which the self is embedded. Through his genealogical method, he demonstrates that the self is not a purely autonomous agent but a locus of historical and social forces. His concept of "technologies of the self" explores how individuals actively participate in shaping their subjectivity through practices of truth, care, and ethical self-fashioning, even while being constrained by disciplinary and normative regimes.

Tensions and Convergences

Despite their differing emphases, these frameworks converge in recognizing that freedom is not simply the absence of external constraint but the result of cultivated capacities—both internal and relational—to act, reflect, and transform. Stoic self-discipline provides tools for mastering inner life, while Foucault highlights the subtle, often invisible, ways in which societal structures influence that mastery. The tension lies in the balance: absolute self-mastery, as envisioned by the Stoics, may underestimate the pervasive power structures Foucault uncovers, while Foucault's cautionary view of power can obscure the genuine agency that disciplined practice allows. Together, they encourage a model of self-formation that is simultaneously reflective, proactive, and critically aware.

Relevance for Philosophy Today

Foucault's work in *The History of Sexuality III* and *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* invites contemporary philosophy to reconsider the interplay of ethics, truth-telling, and self-care. Practices such as parrhesia—the courageous speaking of truth—highlight the moral and political dimensions of self-formation, demonstrating that freedom is enacted not only inwardly but also relationally, in dialogue with others and in engagement with social structures. These insights resonate with contemporary ethical concerns, from bioethics to digital privacy, where the construction of the self intersects with both moral responsibility and systemic power.

Stoic Wisdom for Inner Freedom

Stoic exercises offer timeless strategies for cultivating resilience and equanimity: reflecting on impermanence, distinguishing between what is within one's control and what is not, and committing to daily ethical practice. In today's context, these methods can be adapted into journaling, mindfulness, and therapeutic practices, demonstrating that ancient philosophical tools remain relevant for fostering psychological well-being and moral clarity.

Foucault's Warnings About Invisible Power

Foucault reminds us that power is often diffuse and invisible, operating through norms, knowledge systems, and institutional structures rather than through overt coercion. Recognizing these mechanisms is essential for genuine freedom: it is not enough to cultivate inner discipline if one remains unaware of the social and cultural forces shaping desire, thought, and behavior. By combining Stoic self-discipline with Foucault's critical awareness, individuals can develop both resilience and insight, navigating the tensions between autonomy and influence with intentionality.

Building a Life That Resists and Creates

A life of ethical self-formation requires ongoing practice, reflection, and experimentation. Stoicism provides techniques for daily discipline, while Foucault offers strategies for questioning and reconfiguring the norms that shape us. Together, they encourage a life that is not only resilient in the face of adversity but also generative, capable of producing new forms of thought, action, and social relations.

Bonus Track: Journaling, Therapy, and the Digital Self

Modern tools such as journaling apps, therapy, and mindfulness programs can be seen as contemporary extensions of these ancient and modern practices. Seneca might view journaling apps as a form of disciplined reflection, while Foucault might interpret mindfulness coaching as a subtle site where power and self-formation intersect. These practices offer opportunities to cultivate self-awareness, ethical clarity, and emotional resilience, but they also require vigilance against becoming instruments of self-surveillance or social conformity.

A Daily Practice

In practice, care for the self demands both attention to inner life and critical engagement with external structures. This involves integrating Stoic exercises of reflection and self-discipline with Foucaultian insights into power, truth, and social norms. A daily practice might include journaling on one's desires and judgments, mindfulness to cultivate presence, and reflection on how social and digital environments shape thought and behavior. By doing so, individuals can pursue a form of freedom that is both deeply personal and critically aware, embodying the lessons of Stoicism and Foucault in a contemporary, interconnected world.

This synthesis of Stoic and Foucauldian perspectives offers a path toward a life that is self-directed yet socially attuned, disciplined yet creatively engaged, and ultimately free in ways that are both practical and ethically profound.

Here's a concise, structured workshop script for a **privacy-first evening-review session** inspired by the "Bonus Track" themes:

Evening Self-Reflection Workshop 1: Privacy-First

Duration: 20–30 minutes
Goal: Cultivate self-awareness, inner freedom, and care for the self while respecting your digital privacy.

1. Setting the Space (2 minutes)

- Find a quiet, comfortable spot.

- Silence notifications.

- Use a paper journal or an encrypted digital notebook (no cloud syncing).

Prompt:
"I am taking this time for myself, without outside eyes or judgment."

2. Daily Review (5–7 minutes)

- Reflect on the day's events, emotions, and actions.

- Ask yourself:

  - What went well today?

  - What challenged me?

  - How did I respond, and why?

- Optional Stoic twist: identify one action you could have handled with more virtue (courage, patience, honesty).

3. Truth Practices (5 minutes)

- Inspired by Foucault's *parrhesia*: speak truth to yourself.

- Prompt:

  - Where was I honest with myself today?

  - Where did I avoid uncomfortable truths?

  - What do I need to confront tomorrow?

4. Inner Freedom & Care (5 minutes)

- Focus on what you can control—thoughts, actions, responses.

- Journaling prompts:

- o How did I exercise freedom today?

- o Where did external pressures influence me unnecessarily?

- o One small act of self-care for tomorrow.

---

5. Closing Reflection (3–5 minutes)

- Write a short intention for tomorrow, mindful of both self-care and structural awareness:

  - o "Tomorrow, I will notice the forces shaping my choices and act intentionally within them."

- End with a moment of deep breath, grounding yourself in autonomy and presence.

Optional Extensions:

- Track themes over a week to notice patterns without sharing your data.

- Pair with meditation or light Stoic reading.

- Keep the session digital-free if possible for maximum privacy and reflection.

Privacy-First Evening-Review — Workshop Script 2

A concise, ready-to-run workshop (45 minutes) that teaches a Stoic-inspired nightly review while protecting participants' privacy and avoiding organizational co-optation. Use this script in community groups, therapy-adjacent settings, or optional workplace wellbeing sessions — **never** as a mandatory HR requirement.

Overview (for facilitator)

- **Duration:** 45 minutes (can be shortened to 30 min)

- **Format:** Brief intro → guided practice → private writing time → debrief (non-sharing) → closing.

- **Group size:** 6–20 recommended.

- **Materials:** Paper notebooks (recommended), pens, printed one-page template for each participant, optional on-device local file instructions.

- **Privacy rules (must read aloud):** no recording, no cloud backups by default, no sharing of entries, participation voluntary, resources for clinical help provided.

- **Facilitator role:** teach method, keep time, protect privacy, provide clinical referral if needed. Do **not** read or collect participants' journals.

Session plan (45 minutes)

1) Welcome & Ground Rules (5 min)

Facilitator (F): "Welcome. Tonight we'll learn a short Stoic-style evening review — a private, practical practice for reflection and small corrective action. Before we start: this is voluntary. Please keep everything you write private. If you use a device, set files to local/offline storage and disable cloud sync. I will not ask anyone to read aloud. If at any point you feel distressed, please stop writing and speak to me privately — we have a list of clinicians and helplines. Any questions? (Pause) Good — we'll begin."

Say aloud the privacy pledge: "We agree: (1) no recordings; (2) written entries remain private; (3) participation is voluntary; (4) this session isn't therapy — if you need urgent help we will provide referrals."

---

2) Brief Context (5 min)

F: "This practice draws on classical Stoic routines (Seneca's night account, Epictetus' focus on what is 'up to us,' Marcus' short prompts). It's a short, practical exercise: recall, examine internal moves, pick one corrective action, note one positive. We will do the steps privately and briefly."

(If you like, slide or board: a 4-item template — Recall → Impression/Assent → Corrective Action → One Good Thing.)

---

3) Guided Breathing & Grounding (3 min)

F (soft voice): "Close your eyes (optional). Take three slow breaths. Let the day settle like pages closing a book. Our review begins from calm attention."

4) Guided Prompting (7 min)

F reads prompts slowly; participants listen and mentally prepare to write. (No one shares.)

- "Recall one or two moments from today that still feel active in you. (30 sec) Write a short note: what happened?" (1 min)

- "Now focus on your inner reaction: what did you *assent* to — what judgement or automatic thought drove you? (E.g. 'This is urgent; I must respond now'; 'They meant to offend me'.)" (1.5 min)

- "Ask: Was that judgement up to me? Could I have framed it differently? (Epictetus: what is up to us?)" (1.5 min)

- "Write one concrete corrective action for tomorrow (one small step — e.g., 'Pause 3 deep breaths before replying to an email'). Make it specific and short." (1 min)

- "Finally: note one thing you did that went well today — a small success or kindness. Write it down." (1 min)

(Allow quiet music or soft timer beeps; keep lights dim if appropriate.)

5) Private Writing Time (10 min)

Participants write in silence using the short template.

Template (one page) — encourage printing/photocopy:

1. Time / Date: _____

2. Recall (one or two events): _____

3. Impression / Assent (what judgment drove you?): _____

4. Corrective Action (concrete, one step for tomorrow): _____

5. One Good Thing I Did Today: _____

Digital guidance (if participant uses a device):

- Save locally, **do not** sync to cloud.

- Use an app that supports local encryption or note files stored in a local folder with password protection.

- Do not take photos of the page to upload.

- If using an employer-provided device, prefer analog notebook.

Facilitator circulates silently; do **not** look at participants' pages.

---

6) Silent Reflection & Closing Ritual (5 min)

F (soft): "Close the page gently. Take two breaths. If you chose a corrective action, keep it brief in mind. If you noted something good, feel gratitude for it. This is not a test — it's training."

(Option: short bell/chime to mark the ritual close.)

---

7) Debrief (5–8 min, no sharing of written content)

F asks general, non-personal questions; participants may speak about process, not content.

Sample debrief prompts:

- "How was the practice of focusing on internal judgments rather than events?"

- "Did creating a single corrective action feel doable?"

- "Any thoughts about keeping this private vs. sharing it?"

Remind group: no one needs to disclose what they wrote.

---

8) Resources, Clinical Safety & Follow-up (2 min)

F: "If anything in your writing raised strong distress, please speak with me now or use these contacts." Provide printed resource list (local crisis numbers, recommended therapists, employee assistance program info, nearest clinical services). Repeat confidentiality and voluntariness.

Facilitator notes & precautions

- **Not therapy:** This is a reflective practice, not clinical therapy. If a participant discloses suicidal ideation or serious mental health concerns, follow your organization's crisis protocol immediately. (Have a script and contacts beforehand.)

- **Mandatory participation:** Never mandate journaling or provide entries to HR. If this workshop is offered at work, emphasize opt-in and data protections.

- **Recording & devices:** Switch phones to airplane mode if participants prefer; forbid room recording.

- **Accessibility:** Offer larger font templates, extra time, or audio prompts for participants with disabilities.

- **Cultural sensitivity:** Some traditions may frame "confession" differently — emphasize private repair rather than moralizing language.

- **Confidentiality reminder:** Facilitator does not keep entries; never ask for samples. If someone wants to share outside session, encourage peer-to-peer consent and voluntary sharing.

Optional workplace add-ons (only if voluntary & privacy-guaranteed)

- **Privacy covenant:** If employer sponsors the session, present a short vendor/HR covenant up front: "No HR access to entries; no analytics; full anonymization if aggregate feedback is collected; clinicians have clinical data protections." Have legal/HR sign off on covenant beforehand.

- **Steering committee:** Employee + independent ethics expert committee to review program annually.

- **Voluntary peer groups:** If participants want to form a discussion circle, set ground rules for consent, no data collection, and rotating facilitation.

Quick scripts (copy-paste) — facilitator voice

Intro   script:
"Welcome. We'll practice a short, private evening review. Keep your writing private. If using a device, save locally and disable cloud sync. Participation is voluntary. This is not therapy; if you feel distressed, please see the resources I'll hand out. Let's begin with three breaths…"

Privacy   pledge   (read   aloud):
"We agree: no recording, no sharing of written entries, voluntary participation, and available clinical referrals."

Closing   script:
"Thank you. Remember: small corrective steps, private ledger, and kindness to

yourself. If you'd like a one-page handout or a paper notebook, grab one. I'll be available for questions about resources."

Handout to give participants (one page)

- Title: **Privacy-First Evening Review — 5 Steps (10–15 min)**

- Steps: Breathing (1 min) → Recall (1–2 events) → Impression/Assent (2–3 lines) → One corrective action (1 line) → One good thing (1 line).

- Privacy tips: use paper or local file; disable cloud sync; never upload entries to employer systems; you own your notes.

- If distressed: immediate help — [local crisis number]; counselor list: [email/phone].

- Recommended reads (optional): Seneca, *Letters* 83; Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 1; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (selected passages).

Quick checklist for facilitators (before session)

- ☐ Prepare printed templates and resource list.

- ☐ Confirm confidentiality & crisis protocol.

- ☐ Provide paper notebooks or ensure participants know local storage settings.

- ☐ Announce voluntary nature and opt-out procedure.

- ☐ Arrange quiet space; disable recordings.

Chapter 5.2 — Conclusions: Freedom, Discipline, and the Self

I paused to let the argument settle and then wrote a concentrated, interpretive, and practically oriented concluding chapter. Below is **Chapter 5.2** — long, argument-dense, and richly cited in APA7 — drawing together the Stoic and Foucauldian threads, diagnosing tensions, and ending with a concrete "bonus track" that links ancient practice to journaling apps, therapy, and the society of control.

Introduction

This book has moved between two powerful families of thought: the Stoic tradition, understood as a set of practices (askēsis) for shaping judgment, passion, and action; and Michel Foucault's late ethics, understood as a genealogical investigation into how practices of the self become embedded within power-knowledge formations (Foucault, 1988; Foucault, 2005). The core claim advanced here is modest and dialectical: Stoic techniques can and do cultivate capacities necessary for individual autonomy (disciplined attention, cognitive reappraisal, courage), but those same techniques are historically portable — they can be incorporated into pastoral, pedagogical, bureaucratic, or market institutions that repurpose them for normalization, control, and governance (Hadot, 1995; Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1999). This concluding chapter synthesizes the book's findings, articulates two models of self-formation, highlights tensions and convergences, and sets out a pragmatic ethics for contemporary appropriation — one that keeps the Stoic resource of practice while heeding Foucauldian warnings about invisible power.

Two models of self-formation

Two paradigmatic models of how selves are formed run through our investigations.

1. **Practice-centred self-formation (Stoic model).** In this model, the self is fashioned by repeated exercises: premeditatio malorum, prosoche (attentive care), nightly review, imitation of exemplars, hypomnemata (self-writing). These techniques aim at internal transformation — re-training assent, habituating choices, and re-shaping affective dispositions toward *aretē* (virtue). The unit of analysis is the micro-practice and its telos: the formation of moral character and inner freedom (Hadot, 1995; Nussbaum, 1994; Graver, 2007).

2. **Genealogical-institutional self-formation (Foucauldian model).** Here the self is a historical effect of power/knowledge ensembles: disciplinary institutions, pastoral care, examination, and governmental rationalities produce certain kinds of subjects by making them knowable, legible, and governable. "Technologies of the self" are central, but they are always embedded within apparatuses that channel their effects toward population management or moral regulation rather than solely toward individual flourishing (Foucault, 1977; Foucault, 1988; Rose, 1999).

These two models are not mutually exclusive — rather, their intersection is the analytic site of greatest interest. Stoic practices are the micro-materials that, when re-sited within modern institutional frameworks, acquire additional functions (and risks) that Stoic authors did not and could not have imagined. Understanding that intersection

requires attending both to the fine-grained procedures of practice and to macro-architectures of power that reframe ends and reshape audiences.

Tensions and convergences

Several recurrent tensions emerged across the chapters; they also point toward productive convergences.

Tension 1: Freedom as mastery vs. freedom as non-domination. Stoic freedom is chiefly mastery of one's judgments and passions — an internal autonomy that frees the agent from perturbation (Epictetus; Marcus Aurelius). Foucauldian freedom, especially in the late lectures, is ambivalent: practices of the self can enable modes of refusal and parrhesia but can also be instruments of self-subjection if captured by regimes of truth (Foucault, 2005; Foucault, 2011). The tension is normative: is interior mastery enough, or must freedom also be non-domination — the capacity to resist external structures that impose suffering? Scholars like Oksala and Davidson press Foucault toward the former: a practice-sensitive politics of freedom that aims to expand spaces of critical agency while recognizing the constraints of power (Oksala, 2005; Davidson, 1994).

Tension 2: Therapy vs. normalization. Stoic techniques overlap empirically with CBT/REBT and mindfulness (Ellis; Beck; Robertson, 2010). The therapeutic translation can vindicate Stoic practice as empirically beneficial; yet the same therapeutic forms, when embedded in HR programs or platformized apps, risk normalizing adaptivity to precarious social arrangements (Rose, 1999; Zuboff, 2019). A convergent insight here is practical: therapy-like techniques must be anchored to social critique and structural remedy if they are to be ethically defensible in civic terms.

Tension 3: Private hypomnemata vs. public archives. Seneca's hypomnemata and Marcus' meditations presuppose a private ledger of self-inspection (Seneca, Letter 83; Marcus Aurelius, Meditations). Foucault documents the historical pivot whereby such private practices are folded into pastoral confession, bureaucratic record-keeping, and modern data infrastructures (Foucault, 1988; Foucault, 2005). The convergence is methodological: recovering the private, non-archived forms of self-writing (analog notebooks, encrypted local files) can preserve the practice's ethical core, while resisting the archival logics that make subjects governable.

Across these tensions we find a recurring convergence: practices matter. Both Stoic and Foucauldian frameworks grant practices analytic priority; disagreements turn on context, telos, and institutional embedding rather than on whether practices make a difference. This shared practice-sensitivity opens a space for ethical reconstruction: we may adapt Stoic techniques to contemporary life while designing institutional constraints that preserve agency and prevent instrumentalization.

Relevance for philosophy today

Three domains of contemporary philosophical relevance follow from the comparative work.

1. **Practical ethics and hermeneutics of self.** Hadot's recovery of spiritual exercises and Foucault's technologies of the self jointly rehabilitate ethics as a practical formation rather than as abstract rule-following (Hadot, 1995; Foucault, 1988). Contemporary philosophical ethics should therefore treat techniques and routines as primary data: how individuals are trained to perceive, judge, and feel is as philosophically significant as normative theory.

2. **Political philosophy and the critique of responsibilization.** The Foucauldian critique of governmentality and Rose's study of psychologized governance warn political philosophers that calls for personal resilience can become mechanisms of neoliberal responsibilization (Rose, 1999). Political theory must therefore consider how virtues are socially distributed and how institutional designs can demand or exploit certain virtues.

3. **Philosophy of technology and data ethics.** The emergence of journaling apps, mood trackers, and therapeutic platforms renders the hypomnemata digital and vulnerable to surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019). Philosophers of technology and applied ethicists must account for how affordances, data practices, and business models shape the moral ecology within which self-practices live.

Foucault's technologies of the self — a concise reappraisal

Foucault's late project — *Technologies of the Self*, *The History of Sexuality III*, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, and *The Courage of Truth* — provides three analytic resources.

- **Care of the self (epimeleia heautou).** Foucault demonstrates that ancient practices of self-care are technical, pedagogy-laden, and truth-oriented, and that they should be read as practical grammars for subjectivation (Foucault, 1984/1986). This recasts ethics as praxis and grounds our comparative enterprise: Stoic exercises are empirically visible instances of care-of-the-self.

- **Technologies of the self.** Foucault's typology (writing, memorization, examination, dietetics, and exercises) allows us to map Stoic techniques onto specific operations and to detect continuities and discontinuities in their institutional afterlives (Foucault, 1988).

- **Parrhesia and courage of truth.** The late lectures on parrhesia foreground the ethical-political dimension of truth-telling — practices of frankness that risk

speaker's safety and confront power (Foucault, 2011). Parrhesia connects Stoic moral courage to civic critique: disciplined subjects who have practiced truthfulness may be better equipped to enact parrhesiastic speech.

Foucault thus provides both a descriptive genealogy and a critical toolbox: he helps explain how the good of self-cultivation becomes intertwined with political effects, and why vigilance about institutional embedding is necessary.

What we can learn today

Stoic wisdom for inner freedom

Stoic practices retain three practical virtues for contemporary agents:

1. **Attention and discriminative assent.** Habitual attention to impressions and refusal to assent before testing (Epictetus) cultivates epistemic humility and reduces impulsive action (Epictetus, Enchiridion 1).

2. **Prefiguration and rehearsal.** Premeditatio malorum trains adaptive cognitive frameworks that can reduce trauma-driven reactivity and support resilient planning (Seneca; Marcus).

3. **Short-form scripts and memory anchors.** Aphoristic meditations (Marcus) provide quick attentional re-orientations under pressure — a practical technology for emotional regulation (Hadot, 1995).

These techniques, when practiced in privacy and with ethical teloi oriented toward common good, can foster forms of self-mastery that enable agency and courageous speech.

Foucault's warnings about invisible power

Foucault alerts us to at least three hazards:

1. **Pastoral capture.** Practices of private care can be folded into pastoral regimes that demand confession and produce knowledge for governance (Foucault, 1988).

2. **Normalization through metrics.** Practices that produce legible behavior (journals, mood scores) are amenable to aggregation and managerial use (Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1999).

3. **Responsibilization and depoliticization.** Encouraging individuals to adapt rather than to contest unjust conditions can reproduce structural injustices under the guise of personal virtue.

Taken together, these warnings counsel institutional literacy: practicing Stoic techniques is ethically incomplete without recognizing the power relations that may repurpose those techniques.

Building a life that resists and creates

A practicable ethic that combines Stoicism and Foucauldian insight involves three moves:

1. **Practice with contextual awareness.** Do the exercises (evening review, premeditation, attention), but always ask: "Who judges the outcome of this practice? Where do its records go? For what purpose am I cultivating this capacity?" (This follows the Foucauldian checklist developed earlier.)

2. **Anchor practice in collective projects.** Pair private cultivation with public accountability: discussion groups, peer review, civic action. Stoic discipline should fuel not only individual equanimity but also collective capacity for parrhesiastic critique.

3. **Institutional safeguards.** Where practices are institutionalized (workplaces, schools), insist on transparency, voluntariness, data minimization, and separation of therapeutic practice from managerial metrics (privacy-first architectures, analog hypomnemata, clinical oversight where needed).

These three moves aim to preserve the emancipatory kernel of Stoic practice while resisting its instrumentalization for governance.

Bonus Track — Journaling, Therapy, and the Digital Self

Evening reflections: from Seneca to journaling apps

Seneca's private audit, Marcus' notebooks, and Epictetus' interrogatives are the ancient templates of what we now call journaling. Yet the digital instantiation of journaling introduces two salient differences: (1) **persistence and searchability** — digital records are easily archived and queried; (2) **datafication and third-party access** — apps may monetize or surface data to employers or advertisers. The policy recommendations of Chapter 4 respond exactly to these differences (data-minimization, on-device storage, voluntariness).

Therapy and mindfulness as "Stoicism without the name"

CBT and REBT explicitly acknowledge Stoic antecedents (Ellis; Beck). Mindfulness practices, though arising from different religious-philosophical lineages, overlap functionally with Stoic attention exercises. The contemporary convergence produces valuable therapeutic outcomes (reappraisal, reduced rumination, improved emotion

regulation), but it also yields the pitfalls described earlier when these practices become corporate "perks" rather than supports embedded in structural reform.

Foucault in the age of self-tracking and social media

Foucault's analytics of power are eerily prescient in the age of self-tracking and social platforms. Self-tracking turns private metrics into publicizable, monetizable feeds; social media habituates self-presentation and fosters performative reflection. The hypomnema becomes a dashboard; parrhesia risks translation into curated self-disclosure. Deleuze's "society of control" supplements Foucault here: control is no longer attached to fixed institutions but modulated through networks, platforms, and continuous modulation (Deleuze, 1992). The antidote is not technophobia but institutional design: encryption, design for non-export, and civic norms that protect reflective privacy.

Bonus Track — Stoics → Foucault → You (short vignettes)

- **What Seneca would think of your journaling app.** Seneca would approve of earnest, private audit but recoil at cloud backups that expose the soul to advertisers or employers. He would insist that the ledger remain an instrument of interior reformation, not external legibility.

- **How Foucault might see your mindfulness coach.** Foucault would appreciate the coach's fostering of attentive capacities but ask: "Who benefits from this enhanced adaptability? Does it reinforce governance structures? Who controls the data?" His response would aim to politicize the practice: use it to strengthen capacities for critique, not only compliance.

- **A daily practice: care for yourself, but notice the structures shaping you.** Practically: maintain a private nightly review; pair it with a monthly civic check (discussion with peers about structural causes of stress); resist organizational programs that require data sharing; and, when in doubt, translate therapy into political action — combine inner cultivation with external change.

Final thought

Stoicism and Foucault together give us a double lens: one for technique, the other for context. The former teaches us how to train attention, regulate passions, and enact ethical repair; the latter reminds us to read those practices politically — to ask what institutional grammars enable or appropriate them. The ethical project for our time is to keep both lenses focused simultaneously: to cultivate inner capacities that nurture courage and compassion, and to build institutions that respect privacy, resist depoliticizing adaptation, and enable parrhesiastic speech. In that hybrid practice —

disciplined, reflective, and politically literate — Stoicism's ancient tools may yet help us to live in ways that resist and create.

Select bibliography (APA7)

Beck, A. T., Rush, A. J., Shaw, B. F., & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive therapy of depression*. Guilford Press.

Deleuze, G. (1992). Postscript on control societies. *October*, 59, 3–7.

Davidson, A. I. (1994). Ethics as ascetics: Foucault, the history of ethics, and ancient thought. In G. Gutting (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Foucault* (pp. 115–140). Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, A. (2003). *The art and science of rational emotive behavior therapy* (D. D. David & S. J. Lynn, Eds.). American Psychological Association. (Original work published 1957)

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1975)

Foucault, M. (1984/1986). *The history of sexuality, vol. 3: The care of the self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1984)

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hutton, Eds.). University of Massachusetts Press.

Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2011). *The courage of the truth: The government of self and others II: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Graver, M. (2007). *Stoicism and emotion*. University of Chicago Press.

Hadot, P. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (M. Chase, Trans.). Blackwell.

Marcus Aurelius. (2002). *Meditations* (M. Hays, Trans.). Modern Library.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1994). *The therapy of desire: Theory and practice in Hellenistic ethics*. Princeton University Press.

Oksala, J. (2005). *Foucault on freedom*. Cambridge University Press.

Robertson, D. J. (2010). *The philosophy of cognitive-behavioural therapy: Stoic philosophy as rational and cognitive psychotherapy*. Routledge.

Rose, N. (1999). *Governing the soul: The shaping of the private self*. Free Association Books.

Sorabji, R. (2000). *Emotion and peace of mind: From Stoic agitation to Christian temptation*. Oxford University Press.

Zuboff, S. (2019). *The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power*. PublicAffairs.

Privacy-First Evening Review

Date: _____   Time: _____

Privacy Reminder

- Keep entries private.
- Use paper or local file: **not** to sync to cloud or share.
- Participation is voluntary.
- If distressed, contact a clinicia n or cisis linie or crisis line immediate.

---

1) Breathing & Grounding (1–2 min)

- Close your eyes (optional).
- Take 3 slow, deep breathshs.
- Let the day settle like closing a book.

2) Recall Events (2–3 min)

- Briefly note 1–2 moments from today.

_____

_____

3) Impression / Assent (2–3 min)

- What judgment or thought drove you r reacctio non?
- Which of these were truly under your control?

4) Corrective Action (1–2 min)

- One smail, concrete step for tommorrow.

5) One Good Thing (1 min)

- Note one positive action or s ucces from today.

Stoic Prompt *'When you drise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive — to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love."*
— Marcus Aurelius

Fig. 2 A printable one-page handout