



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

40
FOUCAULT
WORLD CONGRESS
FOUCAULT: 40 YEARS AFTER
BUCUREȘTI

The International Conference *The Courage of Truth in a Post-Truth World*



FACULTY OF
PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF
BUCHAREST



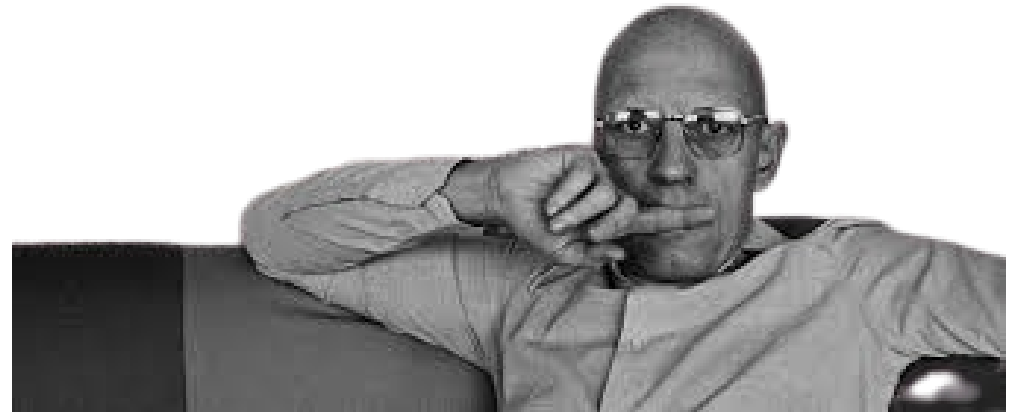
Michał
Kozłowski,
University of
Warsaw

*Foucault
Historized*



In 1977, Jean Baudrillard wrote a pamphlet called *Forget Foucault* proclaiming Foucault's discourse is a mirror of the powers it describes. However, Foucault did not fall into oblivion, at the end of the twentieth century, from the point of view of the social sciences at least, he rather became the embodiment of the *Zeitgeist*. In 2009, according to Thompson Reuters, Foucault led the ranking of the most cited scholars, while the ranking itself was a product of strictly "Foucauldian" categories, neoliberalism, governmentality, the power of classification and, last but not least, *assujettissement*. Foucault's archive, to use Philippe Artières term, has become more than a toolbox, it has become the unsurpassable horizon of our time. From discipline to *parrhesia*, from feminism to decolonialism, Foucault's extremely heterogeneous categories found synergy with the practice of researchers and Foucault's archipelago did not recognize the boundaries of disciplines or even political orientations. Of course, not everyone agreed with Foucault, and few accepted his anti-essentialist, anti-causal credo without reservation, but attempts to ostentatiously overlook Foucault were rather desperate and counter-productive. The question I want to address is whether the rapid transformation of the global landscape, which we have been witnessing since at least 2008, still allows for this peculiarly Foucault-centric worldview. Perhaps to historicize Foucault means to make him the first archivist of the neoliberal era, which is now passing away.

Le courage de la vérité dans un monde de la post-vérité – is in fact a central question and the answer is far from obvious. Can the scandal of a lie be studied using the concept of the scandal of truth? In other words, does Foucault provide us with the tools to understand the hybrid of post-fascism? Would he suggest that the climate crisis is yet another incarnation of Malthusianism? When shameless power replaces discrete power, and marco-power overwhelms micro-power, what does Foucault have to tell us? The point is not to forget Foucault. It's about what he himself always recommended: to historicize, to relativize, to look for boundaries.



Cristian Iftode,

University of
Bucharest

*Foucault's Stance
on Truth: A
Pragmatist View?*



The aim of my presentation is to exonerate Foucault from accusations of being an irresponsible relativist and a precursor of the post-truth era by emphasizing the main stages in the history of the problem of truth in Foucault, beyond the Nietzschean claim that truth has a history of its own. The recently published *Philosophical Discourse*, dating from 1966, begins by contrasting two meanings of truth: disclosure and manifestation. Another structural opposition stands at the heart of the 1970 lectures at the Collège de France: *volonté de savoir* (will to know) vs. *désir de connaissance* (desire for knowledge), with the former being linked to what will later be called a “regime of truth.” In the 1974 lectures *Psychiatric Power*, Foucault partially reconsiders the issue, drawing on M. Detienne’s thesis on the “masters of truth in Ancient Greece” and contrasting truth-demonstration with truth-event. This opposition reappears in the 1982 lectures as the distinction between “knowledge” and “spirituality”. Truth-demonstration, in its historical origin, is nothing more than a “ritual,” one moment or one form of truth as an event, which becomes predominant in the Western world and establishes itself by denying the very existence of other forms or meanings of truth. Another critical “parenthesis” occurs in the 1981 lectures about the “supplement” of truth in relation to reality and the rejection of “the logicist dodge”: “Reality does not contain in itself the *raison d’être* of discourse.” Foucault’s final years, particularly the 1983 and 1984 lectures, provide a decisive twist in

his problematization of truth. Here, he proposes a dramatics of true discourse, complementing the Austinian pragmatics of discourse, the first being focused on showing “how the very event of the enunciation may affect the enunciator’s being.” This political as well as ethical dimension of truth is what Foucault is interested most about. There is truth as “alethurgy” and parrêsia: a “production of truth” that enables us to assess how relativist or skeptical Foucault really was, and also to view him as a pragmatist of a peculiar kind, differing from Rorty on several crucial points.



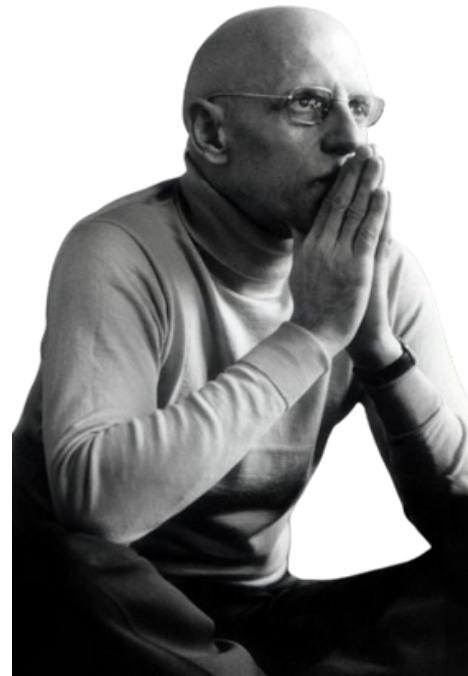
Adèle Maudeux

Bucharest's
French-Romanian
Law College

*The post-truth era
through mirrored by
two philosophical
testaments: Le
Courage de la Vérité
(Foucault, 1984) &
Humanisme et
Démocratie (Saïd,
2004)*

La lecture conjointe des testaments de Foucault et Saïd pose un problème majeur de notre actualité : faut-il philosopher entre amis, pratiquer la parrêsia individuellement face à ceux qui exercent le pouvoir, critiquer toute tentative de véridiction ; ou faut-il prétendre à la vérité, poursuivre le rêve du philosophe-roi et l'idéal de la justice sociale et cosmopolite ? En d'autres termes, que faire de la critique, que faire du pouvoir, que peuvent les philosophes ? Saïd, 20 ans après *le Courage de la Vérité*, lègue dans son dernier ouvrage *Humanisme et Démocratie* une conception opposée des rapports entre subjectivité, savoir et pouvoir. Alors que la parrêsia foucaldienne est indissociable du cynisme, le courage de l'intellectuel prôné par Saïd se comprend à travers la définition qu'il donne de l'humanisme. Leur point commun est de léguer des modalités possibles de recherche de la vérité dans notre contexte philosophique et politique, qu'ils devinent. En distinguant le concept de critique chez Foucault et Saïd, et en restituant chaque pensée dans son contexte, on dégage des divergences épistémologiques et éthiques. Mais ce problème ethico-épistémologique resterait abstrait si on ne s'attaquait pas au problème économique-politique actuel qui le sous-tend, et qui relève d'un nouvel art de gouverner et de produire de la richesse (algorithmes, appels d'offre, usages politiques du dire-faux, post-vérité). L'espace dans lequel pratiquer de la « philosophie » (Foucault) et des « humanités » (Saïd) semble se décentraliser, dans les pays où les deux penseurs ont vécu, pour être remplacé

par des espaces plus marginaux (réels ou virtuels). Il s'agit donc de déplacer la problématique d'un conflit entre deux avatars du philosophe (parrêsiaste foucaldien, humaniste saïdien) vers les limites que les modalités actuelles de l'exercice du pouvoir posent à la recherche de la vérité. Cette réflexion nous poussera à questionner la pertinence du concept « post-vérité » pour désigner notre actualité : parle-t-on d'une société qui se désintéresse de la recherche de la vérité et du dire-vrai, d'une pratique normalisée du dire-faux dans le jeu politico-médiatique encouragé par les technologies de l'information et de la communication, voire d'une confiscation de la vérité ?



Andrei
Mărășoiu,

University of
Bucharest

*An Archaeology
of Emergentism*

Exploring truth guided by Foucault raises the question of the putatively most credible sources of truth, various scientific pursuits. I argue that the archaeological project articulated in Foucault's *Les mots et les choses* shares an important commonality with the "unity of science" debate mid-20th century: that of making it possible for us to articulate alternative narratives concerning the relationship between psychology and economics (both, broadly construed). All the while historically equivocal, the debate is foundational to both the contemporary foundations of cognitive science and those of social science. On the one hand, one might expect that agents on the market are (or reduce to) primarily people, which makes individual expectations and preferences (a matter of psychology) foundational with respect to patterns of interaction, including trade, competition, etc. On the other hand, the ability to specify the expectations and preferences in question may only – or best – be specified socially, which reverts a putative basing relation. I argue we may take a double stance concerning Foucault's project. First, it is not mandatory to always follow the history of scientific development (where macroeconomics predates experimental psychology with around a century). Second, paying heed to history affords more nuanced, modular relationships between areas of psychology and of economics that undercut a simple disciplinary hierarchy, suggesting that the unity of science project may be reconceived in a finer grained way, at the level of individual projects and research traditions rather than that of wholesale disciplines.

Daniel Nica,

University of
Bucharest

*Maturity and Its
Discontents:
Foucault's
Appropriation of
Kantian
Enlightenment*

In “Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?”, Foucault's relationship with Kant is a complicated one. On one hand, Foucault actively subverts Kant's premises and intentions, turning the German philosopher upside down by reversing his foundationalist question (What is necessarily behind all appearances?) into an anti-foundationalist one (What is contingent behind all necessary and universal truths?). But, on the other hand, Foucault's revisionist reading of Kant's “Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?” claims to be in the spirit of the Kantian struggle to interrogate the present, with all its prejudices, and thus liberate the human being.

In order to maintain this liberating ethos of Enlightenment, Foucault shifts the focus from the Kantian link between epistemology and ethics (which binds individuals to power relations, due the equivalence between power and knowledge) to the link between ethics and aesthetics (which promises a more playful type of freedom). This is how the aesthetics of existence is born. And, in this way, Foucault's central question becomes: “How can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?”

This is a shift from the explicit Kantian goal of attaining maturity to an aspiration towards an elusive form of freedom reminiscent of childhood innocence. In my paper, I will argue that Foucault's quest for such a growth without power relations is, in fact, an unconscious regression toward a child-like form of liberation.

My point is that the growth of humans and their capacities is correlated with the process of being increasingly caught up in the impersonal web of power relations. As such, Foucault's reading and appropriation of Enlightenment reveals a paradoxical ambition.

My claim is that Foucault, perhaps unconsciously, aspires to a kind of regression to a childlike state of freedom – a pure yet unattainable liberation within the intricacies of adulthood and intellectual maturity. By longing for a return to a state where freedom is unencumbered by the complexities of power relations, Foucault inadvertently champions a form of liberation that is both pure and unattainable in the realm of real adult life.



Cezar Mihalcea,

University
Babeş-Bolyai

*Producing
subjectivity
through truth-
telling; to a
critique of non-
political parrhesia*

At a first glance, parrhesia, or truth-telling, appears to constitute a series of practices for producing a kind of individual truth. As Foucault points out, parrhesia has, since antiquity, denoted the act of telling the truth about oneself. Under the dominant, ethical interpretations of this concept, truth-telling techniques are rendered unto individually determined action that may even be understood as a form of non-political escape into authenticity. In this intervention, I stand to challenge these conceptions, arguing instead that, as opposed to producing some form of truth, parrhesia (and most notably philosophical parrhesia) engenders a form of politically coded subjectivity. Truth-telling, in this sense, emerges as a technology wherein the claim to truth is inscribed into an individual logic, as opposed to a systemic one. This, however, can be construed in two ways: on the one hand, the subjectivity produced in this manner may deter systemic responses, and thus, for instance, enable the existence of a platform under political pressure; or, to the contrary, its discursive mechanisms risk being assimilated into political power structures as auxiliary organs. It can be argued whether the risk of the second phenomenon eclipses the potential benefits of the first; however, as I show here, contemporary power dynamics - instantiated in the corporation, social media and the state structure, amongst other incarnations - have successfully appropriated the parrhesiastic apparatus for their own goals, undermining the “truth” of the individual in the process. In other

words, subjectified truth-telling has largely been ineffective at challenging oppressive systems, which have, in turn, managed to simulate the former into a power-reproducing mechanism. In light of this, I propose here that the deconstruction of predominant ethical conceptions of truth-telling techniques, in the form expressed so far, can provide the foundation for elaborating a set of distinctly systemic critiques of political structures and practices, that, in this case, should be largely immune to appropriation by the latter.



Sorin Gog,
University
Babeş-Bolyai

*Foucault's
emancipation
project and the
new forms of neo-
liberal subjectivity*

This paper focuses on the global emergence of personal and development programs and the way they are embedded in various fields such as management of human resources, psychotherapy, spirituality, medicine and well-being activities. Following Chandler and Reid (2016) I argue that these new formative programs of self-development socialize a neo-liberal subject that is centered on the articulation of personal creativity, resilience and flexibility that is in tune with the late capitalist transformations and the reconfiguration of labor markets. One of the most important technologies of the self that is encountered in these new spaces focuses on self-reliance and inner-power that encourages the subject to develop an entrepreneurial-ization of the 'abundant' resources one finds present in their own selves. These practices of the self are not limited to popular culture; based on sociological and ethnographic data I show how they start to be an important component of various professional fields. The paper engages methodologically with a Marxist and Foucauldian anthropological approach to the relation between personal and spiritual development programs and the formation of neo-liberal subjectivities and discusses the limits of both. Marxist theories of cultural hegemony and false-consciousness are not able to explain how the subject constitute him/her-self and the specific material technologies of the self one employs in order to produce a desired subjectivity.

The new spirit of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005) can creatively re-invent itself because it incorporates in its transformation new forms of criticisms (social or artistic) which render it meaningful to workers-subjects, both in terms of general legitimacy and self-development (practical abilities, authenticity, modes of social interactions). Foucault's approach manages to do this, but because it disconnects the desired emancipation project ("We have to promote new forms of subjectivity") from a political economy it fails to explain why the self produces those innerfeatures in accordance with the needs of neo-liberal structures. In this context I analyze Foucault's engagement with Greek, Latin and early Christian practices of the self and ask if Foucault's 'new forms of subjectivity' have not been absorbed by the late capitalist developments.



Diana Maria
Miheș,

University
Babeș-Bolyai

*Authority and
Honesty:
Parrhesia, Cynical
Militancy, and the
Realities of
Modern Activism*

Contemporary society is endeavoring to combat systemic issues, and in light of this, revolutionary discourse is currently as widespread as ever, owing to a growing number of activists who are striving to address various topics. Drawing inspiration from Foucault's final lectures at the Collège de France in 1984, I aim to explore the paradoxical nature of activism in today's socio-political landscape, reflected in the way in which modern activism navigates the inherent conflict between revolutionary ambitions and practical limitations within the existing societal structure. By weighing in this facet of the foucauldian project that delves into cynicism, I will convey how the phenomenon of militancy interacts with contemporary activism and the antithesis it creates due to the fact that movements which claim to challenge dominant institutions often end up operating within the boundaries of the existing system rather than actively seeking to undermine or overthrow it. As such, my contribution examines the intricate relationship between contemporary activism and the philosophical ideas of Michel Foucault, specifically focusing on the contrast between cynical militancy and modern activism and how today's anti-establishment methods work within the system rather than against it. I inquire into the manifestation of today's militancy as a means of resistance, which, although vocal, ultimately fails to address the underlying causes of systemic injustices. Contemporary activism often avoids directly confronting established power structures

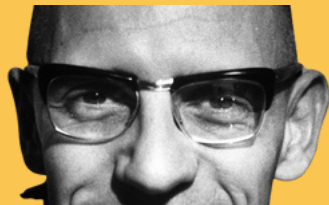
and instead focuses on symbolic actions or gradual changes, which can uphold the existing system rather than address underlying inequalities. This intervention emphasizes the urgent need for thoughtful reflection within activist communities and calls for a reevaluation of strategies by doing a thorough analysis of the concept of authentic militancy. The aim is to incite discussion and encourage deeper exploration of the potential and constraints of revolutionary ideas in the realm of modern activism. I intend to analyze the gap between revolutionary ideals and practical execution, with the goal of understanding the challenges involved in bringing about societal transformation. Additionally, I want to identify potential ways in which revolutionary ideas can be realized in the contemporary world while also acknowledging their limits.



Cezar Gheorghe,

The National
University of
Theatre and
Film, Bucharest

*The medical films
of Dr. Gheorghe
Marinescu – a
biopolitical
analysis*



My paper analyses the medical films of Dr. Gheorghe Marinescu that were filmed at the end of the 19th century at the Pantelimon Hospital in Bucharest. While these films were not made for a wide audience preoccupied by cinema, I propose to expand our notion of the cinematic medium to include medical films. In my analysis, I plan to use the notion of biopolitics, as it was defined by Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality*. In his definition of biopower, Foucault claimed that this new type of power evolved as an “anatomo-politics” of the human body. The medium of cinema and medical films are thus very important as they describe the effects of biopower through an entire imagistics of the body.

Dragoş Jipa,
l'Université de
Bucarest

*Michel Foucault
inconnu. Une
visite à
l'Université de
Bucarest*

Le voyage de Michel Foucault à Bucarest, en 1966, avant la publication de son ouvrage *Les Mots et les Choses*, est resté une énigme dans sa biographie. Sans un souvenir personnel du philosophe et en l'absence de mentions dans la presse ou la critique littéraire roumaine, beaucoup de personnes ont cru qu'il n'avait jamais eu lieu. En réalité, le voyage a été organisé dans le cadre de l'accord culturel franco-roumain qui venait d'être signé en 1965, mais les autorités roumaines ont veillé à ce qu'il passe inaperçu pour le grand public. À partir de sources inédites, cette communication se propose deux objectifs : le premier est de raconter la visite de Foucault à Bucarest et à l'Université de Bucarest et le second est de montrer comment les « techniques d'hospitalité » (Cœuré, 2017) de l'État communiste et l'état du champ intellectuel roumain à l'époque ont fait en sorte que cette visite soit à la fois une réussite de la diplomatie culturelle française et un mystère pour tous les spécialistes de Foucault.



Ciprian Mihali, l'Université Babeş-Bolyai de Cluj

Courage de la vérité et critique de la post-vérité



L'avènement des chevaliers de l'apocalypse numérique – la post-vérité, les pseudo-sciences, les théories du complot, la désinformation, l'ignorance volontaire et j'en passe – nous invite aujourd'hui, nous oblige même à remettre en discussion les stratégies de subjectivation dans le contexte d'un nouveau régime social et culturel de la vérité. Que peut faire la philosophie aujourd'hui dans sa vocation de diagnostique de l'actualité et en tant qu'exercice critique visant à repérer les exigences éthiques de notre existence individuelle et sociale ? Comment peut-elle lutter aujourd'hui, au risque de sa réputation ou de son confort, contre les revendications identitaires qui réduisent la présence au monde à une confirmation incessante de la vérité de soi ? Comment arrive-t-elle à induire des réflexes d'altération nous ouvrant vers un monde autre et à provoquer des ouvertures à la réalité et à l'étrangeté de l'autre ?

Bogdan Ghiu,

chercheur
indépendent

*Productions de
vérité: Dead Zone,
aléthurgie,
réécriture de
l'humain*

Mon intervention vise à vérifier et à questionner, en essayant (autant que possible !) d'éviter les actualisations forcées et les anachronismes, les actualités – au pluriel – de la pensée de Michel Foucault, en mettant au centre, comme un écran multicéphale, la notion d'exposition (d'autrui, par autrui, de soi, à soi, etc.). Il y a 20 ans, 20 ans après la mort de Foucault, je disais dans une conférence donnée dans le cadre du projet *24 H Foucault* de l'artiste Thomas Hirschhorn au Palais de Tokyo à Paris que, dans le Panopticon de Bentham (redécouvert par Foucault dans *Surveiller et punir*), l'homme passe de l'anneau extérieur, c'est-à-dire de la position de cible et de support du pouvoir et de la production de positivités, quelque part entre cet anneau et la tour centrale d'observation, à ce que Bentham appelait *Dead Zone*, devenant, autrement dit, un environnement humain traversé et ouvert à de possibles réécritures sur le sable (métaphoriquement : le silicium) de la plage de la fameuse fin du livre *Les Mots et les Choses*, à la notion d'humanité-arhive dans *Le Discours philosophique*. L'exposition de soi est-elle nécessaire à l'auto-réflexivité éthique ?



Jason Hartford,

Université de
Dundee

*De l'enseignement
de l'histoire chez
Foucault et Péguy:
regards, intérêts,
enjeux*



Considérons les enjeux de la parrhésie dans une question pertinente à toute société moderne : l'enseignement de l'histoire. Nous proposons d'aborder la problématique de la transmission des vérités supposées et discutables de l'histoire, par le biais d'une comparaison des approches à la définition et à la mise-en-énonciation de l'histoire de deux penseurs radicaux français : Foucault bien sûr, et en contrepoint le polémiste Charles Péguy (1873-1914). La relation des sources à l'histoire se pose comme enjeu central de l'approche archéologique, aussi bien qu'à la vision de la Thèse (ca. 1912) inachevée de Péguy. Voici une piste vers la confrontation aux rapports, aux lacunes, aux choix qui structurent les réalités de «source», «fait», «vérité», parrhésie et enseignement. Or le sens de ces mots cités ci-dessus se discutent déjà vivement chez le destinataire du discours éducationnel, voire pédagogique : le peuple.

Comment définir l'enseignement de l'histoire sous les conditions de la parrhésie ? Comment aborder les responsabilités critiques, éthiques de l'historien.ne lors d'une contestation discursive et médiatique effrénée ? Ne tardons pas à reconnaître la modernité, la pertinence actuelle des éléments constitutifs du discours contemporain à Péguy : polarisation, amertume, grandeur voire grandiosité, nationalisme, intégrisme, objectivités discutables et discutées... Bien sûr par ailleurs que l'enseignement de l'histoire peut déterminer sa constitution.

Pourtant que Péguy ne fût que part bien tangentielle de l'académie, sa vision des responsabilités de l'historien — mise en rapport avec ses activités de polémiste — nous offre un interlocuteur à grand potentiel vis-à-vis des positions de Foucault. Que la pensée de l'ère de l'Affaire Dreyfus et des querelles autour de l'éducation nationale, de la laïcité, prenne sa part de lumière lors d'une réflexion sur la parrhésie à l'époque des nouvelles polémiques nationalistes, intégristes, et du fake news.



Adrian Niță,
Institut de
Philosophie
“C. Rădulescu-
Motru”,
Académie
Roumaine

*Sur le courage de
la vérité et la
compréhension*

Dans le dernier cycle de conférences donné au Collège de France en 1983-1984, peu avant sa mort, Michel Foucault a parlé pendant une année entière du courage de la vérité (*parrhesia* en grec). Caractérisée par la vérité, l'engagement et le risque, cette phrase veut souligner qu'il ne suffit pas de dire clairement et ouvertement ce que nous pensons - car ce serait une sorte de bavardage, un bavardage avec lequel nous pouvons éventuellement tuer notre temps, mais il ne s'agirait en aucun cas du courage de la vérité.

En revanche, ni la sagesse ni la diplomatie ne sont propres au courage de la vérité, même si l'on dit des sages qu'ils disent toujours ce qu'ils pensent et des diplomates qu'ils prononcent des paroles élégantes et agréables même dans les situations les plus tragiques.

On voit qu'au-delà de l'ouverture et de la vérité, il faut ajouter le risque : nous n'avons le courage de la vérité que lorsque nous risquons quelque chose par ce que nous disons ouvertement ; nous risquons de perdre un ami, si nous faisons preuve de *parrhesia*, nous risquons de perdre un poste ou un emploi, si nous disons au patron, avec l'attitude de *parrhesia*, une vérité inconfortable, ou même, point culminant du risque, nous perdons la vie. Ici, nous pouvons penser à la fois à Socrate, qui a toujours et toujours dit des vérités inconfortables pour la jeune démocratie athénienne, ou à Navalny qui a dit la vérité avec courage dans une société totalitaire, ce qui lui a coûté la vie.

Mon objectif dans cette recherche est d'aborder certaines conséquences de l'idée de Foucault selon laquelle la parrêsia est dangereuse à la fois pour la démocratie et l'autocratie. Je me concentrerai sur les aspects de la compréhension et de la compréhension empathique pour souligner le besoin d'éthique de notre époque (par opposition à la modernité, centrée sur la raison et la science, ou à l'Antiquité, centrée sur la foi et la religion). Je montrerai comment les membranes de compréhension, propres à notre époque, doivent fusionner les niveaux descriptif, narratif et prescriptif pour qu'une action soit bonne, même lorsqu'elle est caractérisée par la vérité, l'engagement et le risque.



Cristina Ursu,

The State
University of
Moldova

*The Truth
Within: Cynic and
Christian
Perspectives on
The Silent Way*

Ancient Cynicism and Christian asceticism relate to the rudimentary way of being. The rudimentary way of being manifests beyond internalized discourse, encompassing “evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness” (Mark 7:21-22). If the short road to virtue, according to Foucault, would be the way of exercise, described as “relatively easy, and does not require great effort” – “the silent way”, the long way would be through logos (doctrinal apprenticeship) – the way of discourse, described as “hard, arduous”, with many obstacles. We believe that “the silent way” entails the quieting of thoughts. The simplicity and practicality of Kynismus is a shortcut, a short way (suntomos odos) in the image of Demetrius the Cynic who asserts that it is better to follow a few precepts than to know many without applying them.

Therefore, Kynismus had an elementary theoretical framework, being exiled from the honorable field of philosophy, yet its essence remained universally valuable across time. Elitist reluctance to Cynicism also stems from the difficulty in accepting the shortcut to virtue, even questioning the existence of such a shortcut. The to-and-for of discourses in society generates too much tumult and resonance to be evaded. Universal Cynicism, therefore, manifests itself in a parallel space of human existence, in the thoughtless space with a pure heart.

Here, the freedom to live is revealed in truth; freedom of thought being the essence of truth. It is precisely here that connections are made with Christianity and the teachings of the Holy Fathers who regard thoughts as deceptive and of bad character, as Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Theophan the Recluse and Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov write about “How to fight with thoughts?”. When attention slips away, it is lost and torn from the heart (from the existence of the day) by various false thoughts. When thought scatters and wanders, when evil shows itself in all its detail, and when the hidden courses of the mind astray from truth are understood. It is precisely the space freed from thoughts that gives courage to tell the truth of/to oneself and reckoning them as nothing involves being and action in simple, yet righteous steps.



Mugurel
Păvăluță,

Carl-von-
Ossiëtzky-
Universität
Oldenburg

*The Early
Christian
Parrhesia
According to
Michel Foucault*

Foucault speaks about *parrhesia* as a personal relationship to the truth, in which the speaker chooses freely the sincerity instead of persuasion, the criticism instead of flattery, putting at risk his own life or security for the sake of the truth. Beyond Cynicism, Neoplatonism, Stoicism as well as great philosophers of Antiquity, as for instance Plato or Epictetus, Foucault extends his critical considerations also over the Christian position regarding the parrhesia, *i.e.* the truthful correspondence between the subject (speaker or doer) and his actions (speech or act). Consequently, this essay sets out to present Foucault's perception and understanding of the parrhesiastic phenomenon in Christian antiquity. The presentation is structured in two parts. After a general introduction to Foucault's understanding of parrhesia, the first part deals with the Foucauldian differentiation between philosophical and Christian parrhesia. After considering them as a continuum of the same historical period of the Antiquity, Foucault only made this distinction in the last years of his life. For Foucault, Christian ethics opens a differentiated path for a specific parrhesia. The second part refers to the specificity of Christian asceticism and its Foucauldian interpretation as parrhesia. Here plays the Foucauldian analysis of Christian monasticism as a parrhesiastic relation to the self a central role. Both parts of the work base on Foucault's analyses of various writings of the early Christian Church. We are thinking here in particular of Tertulian and John Cassian.

In addition, Foucault's interpretations regarding the mysteries (such as baptism or penance) of the early church are also considered. A conclusion summarizes what has been found in the two parts. In addition, an attempt is made to answer an important question about Foucault's attitude to early Christianity. For Foucault, Christian ethics opens a differentiated path for a specific *parrhesia*. At the heart of Christian ethical teaching is obedience as an absolute value for Christian life and Christian faith. The big question that arises here is whether *parrhesia*, which is conditioned by obedience, is still an authentic act of truthfulness or whether it overshadows it.



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*Mapping the
Discourse: A
Visual Aid in
Understanding
Foucault's The
Courage of Truth
Lectures at Collège
de France*

Michel Foucault's work is a popular theoretical framework through which students and academics analyse concepts and events, regardless of the field of research. Within the scope of digital humanities, there is research that concentrates on Foucault's written works, such as *From the Archive to the Computer: Michel Foucault and the Digital Humanities* (Henning Schmidgen, Bernhard Dotzler, and Benno Stein, 2023) or *Foucault, the Digital Humanities, the Method* (Simon Ganahl, 2023). Besides Foucault, other philosophical texts and thinkers that have been analysed through digital tools are the ancient philosophers (*Ancient Philosophers: A First Statistical Survey* by Richard Goulet, 2013), or Friedrich Nietzsche (*Nietzsche's Moral Psychology* by Mark Alfano, 2019). Building on Foucault's spatial tendencies to map history and human interactions, this presentation aims to offer a visual understanding of Foucault's *The Government of Self and Others* and *The Courage of Truth*, both independently and in connection to one another. This endeavour will be done by creating parallel Foucaultian grammars, concentrating on the most popular occurrences within the corpora, using graphs or other corpus query tools. The initiative will analyse the texts in English and French because the author is interested in identifying if Foucault's lectures are interpreted differently because of the language. This project can be used for education purposes and can be scaled up in future research to include all of Foucault's lectures at Collège de France.

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The spell of Truth-Telling in a Post-Truth world



Nowadays, it seems like Foucault's dream of pharresiatric practices have become a nightmare. In a post-truth world, at first sight, everyone is indulging in 'speaking their own truth'. However, if we look more closely, we can easily spot several differences between what Foucault describe as parrhesia and the way people express their truth in our post-truth political setting. I spot at least two major differences: one at the level of the subject, and one at the level of truth.

Parrhesia was Foucault's response to the problem of subjectification he raised more than a decade earlier. Within a foucauldian framework, the subject it is not something fixed, an underlying ego that must be discovered and it is revealed through truth telling. On the contrary, truth telling is a practice aimed at constantly shaping and reshaping our own subjectivity, while at the same time addressing current issues present in the political body, reinforcing the bond between the individual and the community. However, in our current political setting, 'speaking the truth' is more a way to express identity and reinforce their own beliefs rather than reconsidering their own subjectivity, and it scatters communities rather than strengthening them. This leads us directly to the second problem of truth.

For Foucault, truth it is not something that exists per se independently of the context from which it emerges. On the contrary, he spent a great deal of his intellectual enterprise in

developing genealogies of truth, hence in mapping the conditions of emergence of truth within discourses. Nowadays, it seems that many would agree with Foucault in saying that truth is strictly tied to political institutions and system of governmentality: however, it seems that people simply reject any form of truth promoted by the top to the bottom, independently of the conditions that make a certain fact to be true, and has replace it with their own singular beliefs that would support their bias towards the world.

This paper is therefore an attempt to sharply distinguish between parrhesia and truth-telling in post-truth politics, in order to shed some light on how 'truth-telling' can lead to the 'unhealthy democracy' described by Plato in his *Republika*.



Michel Foucault

Sketch by: Constan
10/9/2019, 5:42 PM

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*The Parrhesiastic
Speech, “Knowledge,
Made for Cutting”
And the
Power/Knowledge
Conjunction in
Michel Foucault*

Speaking the truth means in Michel Foucault's philosophy carving out a power/knowledge configuration, emphasizing it, just as taking out a sculpture off a block of stone. “Knowledge is not made for understanding, it is made for cutting,” famously said Michel Foucault. This striking idea is approached within the theoretical and practical (social and ethical) contexts opened by an examination of Foucault's concepts of discourse and power/knowledge configurations. Traditional historical, epistemological and social analyses are examined critically by Michel Foucault. Discourse functions as a revealing agent for an architecture of statements which are characteristic for the times. The symbolic meaning correlates with the regulated statements sets that enforce not only a discursive order, but also an epistemological, historical, ethical and socio-political order of things. There are institutionalised practices governing the rules of knowledge production, the “material conditions of thought”, of the profile of the freedom of speech and action. The philosopher, the militant, the revolutionary come to face the situation where she or he has to speak the truth, possibly, against what is established as true, as Foucault did. Power is not something to be disjointed from knowledge, but something better grasped and challenged by its conjunction with knowledge, by power's intrusions and transfigurations as history, as order, as regulatory practices, as truth.

Foucault's essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" occasions a discussion of genealogy and power/knowledge intricate modern, postmodern, transmodern displacements become more fruitful than the ancient continuities: history is not a linear development and the body is not neutral, biological or spiritual.

The body becomes a focalizing entity for power relations and which, via knowledge, opens toward ethico-political knowledgeable and, thus, empowering sensitivities and concerns (which were active in the Athenian demos, too, but now, they become a kind of biopolitical existential stake) toward the subjective ethical modality of life as a work of art, based also on knowledge made for cutting, for individuation and self-creation. The body is aesthetically, ethically, socially and politically targeted by the configurations of power and turning to face power along all these dimensions.



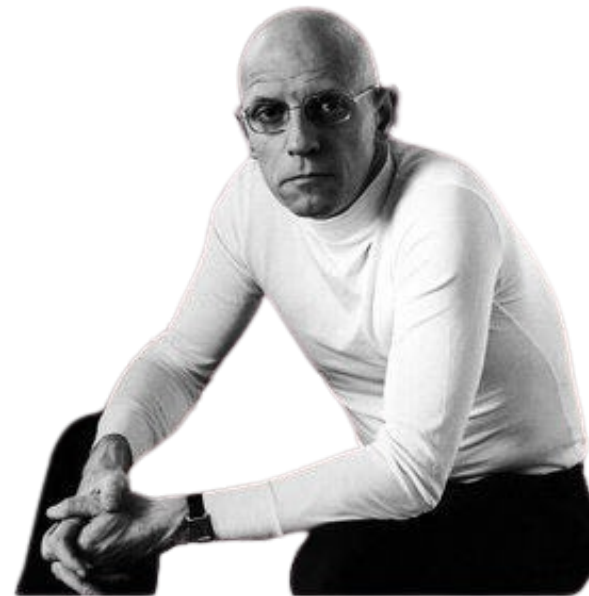
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*Michel Foucault's
Genealogy of Truth-
Telling as a Critique
of Metaphysics*

The attempt of the contemporary metaphysical tradition—from E. Husserl and B. Russell to H. Putnam and P. Engel—to ground ontological, epistemic, and moral beliefs can be understood in terms of a double thesis. On the one hand, the subject and the world are considered sharply divided and distinct ahistorical entities, and, on the other, a metaphysical relation of representation between the two is postulated. In contrast, Michel Foucault's genealogical investigations constitute a kind of critical historical discourse that aims at undermining both the hypostatisation of concepts as ahistorical entities, and, consequently, the metaphysical grounding of any associated beliefs. The present paper focuses on Foucault's works of the period between 1982 and 1984 that examine the notion of parrhêsia (truth-telling) in antiquity. The aim of the paper is twofold. I attempt to show, first, how a genealogy of truth-telling can undermine a kind of metaphysical realism, and, second, how the undermining of an ahistorical subject, in which this metaphysical realism is grounded, entails a different conception of an ethical self. Regarding the first aim, I attempt to show how Foucault's genealogy of truth-telling can be seen to debunk P. Engel's theory of minimal realism—that is, one of the most robust, current, representative versions of the above metaphysical thesis. Namely, Engel's double idea of a necessary, conceptual interrelation amongst the notions of 'assertion', 'belief' and 'truth', and of their grounding in an ahistorical

subject, is shown to be the outcome of a process of decontextualisation and hypostatisation—that is, the outcome of a process of the extraction of these notions from a historically determined context of truth-telling practices. Regarding the second aim, I focus on Foucault's analysis of Socratic and Cynic truth-telling in Plato's *Laches* and Dio Chrysostom's account of Diogenes, respectively. I attempt to show how Foucault's hermeneutic strategy of bracketing and radically reinterpreting any possible metaphysical elements of the Platonic and the Cynic discourse depicts a different—nominalist, contextualist, and particularist—version of selfhood and ethical practice.



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*La politique de
l'aveu. Du pouvoir
pastoral à la
biopolitique à partir
de Foucault*

Quoi de plus banal que l'aveu? On avoue spontanément à l'école, à la maison, à la télévision, au psychanalyste, on parle de nous-mêmes sans cesse. Mais qui parle à qui? L'aveu est-t-il l'expérience d'une libération ou l'expression d'une obligation externe? L'aveu: privé et publique, intime et médiatique. Dans son essence, l'aveu appartient au domaine de l'intimité, à la relation que nous entretenons avec nous-mêmes et aux autres. Aujourd'hui, cependant, cela semble plutôt être annexé à la sphère publique, en considérant, par exemple, à quel point il a été naturel de dépeindre sa vie personnelle dans des émissions de télé-réalité, de mettre la vie privée dans le discours et l'image des médias sociaux.

En plus d'être une forme de déclaration personnelle, l'aveu est aussi une forme de parler vrai. En d'autres termes, l'aveu présuppose une relation déterminée avec nous-mêmes à travers la vérité. Pas toutes les cultures n'ont pensé que l'aveu est quelque chose de << naturel >>. Les Grecs, par exemple, n'ont pas avoué, mais ils envisageaient de se déclarer devant une autre personne et d'examiner la conscience plutôt << administrativement >>, comme un examen des activités et des actions extérieures. Dans la culture occidentale moderne, cependant, l'aveu en tant qu'examen, d'auto-herméneutique, qu'expression de pensées intimes, que des tentations les plus secrètes ou que des désirs du corps est devenue une pratique courante à partir du christianisme, par le biais des rituels de pénitence.

Au-delà de ces racines historiques, l'aveu a pris diverses formes dans différentes cultures au fil du temps. Dans le monde contemporain, des formes d'aveu pourraient être trouvées dans la théologie, la justice, la psychanalyse, la littérature, les médias ou les réseaux sociaux. Il serait intéressant d'analyser en détail les valences de l'aveu dans tous ces domaines, mais on veut se limiter dans ce travail à ce qu'on appelle une politique d'aveu. En d'autres termes, ce qui nous intéresse dans la question de l'aveu, c'est sa relation avec le pouvoir (plus précisément avec la gouvernamentalité) telle qu'elle apparaît dans la pensée de Michel Foucault et aux autres.



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chercheur
indépendent

*L'ordre inverse :
discours et parrêsia*



What is called post – truth could represent a current condition for the humanity. Sometimes, the overlapping between facts and the representation of a general discourse about these facts or events seems to highlight a detachment in terms affirmation of Truth. It seems that the composition of a *Discourse* (the general discourses) follows lines of thought which encompass the materiality of the real (the reality we can observe) absorbing forms and elements which sustain the discourse itself. In these terms, the contribution of Foucault at Collège de France (1970), could help the description of these times (the condition) considering excluded elements of the *Discourse*: what is part of the *Discourse* and what could not be introduced, except for what is conventionally accepted – and this means what is matching the paradigms of ‘politically correct’. For this reason, the aim of this work, not in pretentious ways, is to raise some questions about how the assumptions of Truth, the événement (in Foucauldian conception), the case and the forms of control on which the Discourse is based, could probably produce a perceived sense of detachment between materiality (the consistency of the matter) and the Discourse. These two plans of existence (at least) which produce material effects seem far away from the concept of *parrêsia*.

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*Vérité du marché,
vérité incarnée*

Dans la pensée de Foucault le concept de vérité change de significations au cours des décennies. Nôtre propos concerne le rapport entre la conception de vérité comme produit du marché (Foucault, 2004) et la vérité comme incarnation d'une vie éthique (Foucault, 2009, 2014).

Dans le premier cas le marché est conçu comme lieu de production de vérité qui ne peut pas être aperçu directement, mais par le biais des signaux-prix (Buck-Morss, 2011; Tellmann, 2009). Dans *Naissance de la biopolitique* Foucault utilise de façon oblique la pensée de Hayek (Hayek, 2012, 2013; Marchetti, 2018) pour aboutir à une vision kantienne du marché : il est le dispositif qui produit la vérité en rendant ses players aveugles. Le marché devient donc un objet anhistorique, unique et autonome, mais son régime de visualisation n'est pas approfondi. Dans les recherches de Mirowski (Mirowski, 2011, 2014, 2018, 2019, 2023) on voit un approfondissement des thèmes de Foucault : le projet néolibéral est conçu comme une théorie de la connaissance et comme une éthique.

En tant que théorie de la connaissance, le néolibéralisme propose une théorie de la découverte scientifique qui fonctionne comme un ordre spontané, en suivant la métaphore connue de Smith (Boettke & O'Donnell, 2014; Grimes *et al.*, 2018; Harjuniemi, 2021; Leonard, 2002; Zollman, 2018). Cela implique une « mort de l'auteur » et une élimination de la responsabilité éthique des chercheurs. Cette théorie peut être définie comme nietzschéenne, car elle ne contemple pas la vérité comme

correspondance à la réalité. La vérité devient un produit de l'application du mécanisme de la demande et de l'offre qui procède à travers bulles et crises. Les procédures de véridiction classiques (tel que la peer review (Biagioli, 2002)) sont substitués par une économie de la réputation et par une marchandisation de la recherche.

Pour ce qui concerne l'éthique, l'ordre néolibéral propose une conception précaire et en constante évolution du sujet (Chicchi & Simone, 2017). Il reste à penser le rapport entre le sujet néolibéral (qui reçoit la vérité du marché) et le sujet qui déclare et incarne sa vérité (Grenier & Orléan, 2007; Miller, 2024).

