

Freedom as the Way of Life: Power, Truth-Telling, and the Politics of  
Michel Foucault's Critical Philosophy

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Acknowledgement

As proper to a dissertation on truth-telling, I should start to tell the truth that this dissertation would have been impossible without many people. I own a greatest debt to my supervisor, David Howarth, who has encouraged me to think boldly, while also helping to clarify a main stake of my argument in this project. His patient reading of my multiple drafts has shaped my own thinking, not only in the way I write this dissertation, but also in the manner I should behave as an excellent adviser. Without his kindness and encouragement, I would not have a confidence to finish this project.

My next special debt goes to Jason Glynos, whose thought-provoking questions pushed me to reconsider my reading of Foucault's critical manner, especially its epistemological and ontological position. His deep knowledge on Jacques Lacan, and the method of psychoanalysis, also gave me a hint to postulate another horizon that Foucault might derive his work in parallel with. I would also like to thank Aletta Norval, whose perceptive reading of my proposal, in my first year, entailed me to profoundly realize and be cautious about the otherness lying within my thought. Furthermore, her kindness and sympathy touched me so much. It has taught me how the care could be practiced concretely.

During studying at Essex, I have learnt a lot from many brilliant people. Among others, I would like to thank Reichl Pavel, who helped me to grasp an essence of Heidegger's approach of truth. I am also indebted to Matteo Falomi, whose course on the problem of alienation, left an obvious footprint in this dissertation. Also, my several conversations with Savvas Voutyras, and Shreyaa Bhatt helped me to comprehend a vast landscape of political

theory in our contemporary horizon. Moreover, a group of PhD. comrades in the Center of Ideology and Discourse Analysis generated a challenging, yet friendly, environment for my academic adventure. It is my pleasure to have colleagues, whom I have never been exhausted to make a wonderful discussion with, especially Noof Al-Dosari, Claudio Coloma Rojas, Abdulaziz Alghashian, Joash Tepiharu, and Ryan Flitcroft. I would also like to thank Konstantinos Roussos and Jimena Vazquez Garcia for their dedication to the group. Without them, I would never have my academic home to live and complete this dissertation.

In addition, I also had occasions to present parts of my works in many conferences, such as the Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) Conference, in 2017; ECPR (European Consortium for Political Research) General Conference, in 2018; International Conference in Ideology and Discourse Analysis, in 2019. Many participants in these conferences gave me excellent comments on the works that I presented. I would also like to thank a number of institutions that provided me a financial support to participate in these conferences, especially the Department of Government at Essex University, European Consortium for Political Research, and the Government of Thailand.

To some degree, this dissertation is a realization of the project I initiated before coming to Essex. This project has been developed from an inspiration of the works of my teachers at the Department of Political Science, Thammasat University, Thailand. The encouragement and philosophical enthusiasm of Chaiwat Satha-Anand planted in me a seed to pursue a PhD. project on the topics of truth and truth-telling. Similarly, Thanee Wongyannava was the one who introduced me not only a thought of Michel Foucault, when I was studying a bachelor's degree, but also a French specific context within which this thought was derived. I would also like to thank my employer, the School of Political Science and Laws, at Walailak University, for giving me a permission of my four years PhD. studying. This dissertation is entirely funded by a scholarship from the government of

Thailand. All of the financial support comes from the money of Thai people. Thus, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to them, particularly those who are courage to risk their lives by telling the truth of this country.

Finally, this acknowledgement will not be completed unless I mention my debt to Nattaporn Sittipat, whose dedication and patience to my academic passion is beyond any words to explain. I would like to thank her for always standing beside me. Her presence determines the horizon of my experience in writing this dissertation. Thus, it is not exaggerated to state that she is part and parcel of this dissertation, to the extent that this dissertation is the product of my existence in being-with her.

## Abstract

Since 2016, the proliferation of post-truth discourse has created a condition that affects the order of democracy in the west. Though many scholars have explored this condition through various frameworks, one of the topics that is rarely investigated is the new character of freedom and truth, as well as the relation between these concepts. In this dissertation, I propose a way of accounting for this point by turning to Foucault's notion of truth-telling. I start my reading of Foucault by showing that, despite the popularity of his framework for analyzing the operation of power, Foucault should not be viewed as a philosopher who surrenders to the operation of power. On the contrary, his treatment of power should be read as part of the critical project that takes power to be its target. Seen in this light, the notion of truth-telling, which Foucault elaborated in his last three years, is nothing short of the conception that enabled him to complete his critical project against power. By tracing how he derives his critique of the operation of power, I demonstrate that Foucault's notion of truth-telling is the form of action that actualizes the truth enshrined within what one thinks. Thanks to its being presented objectively, this truth also grounds the condition under which one's freedom could be realized, in such a way that it could activate a moment when power, operating by governing the way one behaves, is disrupted. Freedom, then, is an experience activated at the moment when one could assert one's capability of governing one's own self. Hence, our current situation, characterized by the proliferation of post-truth discourse, could be understood as the emergence of a new freedom, which asserts the capability of self-determination, through the form of action that allows each individual to manifest their own truth.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction: Michel Foucault and the Question of Freedom in the World of Post-Truth

#### Post-Truth and the Breakdown of Democratic Order

*Post-truth* is an adjective defined as ‘relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief

Oxford Dictionaries, 2016

I would like to begin my dissertation with the passage from the website of Oxford Language. This passage has been displayed since 2016, when Oxford Dictionaries announced their chosen word of that year: post-truth. According to them, the main reason for choosing the word ‘post-truth’ was because of the popularity of its being used in many commentaries during the Brexit referendum campaign in the United Kingdom, and in the United States presidential election, in which it was connected to the demolishing of the truth/false distinction. As they wrote on their website: “rather than simply referring to the time after a specified situation or event – as in *post-war* or *post-match* – the prefix in *post-truth* has a meaning more like ‘belonging to a time in which the specified concept has become unimportant or irrelevant’.” It could thus be said that, apart from pinpointing the new age, post-truth could also indicate a symptom of our political defects, the loss of objective truth as the condition of democratic breakdown.

To be sure, this does not mean that there were no signs of democratic decline before 2016. Francis Fukuyama, for instance, once suggested in *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution and the Globalization of Democracy*, published in 2014, that the democratic order has the tendency to decay, due to an abuse of institutional resource by some interest groups, whose superiority to the others led them to have an influence over the use of public institution in maintaining their advantage, in spite of the public's interest (Fukuyama, 2014: 399-411). Yet, while Fukuyama put an emphasis on institutional stagnation, the breakdown that we have seen since 2016 arises out of people's scepticism towards the truth on which the democratic order is grounded. In her thought-provoking article, "Neoliberalism's Frankenstein: Authoritarian Freedom in Twenty-First Century Democracies", Wendy Brown highlights the destabilization of truth that serves to be the ontological element of democratic order. She argues that this situation is the result triggered by a new type of freedom, called nihilistic freedom, whose aim is to realize its pleasure in humiliating others, or destructing the civilized principle used to support it (Brown, 2018: 27-29). In this way, the crisis of democracy that we are talking about could be nothing less than the crisis of truth that loses its objective bearing, the crisis which, at the same time, relates to the new feature of freedom. Here, in spite of viewing freedom as something encroached by the rule of majority,<sup>1</sup> Brown frames her account of democratic breakdown by unravelling the new form of freedom, as an effect of the operation of neoliberalism, which tries to extend the realm of personal interest at the expense of the democratic principles of equality and universality. By underpinning how the norm of public life gets displaced by the mechanism of the market, this freedom is presented as nothing but the expression of resentment representing the distrust of political order which is pursuing the

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<sup>1</sup> For those who describe this democratic breakdown in terms of the way freedom is dismantled by the rule of the (democratic) majority see, Mounk (2018) Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) Eatwell and Goodwin (2018) Kaufmann, (2018)

dystopian future (Brown, 2018: 16-29). Hence, it could be implied that, following Brown's argument, the relationship between post-truth and democratic breakdown is resided in the new character of freedom, that is, the freedom of unleashing resentment to the democratic order, as the result of neoliberal rationality.

But, if freedom is the main element playing beneath the destabilization of truth as well as the democratic order, is it possible for this freedom to mobilize the destructive energy without appealing to the positive feature of truth? How can those who are encompassed by such freedom be ensured to destroy any principles, if they are unable to see what they want to destroy as something *truly* bad? Against Brown's account that approaches the relation between truth and freedom in a negative/destructive way, this dissertation is designed to formulate the relationship between truth and freedom in a way that it could be used to understand the entanglement between post-truth and the breakdown of democratic order. In other words, what I intend to do in this dissertation is to elaborate the formation of the relationship between truth and freedom, which proceeds dialectically from Brown's insight. It means that despite having the same opinion as Brown in highlighting the role of freedom that ruins the objective ground of truth, I still hold this freedom in terms of being a positive feature relating to the new form of truth. But, what is the way in which I can ascertain this positive feature? What is the framework allowing me to grasp the relationship between truth and freedom in a productive manner?

### **Michel Foucault and the Entwinement of Truth and Freedom**

Any attempts to undertake the relationship between truth and freedom is contested by its novelty. Though the proliferation of post-truth has generated much writing on its relation with the crisis of democracy, there has not been literature directly framing this relationship

through the lens of truth and freedom.<sup>2</sup> Arguably, one of the reasons eschewing any treatment of such a relationship might come from the assumption about truth, working generally in academic areas, as the negation of freedom. In her classical article on the relationship between truth and politics, Hannah Arendt suggests that truth, either in the factual form or in the rational one, has a tyrannical character to the extent that it carries within itself an element of compulsion that is incongruous with politics, as the realm where opinions are exchanged freely (Arendt, 1954: 239-241). Truth, in this regard, is posed as the danger to freedom, insofar as it is naturally coercive and leaves no room for debate. This opinion about truth could also be seen in John Rawls's late thoughts where he distances his philosophy of political liberalism from any metaphysical doctrines, which grounds its validity of the truth in its preferred substantive ethical theory (Rawls, 1993: 126-129). Viewing truth as something comprehensive that could not run together with his liberal position, Rawls renounces it from the grounds of his political formation, which admires a plurality of the use of reason under free conditions. Truth, for him, is something that needs to be abstained from. It could make people intolerant to each other, that is, it could devastate the public order on which the freedom of each individual to express their thoughts could be guaranteed.

But, if the study of the relationship between truth and freedom is blocked by the coercive character of truth, could it be possible for us to dissociate truth from its coercive character? If it could, can we rethink the possibility of studying this relationship? What does truth look like if its character is not coercive? In an article written under his pseudo name, Michel Foucault manifests that one of the notions working through his intellectual writings is the notion of truth. Yet, in contrast to Arendt and Rawls, he does not approach truth in terms

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<sup>2</sup> It could be concluded that several pieces of literatures on the issue of post-truth usually view its topic through the framework of epistemological politics (Fuller, 2018; McGoey, 2019; Sim, 2019), or the role of media in investing the affect (Kalpokas, 2019; Muirhead and RosenBlum, 2019), or the new terrain of democratic imagination (Farkas and Schou, 2019).

of the comprehensive force. Truth, according to Foucault, works as the rule giving validity to the relationship that constitutes the subject and object of knowledge (Florance, 1994: 314-315). It is then not something separate from daily life; instead, it is a thing of this world, that is, it is produced immanently by virtue of multiple forms of thought whose existences have already been in political society. As Foucault once pointed out, the truth functioning within political society not only possesses a true or false verifying character, but also plays a crucial role in framing a condition under which everyone must subject to identify themselves (Foucault, 1988b: 16). It could therefore be argued that the relationship between truth and freedom might not be posited as something where they are against each other. It means that while there is little literature dealing with the relationship between truth and freedom, Foucault's treatment of truth could help me to see the possibility of coming to grips with this relationship.

This possibility becomes confirmed if we pay attention to his interview on October 25, 1982, where Foucault describes himself as the one who could make people to realize that they are much freer than they feel, and that they could liberate their lives from what their society regard, in some certain context, as truth (Foucault, 1988a: 10). In this way, in addition to having a specific account of truth, Foucault's philosophy could be explained as the critical philosophy to the extent that it aims at promoting freedom. "Critique is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom," he said (Foucault, 1997a: 114, translation modified). Considering this, although there are many famous philosophers who categorize Foucault to be a philosopher of power, whose target is to cherish power, and thus made any projects of emancipation impossible (such as Habermas, 1995: 238-293; Walzer, 1986; Taylor, 1986; Rorty, 1991), I would like to read Foucault in line of the critical philosophy, that is, I deem Foucault as a philosopher of critique who proposes nothing but the way to critique the operation of power. Central to my reading of Foucault

here is the insight of freedom. It presupposes that beneath Foucault's critical philosophy against power lies the specific insight of freedom, which, as I intend to demonstrate in this dissertation, has a direct relationship to the operation of truth.<sup>3</sup>

To some degree, my argument seems to share the same landscape with scholars who review Foucault's critical thought by emphasizing his insights of freedom. The first scholar who should be mentioned here is Alan Sheridan, whose Nietzschean treatment shows how Foucault is influenced by Nietzsche in developing the insight of freedom (Sheridan, 1980). For Sheridan, the extent to which Foucault derives his idea of freedom from Nietzsche's philosophy rests on the project of subverting the regime of truth. Freedom in this interpretation is defined as the concretization of the will, which not only repeats the opposition between truth and freedom, but also lays down a dominant manner in accounting freedom as a negative or destructive energy. This manner could also be seen in the works of John Rajchman, James Bernauer, and John Simons. In Rajchman's interpretation, the freedom that Foucault would like to advocate through his works is freedom in term of practice. In this view, Foucault's works that contest social institutions of knowledge could be amounted to be nothing but the practice of rejecting the instituted identity, allowing freedom to be experienced at the moment when what is counted as nature or identity is dissolved (Rajchman, 1985). Similarly, Bernauer explains Foucault's works as the force of thought, in the sense that it seeks to liberate the way we think from the epistemological constraints of modern humanism (Bernauer, 1990). By commenting on how Foucault unleashes thought from some certain limits such as the anthropological condition of modern episteme, or the juridico-discursive metaphysical framework of power, or the modern ideal of self-possession, Bernauer is successful in explaining Foucault's insight of freedom as the transgression of

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<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that in addition to the insight of freedom, Foucault's critical philosophy could also be studied through another notion such as knowledge (Han, 1998), experience (Lemke, 2012), a form of subjectivity (McNay, 1994), and political preference (Kelly, 2014)

limits. Mentioning freedom as the transgression of limits could take us to the interpretation of Simons who seeks to show the political significance of Foucault's works in focusing on the transgressive gesture (Simons, 1995). For Simons, Foucault's concern with freedom could be seen through the notion of critical ethos, derived from his re-reading of Kant's 'What is Enlightenment?', as the practice that drives to transgress the limits which identify our identity. Foucault's project is therefore nothing rather than a project of destroying the boundary, which is usually understood as something being indestructible.

At this point, it needs to be noted that though the works described above could provide me with some clues as to how to treat Foucault's insight of freedom, they still rely on an assumption that poses freedom as a counter to truth; in their framework, Foucault does not provide the way to account for an entwinement of freedom and truth. This assumption could also be seen in the interpretation of Gilles Deleuze who does not see in Foucault's treatment of freedom the role of truth. What underscores Foucault's treatment of freedom, according to Deleuze, is the precondition of human vitality (Deleuze, 1988). Life, as an immanent force that always already resists its containment, entails Foucault's treatment of freedom to the extent that it inspires Foucault to unfold the contingency of power, and pinpoints how the power could be transcended. In this way, Foucault's philosophy could be presented as a vitalist philosophy that places life over the operation of power. However, though Deleuze's vitalist reading could provide a great deal of influence to many scholars (such as Patton, 1998; Connolly, 1998; Oskala, 2005), this reading ignores the attachment between truth and freedom, since it sees life, not truth, to be the ground of this freedom. In fact, this is the point that separates Foucault from Deleuze, as Deleuze once accused Foucault of being 'nuts' for dragging their intellectual circle to pay attention to an old idea like truth (cited in Dosse, 2010:318). Considering this, it could be summarized that though there are various scholars who grasp the role of freedom in acting as the ground of Foucault's critical philosophy, no



one takes this freedom as something entwining with truth. Indeed, all of them tend to view truth as something against which freedom is situated, not as the one that endorses freedom.

This line of reading, however, will be contested as soon as we turn to the publication of Foucault's biography written by Stuart Elden (Elden, 2016). Overall, the scope of Elden's book is mainly about the subtle transition in Foucault's philosophical project during his last ten years. With the newly archived materials as well as the publication of Foucault's 14 Collège de France lecture courses, Elden elaborates that while the first half of Foucault's last ten years was spent deriving the notion of governmentality, as the culminated framework to undertake the operation of power, what concerned Foucault in the latter half was the proper way to counter power framed through that notion. In this regard, any ideas Foucault drew out from his turning to ancient texts in that period was nothing but the tools to counter governmentality, especially the idea of truth-telling, which he proposed in his last two years, as the last notion designated to battle against power, or governmentality (Elden, 2016: 194-204).

Viewing from this perspective, it could be argued that through the notion of truth-telling we could anticipate how Foucault locates truth as the ground of freedom against the operation of power. In spite of being the point against which freedom is designated, truth could be campaigned for as the operation of freedom. In short, if Foucault's critical philosophy is the critical project against power, and if one of the concepts he proposes to realize this project is truth-telling, then there must surely be the interrelation between truth and freedom in Foucault's thoughts, or at least in his late works. But what is truth-telling in Foucault's thoughts? To what extent does this notion help me to grasp Foucault's insights of freedom, as well as its engagement with truth?

### **Foucault's Truth-Telling: a Preliminary Overview**

Originally, truth-telling is an idea that Foucault had mentioned in his Collège de France lecture in March 1982, before thematizing it in a full manner in his last two lectures courses in 1983 and 1984. At first glance, the word 'truth-telling' seems to reflect a strange sense in Foucault's translation since the original word is '*parrhesia*', which is equivalent to the word 'free speech', or 'free-spokenness'(franc-parler). Thus, 'parrhesia' and 'truth-telling', from the etymological point of view, are not autonomously identical to each other. However, this sense of translation does not come from Foucault's defective skill; instead, it indicates his taste in attaching a subtly philosophical meaning to the word that he uses.

According to Foucault's 1983 Collège de France lecture, parrhesia is a certain form of practice embedded within the life of a person who could direct others to constitute their relations to their own selves (Foucault, 2010: 43). In this respect, parrhesia should be seen as the practice capable of constituting the two layers of a relationship: the relationship among persons and the internal relationship within oneself. It is, then, the practice belonging to some types of techniques, which guide one person to create the substantial relationship to his own self. But how can it be possible to constitute these kinds of relationship without presupposing some certain form of truth? Is it possible to realize the self-relationship without thinking about the role of truth? At this point, it is important to underline that parrhesia, apart from being a practice constituting the relationship in which one could realize one's own self, is also described by Foucault as something that could not come into being unless the message received from it is considered as true (Foucault, 2010: 43). Truth is therefore the condition under which parrhesia is made possible. If parrhesia is the practice which determines the self-relationship, the truth determining a condition of this relationship will not emerge in other forms except in the form of truth-telling. Truth-telling, for Foucault, does not emphasize a notion of truth, as it denotes some certain kind of practice which allows truth to ground the

way one constitutes oneself. Hence, in proposing the idea of truth-telling, Foucault's first concern is not the truth, but rather actions, or practices, which address the truthfulness lying beneath the relation between the teller and his own self.

Focusing on actions, or practices, as the core of truth-telling allows us to think about the relation between the practice of telling, and the truth coming out from what is told. To be sure, this relation is nothing new in Foucault's thoughts. In his 1969 book entitled *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault pointed out that, what constituted someone to be a subject of truth-telling, lay in some certain forms of relations which alienated the truth-teller from his own self. Using an illustration from the case of medical science in the nineteenth century, Foucault argued that beneath the status of a doctor who was eligible to pronounce a medical statement presupposing the truth of human's organs, there was the relation between some certain skills (the specialized knowledge), the site of institution (hospital), and the function of 'doctor', which various people could perform in response to the symptoms of the patient (Foucault, 1972: 50-55). In this case, truth did not spring from the self of the teller, but from the rules operating throughout political society at some definite points in time. When a truth-teller told the truth, they did not merely tell the truth; they were subjectivated to be the enunciating subject, whose function was to maintain the rule of political society by telling what society regarded to be true. A truth-teller, in this book, was then not precisely the one who told the truth, for the simple reason that he just behaved as he was in line with some certain rules, and got rid of how he really thought about what he told. This point could be summarized exactly in a passage from Foucault's brilliant 1970 lecture, in which he stated that, "It is always possible that one might speak the truth in the space of wild exteriority, but one is "in the true" only by obeying the rules of discursive "policing" which one has to reactivate on each of one's discourse" (Foucault, 1981: 61).

Accordingly, it is crucial to realize that Foucault regards truth as the power which can police or draw the line of the truth and falsity to validate what anyone can talk of in some definite epochs, or regimes. This power arguably functions through what he calls ‘the principle of rarefaction’, as the principle that orders some groups of statement as true, together with excluding other groups as false (Foucault, 1972:118-125). Undoubtedly, this brings us to the Nietzschean influence in Foucault’s approach of truth. As Foucault presented in his 1970 Collège de France lecture, what concerned him mostly in the work he had carried out up to 1970, could be described as the assertion of the Nietzschean manner in treating the truth like a product of the will to power (Foucault, 2013: 197-198). In this way, truth is nothing but a fiction which could be altered according to the will of those who has power to invent it.

This might explain why some scholars, like Thomas Flynn and Paul Veyne, approach truth-telling, in Foucault’s late thoughts, as the completion of the Nietzschean philosophical project, namely, the use of power to disclose that beneath the modern metaphysically scientific regime of truth is the discursive product of the will to power. For them, the main element of Foucault’s notion of truth-telling has nothing to do with truth itself; it is all about the teller’s commitment to what is told. This means that despite being presented through the figure of an ancient philosopher like Socrates, truth-telling is a notion utilized according to Nietzsche’s philosophical direction. As suggested in his article, which is regarded as the first English article that deals with Foucault’s notion of truth-telling, Flynn pinpoints the way that Foucault’s intention behind this notion unfolds the dark side of rationality, starting from the age of Enlightenment, in inaugurating the norm of universal validity. Hence, in a similar way to how Nietzsche self-referentially interprets ancient texts, Foucault—viewed through this lens—accomplishes his task to present Socrates and cynics treatment of truth-telling as a model of moral agent who could confront the scientifically normative enlightenment truth

(Flynn, 1988: 111-116). Veyne, in the same fashion, portrays Foucault's treatment of truth-telling as a promotion of the resoluteness of believing, as if there is no objective ground of any values except the will that commits with the belief of those values. Truth-telling, as Veyne conceives of it, is the way of a philosophic warrior who is ready to declare war on any rule that validates a dichotomy of true/false proposition, by exposing that there is no certain ground of knowledge except the power relation at that moment (Veyne, 1997: 226-227).

Due to this Nietzschean reading, it should be emphasized that both Flynn and Veyne seem to confuse their interpretation of Foucault's truth-telling with their accounts of power. In other word, it seems to me that they try to assimilate Foucault's notion of truth-telling with Nietzsche's idea of the will to power; there is no gulf between truth and power in their interpretation. This line of interpretation seems to be in consonance with the reading of Torben Dyrberg, who regards Foucault's account of truth-telling as the practice of power of authority. "Parrhesia", as he argued, "captures some of the most vital dimensions of political life of how to exercise the political power of authority in a way that is both truthful and trustworthy" (Dyrberg, 2016: 266). Here, it should be noted that despite pursuing the view that places truth-telling in line with the exercise of power, Dyrberg does not entirely follow Flynn and Veyne's Nietzschean perspectives, for he considers Foucault's late works as an attempt to seek out the productive form of power situated to counter the negative effect of the other forms of power, presented in the previous stages of Foucault's works (Dyrberg, 2016: 270). Truth, in this consideration, could not be equated with the will, as it concerns the political condition that gives rise to the collective form of countering the technologies making individuals submissive. This might explain why Dyrberg associates truth-telling with the value of trustworthiness, which is inseparable from the idea of accountability. For him, the truth referred to in the notion of truth-telling is nothing but the sense of credibility belonging to someone when having some discussions with others (Dyrberg, 2016: 276-278). Truth,

then, should be seen in the sense of trust which could be recognized impersonally, the sense of trust that acts as the condition under which the form of political authority in fighting against the repressive structure of power could be made

Here, I think it is very significant to indicate that Dyrberg's interpretation—albeit thought-provoking and insightful—is problematic. In my view, the problem of Dyrberg's interpretation is that by equating truth-telling with trustworthiness he is making truth to be the result arising out of the condition of acceptability; what one says as true will not be regarded as true unless it is moved according to the procedure authorizing it as true. Truth, thus, loses touch with the self of those who tell it. This point is very critical, for it could mean that while paying the most of his attention to the productive condition of political authority, Dyrberg seems to neglect the transformation of Foucault's works in the 1980s that moves his philosophical style through the theme of care of the self, as the scheme in which the practice of truth-telling was brought out. It could thus be said that Dyrberg's success in treating truth-telling to be the productive power of authority comes at the price of his neglect of the most important element in Foucault's late works: the relation between truth and the practice of the self-constitution.

Bearing this in mind, I turn the corner to the argument of Edward McGushin, whose excellent book points out that while Foucault's works before 1980s could be described as the diagnostic moment, his works since the 1980s should be understood as the etho-poetic moment where he pays attention to the feature of self-transformation activated by some certain forms of practice (McGushin, 2007: xii-xvi). Hence, rather than regarding it as something like power against power, truth-telling should be understood as the practice of the self, whose effect is to permit one to tackle the operation of power. Since Foucault's point in his late life is not to present the productive form of power, but to activate the way of life in encountering power, the entirety of power—not just the repressive side of it—is the critical

object of truth-telling. Truth-telling, seen from this angle, is not the practice of productive power against the repressive one, but the practices activating the form of life in disrupting the entirety of power; it is the practice of countering power, not the practice of power.

At this point, I think it is crucially important to stress that although McGushin does not explicate it in his reading, we could postulate the place of freedom in Foucault's notion of truth-telling. Truth-telling, here, is the practice of freedom to the degree that it allows one to transgress the impasses created by the operation of power. Following this, McGushin's reading could therefore be grouped with the interpretations of Nancy Luxon and Daniele Lorenzini who formulate Foucault's notion of truth-telling in term of practices that enable each individual to attain their own experience of freedom. As Luxon suggests, truth-telling should be approached as a form of activity that allows one to liberate oneself from the control of power, by enabling one by oneself to master the pace, rhythm, and circumstance relating to the experience in one's daily life (Luxon, 2008: 386-388). Freedom, hence, appears as the effect activated only through the practices that make one autonomous from any external standards, by producing the relation where what one acts could be identical with what one is. As such, it is part and parcel of the act that harmonizes *logos* and *bios*, or word and life; as soon as one speaks what one really thinks, one could obtain the sense of freedom by being what one really is. This point is asserted in Lorenzini's comment where he defines Foucault's notion of truth-telling as *alethurgy*—translated in English as 'the act by which truth is manifested'—which means that he is equating truth-telling to the act that not only binds the teller with what is pronounced, but also renders the teller's self, and his life, perceptible through the discourse he delivers (Lorenzini, 2015: 264-266). It also means that together with affirming what one is by releasing him from any containments of relation he has with the others, truth-telling could be seen as the pronouncement of freedom since it could grant the teller the capability to determine his own action through the commitment he has with what he

tells (Lorenzini, 2015: 261-262). Without freedom, it would not be possible for Foucault to propose the notion of truth-telling.

However, though this line of reading could assure us the place of freedom in Foucault's notion of truth-telling, there are some points that are underdeveloped, and thus left obfuscated. That is to say, the feature of truth operating within the notion of truth-telling, and the way it relates with Foucault's insight of freedom. These points are important for me given that what drives me to read Foucault is because I aim to propose the formulation that could positively account for the relationship between truth and freedom. But how will I achieve this aim if I do not know the features of truth that operates with Foucault's insight of freedom in the first place? Could it be possible for us to ascertain the entwinement of truth and freedom without defining the truth playing in this entwinement?

In order to deal with this points in an exhaustive manner, this dissertation is narrated by focusing on the feature of truth as well as its role in Foucault's philosophical formulation, particularly in the works of his last ten years, which will offer me a substantive way to acquire the outlook of freedom derived from it. This presupposes that the story of my dissertation is directed towards an examination of how Foucault re-grounds his position by that feature of truth that not only inaugurates the insight of freedom, but also strengthens his philosophy to accomplish its critical mission against power. The more I can clarify the feature of truth in Foucault's late works, the more I can extricate and develop his insight of freedom. And the more that insight is elucidated, the more I can formulate the positive relationship between truth and freedom, which not only permits me to grasp the character of Foucault's philosophy of critique, but also furnishes the way to cope with the problem of post-truth and its effect in causing the breakdown of democratic order in our contemporary horizon.



## **Hypothesis, Research Question, and the Structure of Dissertation**

The starting point of this dissertation comes from the puzzle of the interrelation between truth and freedom that I draw out from the breakdown of democratic order which is, to some extent, connected to the proliferation of ‘post-truth’. Here, while there are rarely theorists who could provide us with a formulation to undertake that interrelation, I have found that Foucault’s notion of truth-telling could be used in this case. However, as I explained in the previous section, truth-telling is the concept that Foucault designates to complete his critical mission of encountering power. Thus, in order to take a full account of this truth-telling, it is inevitable for me to demonstrate the framework that Foucault employs to grasp the operation of power, along with how to counter it. The more I elaborate that framework—together with how it could be countered—the more I can pose a full account of truth-telling. Considering this, the main questions that I can use to keep the direction of this dissertation can be divided into two related questions. They are:

1. How does Foucault posit the notion of truth-telling in his critical project against power?
2. How does this position help us to demonstrate Foucault’s premise of truth that could give rise to the insight of freedom, as the ground of his critical philosophy?

In terms of its overall structure, this dissertation is divided into eight chapters. Following this chapter of introduction, Chapters Two and Three are devoted to the description of Foucault’s framework of analyzing power, especially the notion of governmentality, which he proposed in 1978, as the culmination of his philosophical framework. Chapter Two unveils Foucault’s procedure of power, paving the way to an understanding of his notion of governmentality. Then, Chapter Three is sets out my investigation of the role of truth and its relationship to governmentality. By focusing on this

role of truth, I argue that the real problem of power that Foucault would like to encounter—after viewing it through the framework of governmentality— can be understood in terms of self-alienation. The role of truth here could be nothing but the condition under which an experience of self-alienation has taken place through the way one discards one's capability to govern one's own life. Following this, in Chapter Four I characterize the form of critical philosophy that Foucault pursues in countering power. Here, I focus on his approach to genealogy, because its unfolding of the historicity beneath all forms of knowledge can provide the ground on which Foucault could perform a critical task against truth playing underneath power. In addition, I also demonstrate how he reorients his use of genealogy, which in turn can be read as the way he changes the premise of truth working in his critical philosophy, as well as the feature of freedom associated with that premise.

After clarifying the direction that Foucault pursues to counter power, the next three chapters shed light on the character of truth-telling, as the notion designated to complete his critical mission against power. Chapter Five shows the feature of care of the self, according to which it is the scheme that Foucault employs to read ancient canons, while deriving the notion of truth-telling. Meanwhile, chapters Six and Seven are located to demonstrate Foucault's treatment of truth telling through his reading of the use of truth-telling in Athenian politics (chapter Six), as something he seem to dismiss by moving to the philosophical use of truth-telling in the case of Socrates's philosophy and its radicalization in the cynical thought of Diogenes of Sinope (chapter Seven). Chapter Eight is the last chapter of this dissertation, which I designs to conceptualize what I propose in the previous chapters, especially Foucault's insight of freedom, as well as its interrelation with truth. I also devote the last part of this chapter to show, in a preliminary manner, how we can use Foucault's insight of freedom to understand the breakdown of democratic order as related to the proliferation of post-truth in our contemporary discourse. I will endeavor to show that, despite living in a

different time from us, Foucault's thoughts can still help us to comprehend what is taking place in our own political situation.

## Chapter Two

### **From Power to Governmentality: Problematizing the Aim of Foucault's Critical Project**

#### **Power as the Main Subject in Foucault's Writings after the 1960s**

What I want to say is this: it is the custom, at least in European Society, to consider that power is localized in the hand of the government and that it is exercised through a certain number of particular institutions, such as the administration, the police, the army, and the apparatus of the state. One knows that all these institutions are made to elaborate and to transmit a certain number of decisions, in the name of the nation or of the state, to have them applied and to punish those who do not obey. But I believe that political power also exercises itself through the mediation of a certain number of institutions which looks as if they have nothing in common with the political power, and as if they are independent of it, while they are not.

Foucault, 2006: 40.

In November 1971, Michel Foucault was invited to take part in a debate broadcast on Dutch television, as part of a program that sought to capture the intellectual consequences after the events of May 1968. The theme of this program was a debate on human nature and its relationship to politics, in which its guests were required to present their vision of politics (Rajchman, 2006: vii-viii). However, albeit participating in the program, Foucault avoided the scheme to propose his political vision, and instead talked about his intention to unfold a new political object: power.

Definitely, placing power as an object of political investigation was not novel. Yet, as suggested in the quote, Foucault did not view power in the traditional sense, making it

intrinsic to the state's apparatus. On the contrary, he tended to regard power as something hidden behind the sphere generally seen as nothing to do with power. Power, which particularly operated outside the domain of formal political institution, was, for Foucault, the political object needing to be taken into close consideration. If there was some political element serving in Foucault's critical project, that element could be nothing but the operation of power disguised as something opposed to what it really was. "It seems to me that the real political task in society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions, which appear to be both neutral and independent: to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmask,..." he said (Foucault, 2006: 41).

At first glance, there seems nothing exciting in what I describe above, especially in the eyes of scholars who are familiar with Foucault's thoughts. However, this might be more interesting, if we consider that Foucault, before the time of that program, had never manifested his interest in taking on the operation of power. Although, as Mark Kelly notes, Foucault's arguments in his works during the 1960s—such as his historical accounts of psychiatry or medical science—could be viewed through the framework of power, there is a huge gulf between power as the internal logic acting within other problems, and power which is problematized manifestly (Kelly, 2009: 31-32). Indeed, as Thomas Lemke rightly suggests, Foucault's manifestation of his interest on the operation of power comes from the shortcoming of his archaeological method to grapple with the historical condition of the scientific knowledge (Lemke, 2019: 31-48). It could thus be said that Foucault's declaration of his interest in the operation of power was inseparable from his struggle to overcome the limit of his framework in that time. In other words, though the popularity of Foucault's notion of power could influence many works in various fields<sup>1</sup>, we should not mistakenly

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<sup>1</sup> Such as Said (1978), Tully (1995), Butler (1997), Shapiro (2001), Stoller (2002)

regard that notion as something Foucault proposed at the beginning of his career. Hence, along with the shift of his methodology, the break of Foucault's writings at the turn of 1970s was the break that placed the problem of power at the center of his project.

However, it is very significant to emphasize that while Foucault started to problematize the operation of power in the early 1970s, his framework to conceptualize power was often altered until he proposed the notion of governmentality towards the end of the decade. This means that, as some scholars have noticed, though Foucault poses power to be his critical target, he continually changes the way to conceive its operation (Kelly, 2009; Lemke, 2019). It could then be said that though Foucault began problematizing power in the early 1970s, he had never been satisfied with his framework to undertake it until he proposed the notion of governmentality. This surely leads us to questions about the conditions under which governmentality is proposed, as well as the way Foucault shifts his understanding of power from the immature stage to the mature one: *for what is power and governmentality in Foucault's thought? If governmentality is Foucault's culminated view of power, to what extent does it help Foucault to surpass the obstacle from his previous understanding of power? And if governmentality is the framework that incorporates the existence of state and its apparatus into his account, what is the look of power viewed through it? What is Foucault's mature understanding of power, as the object of his critical project?*

This chapter is written to answer these questions. By demonstrating how Foucault articulates his framework to undertake the operation of power, as well as how he alters it, the main content of this chapter is to show the way Foucault problematizes the point against which he wants to develop his philosophy to fight. As explained in the chapter one, because of my reading, which treats Foucault to be the critical philosopher, whose task is to critique the operation of power, I am required to display the way he conceives and reconceives the operation of power during the 1970s , as it serves me to get a glimpse of how Foucault

pursues his critical philosophy. This chapter is thus structurally divided into 3 parts. The first part deals with Foucault's early framework of power in the first half of the 1970s, focusing mainly on its features as well as the impasse that prompts him to overcome those features. The second part is my account of Foucault's description of governmentality, as his culminated framework of power. Showing how Foucault explains it in a genealogical manner, I argue in this part that governmentality could be nothing rather than the rationality that modifies one to subjectivate one's own self to be the object of government. The third part concerns the character of the power expressed through the framework of governmentality. In this part, I demonstrate that this character of power is nothing more than what Foucault calls bio-politics. For Foucault, bio-politics contain elements that could allow him to undertake power at both macro and micro levels. That is, while it help Foucault to depict the operation of power in the big scope, bio-politics also show him how that power exercises itself in the way we live our everyday life. Bio-politics, therefore, is the operation of power that Foucault takes as his object of critique. To critique, then, is nothing except to critique the performance of bio-politics, as the highest operation of power in Foucault's thoughts.

### **Foucault's Early Framework of Power: the Features and Its Conceptual Impasse**

It is not coincidental that together with his start of problematizing power in the early 1970s, Foucault shifts the direction of his project from the archaeological investigation of the scientific knowledge (*connaissance*), to the genealogical inquiry of everyday knowledge (*savoir*). Indeed, it seems to me that Foucault's commencement to undertake power and his methodological redirection are inseparable. As Thomas Lemke captures, although Foucault does not mention it directly, we could trace his motive for dealing with power in his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, published in 1969, in which he reconsiders his archaeological

analysis and indicates its shortcoming that he needs to surpass (Lemke, 2019: 32-44). To understand how Foucault comes to problematize power in the first place, then, we need to understand how he situates the relationship between power and his new approach.

This issue is sorted out if we pay attention to Foucault's inaugural lecture at Collège de France on 2 December 1971, titled "The Order of Discourse." At the outset, this lecture epitomizes Foucault's works in the 1960s, alongside demonstrating the advanced stage he intends to pursue from those works (Foucault, 1981). Moreover, the lecture is also the first academic event that he mentions the word 'power' (*pouvoir*), as the problem he would like to devote his subsequent works to deal with. Thus, while Foucault re-conceptualizes his previous method centering on the modality of exclusion, he also brings a new focus into play, that is, the relation of power serving as the condition of applicability, under which certain numbers of rules working on individuals, who activate those practices of exclusion, are made possible (Foucault, 1981: 61-67). As Stuart Elden rightly captures, the new focus presented in the lecture signifies nothing other than Foucault's shift of concern from the effect of the practical use of language, to the relation of power determining that use in the first place (Elden, 2017: 16-17). Power is hence part and parcel of Foucault's new methodological manner. It could not be separated from the new method, which he will employ in his works over the following years, as he commented in the lecture about its specificity, as something scrutinizing "the series where discourse is effectively formed", and that "not so much a power which would be opposed to that of denying, but rather the power to constitute domains of objects, in respect of which one can affirm or deny true or false propositions" (Foucault, 1981: 73).

In this way, it is worth noting that while the manner of exclusion—as the main feature in Foucault's treatment of the discursive practice in the 1960s—could inspire some theorists to develop their insights into power, this manner is not regarded by Foucault as his character



of power. This is not hard to approve given that the word '*pouvoir*', as the original word Foucault uses to describe power, could signify the faculty or capability of actualizing something or bringing something into being, rather than suppressing or destroying something. In this regard, power, in Foucauldian terms, should not be associated with destructive forces, or physical violence. On the contrary, it should be understood as the relationship that produces the possibility for acting, as well as the forming of subjectivity and knowledge (Revel, 2002: 46-47).

Looking from this aspect, it could be argued that Foucault's exposition of power goes hand in hand with the transition of the sense of knowledge in his account of the discourse analysis. That is to say, the transition from the knowledge in an epistemological sense (*connaissance*), which could not sustain its status without the networks of institutions (such as schools, or hospitals) and its apparatuses in forcing everyone to behave according to the content of that knowledge, to knowledge in the ontological sense (*savoir*) operating through the validation of true and false, which designates the process by which each individual is defined to be its subject (Revel, 2002: 55-56). *Savoir*, or knowledge in the ontological sense, plays a leading role in Foucault's notion of power, to the extent that it could render those who exercise it to be its agent whom the power could operate through. Power, thus, not only entails one to act in line with its determination, but also constitutes the identity of its agent.

As Foucault once said:

In actual fact, one of the first effects of power is that it allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual. The individual is not, in other words, power's opposite number; the individual is one of power's effects. The individual is in fact a power-effect, and at the same time, and to the extent that he is a power-effect, the individual is a relay: power passes through the individual it has constituted. (Foucault, 2003: 29-30)

In short, if power is treated by Foucault as the relationship that produces something, its product could be nothing less than the form of subjectivity. Of course, this does not mean that by stressing subjectivity as the product of power, I am equating Foucault's treatment of power with the psychological operation of consciousness. Instead, what concerns him, in my eyes, is the form of relationship that materializes the subjectivity through the practices embodying knowledge with the way one identifies oneself. An assertion of this point is easy if we look at the book titled *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault's consummate work in the first half of the 1970s. As has widely been acknowledged, the focus of this book is the constitution of the docile body, acting as the field of the new form of power called disciplinary power; through the expansion of capitalism and the invention of techniques of surveillance, the body is rendered to be the point at which the discipline could be manifested concretely. Yet, as Lemke rightly pinpoints, Foucault does not exhaust his notion of power as the physical feature of body. Instead, he treats the body as the explication of the soul to the extent that this body could enable him to grasp the production of subjectivity, as an exercise of power, at the most concrete level (Lemke, 2019: 32-44). What concerns Foucault, then, is not the physicality of body, but the way in which the body is arranged in everyday life, such as learning types of behavior, reiterating gesture, constructing habits, etc.

This is the reason why during the first half of 1970s, Foucault, due to his emphasizing on discipline, puts a lot of his energy into accentuating the exercise of norm in directing the operation of power. "The discourse of discipline is about a rule: not a juridical rule derived from sovereignty, but a discourse about a natural rule, or in other words a norm", he said (Foucault, 2003: 38). Here, I need to clarify that when Foucault mentions the exercise of norm, he does not refer to the ground legitimating the use of laws. Norm, for him, has nothing to do with laws issued by the sovereign, inasmuch as the objects of their operation are distinct from each other. As Foucault remarked in his Collège de France lecture on 14

January 1976, while laws were the manifestation of the sovereign power whose object was the land and its goods and wealth, discipline was concerned primarily with the process by which bodies were normalized through constant surveillance, so that their time and labor could be extracted as effectively as possible (Foucault, 2003: 35-36). The norm, in Foucault's treatment, could then be nothing but the model of normalization that frames the exercise of power, not at the macro level of legal institutions or state apparatus, but at the micro level of the way we live our social lives.

This could explain why Foucault's notion of power described above, despite unfolding the new terrain of the operation of power, falls short of shedding new light on the power operating within the institutional framework, which subsequently leads him to be challenged. According to Francois Ewald, his secretary at that time, one of the challenges Foucault faced after the publication of *Discipline and Punish* was the demand of the French audience, who wanted to see how Foucault used his notion of power to describe the features of state, sovereignty, and political institutions (Becker, Ewald and Harcourt, 2012: 4). This demand is somewhat challenging, considering that the unit on which Foucault proposes his analysis of power is the individual body, while the unit for analyzing the power operated at the institutional level is characteristically collective. For Foucault, disciplinary power, since it is concerned only with the body of an individual, cannot be associated with sovereign power, which centralizes the land's usurpation (Foucault, 2003: 35-36). It means that, in order to overcome this challenge, he must expand his unit of analysis from the individual level, to something big enough to incorporate the state or sovereign power into the framework of his treatment of power (Foucault, 2003: 38-39).

Foucault proposed this expanded framework in his lecture at Collège de France on 21 January 1976, where he introduced the idea of war-repression, as the new logic playing in it. With this new logic, power is viewed as the relationship of forces, presupposing the

permanent battles among lines of forces that move through the social body. Foucault crystalizes this by offering the motto that ‘politics is the continuation of war by its other means’, meaning that behind the political orders or peace circumstances, there lie struggles among adversarial groups, who try to maintain their status quo by suppressing their enemies (Foucault, 2003: 47-51). The relation of power could then be nothing but the kind of unresolved antagonistic relationship that moves among certain groups, who confront each other as their rivals. Thus, there is no better analogy to capture these relationships than wars, since wars could be regarded as the maximum point of tension, revealing the uniqueness of this antagonistic logic (Foucault, 2003: 46).

Through the logic of war-repression, Foucault is able to offer a new form of power that could extend the scope of his previous notion of power. This form of power was called ‘bio-power’, as Foucault mentioned in his lecture at Collège de France on 17 March 1976, when he proposed it to be the form situated at the highest level of power, framed through the logic of war-repression. In the lecture, he began his argument by underlining the rise of new medical science and biology in the latter half of eighteenth century Europe. By emphasizing how this medical science and biology gave birth to new techniques of regulation, such as the birth rate, the mortality rate, the fertility rate and public hygiene, Foucault delineated the extent to which bio-power could be the form of power that harmonized the disciplinary power and the command of sovereignty (Foucault, 2003: 242-243). What lay at the heart of this extent was an emergence of the new social and collective body named population, according to which it was the object of medical and biological regulations that could compile any separated and dispersed individual bodies into a single life (bios). It thus became palpable that the unit for analyzing the relation of power was no longer the individual bodies, or the land’s usurpation, but the life of the population. The population, and its life, was then the

object and field for the operation of bio-power; without it, it would be impossible for bio-power to come into existence.

Having said this, it is not difficult for us to see how Foucault enlarges the scope of his notion of power, from the individual level to the collective one. This becomes clear if we pay attention to the new modality of the mechanism of surveillance. As explained above, in Foucault's former treatment of power, surveillance was the mechanic of power, as the normalization, operating in a horizontal direction. But with the notion of bio-power, such surveillance seems to act in both vertical and horizontal directions in as much as the body of population is something the sovereign is forced to take care of, enabling the sovereign—in turn—to regulate the life of all individuals who belong to the body of population (Foucault, 2003: 247-250). To be sure, this allows Foucault to reconfigure sovereign power from the traditional account, which focuses on the capability of taking the life of its subject, to the new account which pays attention to how the life of population is nourished and, through this nourishment, how to justify the act of the sovereign in eliminating some abnormal group, or delinquency, whose existence could make the life of population impure and less healthy (Foucault, 2003: 250-258). In short, bio-power, as Foucault's main mechanism of his new treatment of power, is the power operating through the new performance of a sovereign who must take care of the life of his population, together with discarding those who might make that life unhealthy.

Clearly, it is not a surprise that this treatment has generated a lot of contributions in the field of political theory, since it has opened a pathway that many philosophers and political theorists could advance.<sup>2</sup> But if bio-power is Foucault's notion that permits the sovereign power to transgress the life of individuals, as its parts of the population, why and

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<sup>2</sup> For example, see Agamben (1998), Butler (2004a), Esposito (2008), Mbembe (2019), Bradley (2019). For the brief overview of this point, see also Lemke (2011)

how do these individuals render themselves to be parts of the population in the first place? What entails them to yield to be an object of the sovereign power? These questions inevitably lead Foucault to the problem of subjectivity, especially how each individual subjectivates themselves to being part of the population. However, since his framework of war-repression does not take the population's modes of subjectivity as its unit, he is incapable of resolving this problem. In other words, although the logic of war-repression could allow Foucault to bring forth the performance of the population, as the vehicle for enlarging the unit of his analysis of power, it has a constraint to the extent that it treats population as only an object ready to be imposed on by the exercise of sovereign power. Population, through this view, is the conceptual object containing nothing except its existence for being controlled by the sovereign, thus stopping us from having any capability of understanding it from its own point of view.

This may be the reason why, after his one-year sabbatical leave, Foucault accepted, in his lecture at Collège de France on 11 January 1978, that the notion of bio-power that he had proposed was somewhat vague, because it could not give him a proper framework to expound the full account of the operation of power (Foucault, 2007: 1-2). Following this, it is not hard to anticipate that Foucault put forward his new framework which places the mode of subjectivity, or the way one renders oneself to be part of population, at its center. This framework is nothing but what Foucault calls 'governmentality'

## **Governmentality: Frameworks and Its Historical Concretization**

Foucault firstly proposed the notion of governmentality, as his mature framework to undertake power, in his Collège de France lecture on 1 February 1978.<sup>3</sup> For him, as we will see in the next chapter, governmentality not only provides the vehicle to transcend the conceptual defect in his previous framework, but also sets forth the real stake against which his critical project is posited.

Foucault begins proposing this notion by dwelling on the historical treatises that take the art of government as its theme. Having been published from the sixteenth century onward, these treatises are conceived by Foucault as the historical traces from which he could seek out some characteristics of governmentality. As he describes in the lecture, these characteristics bring new light to the issue of government, for the reason that it introduces new fields with which the government must deal, namely, the problems of the relationship between man and anything, such as the relationship between man and wealth, resource, territory, famine, and death (Foucault, 2007: 96-99). These problems, as Foucault presents, could not be managed by physical enforcement, for they need some tactics or strategies to solve, which will, in return, entail someone amenable to be the object of government. Governmentality is then the form of rationality implicit in any technique or means of government, which could be exerted through the way it solves any problems of individual who subjectivates himself to be its object. In short, governmentality is the notion Foucault uses to frame the operation of power, not solely in terms of the relationship of the forces, but in terms of the rationality that possesses the capability to render any individuals to be the objects of government.

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<sup>3</sup> It is worthwhile to suggest that in addition to being delivered at Collège de France, this lecture was published as an article titled “governmentality” in 1979, which would be reprinted three times. See the detail in Falzon, O’Leary, and Sawicki (2013: 575)

At this point, it needs to be stressed that, by mentioning rationality, Foucault is neither referring to the source for the legitimacy of political power, nor the justification of the rebellion. This rationality, according to him, is nothing other than the exertion of the means-end calculations to accomplish the aim of changing any individuals to be the object of government, by providing them with the way in which they could achieve their preferred ends (Foucault, 2007: 99). This is the reason why some scholars approach governmentality as a scheme of rationality that allows the government to exert power over their objects. Mitchell Dean, for example, accounts the governmentality as the regime of practices that organizes forms of rationality, or techniques, in shaping the field of human action, which will configure them to be its object (Dean, 1999: 11-19). In the same manner, Lemke treats governmentality as a program designating the discursive field within which power is rationalized in the service of ruling its objects (Lemke, 2019: 148-149). However, though viewing governmentality in terms of rationality is by no means flawed, I would like to underline another element working in the framework of governmentality: the mode of subjectivation. As Nikolas Rose puts forward excellently, apart from the scheme of means-end calculation, governmentality is also concerned about the process of making one compliant to subjectivated oneself as the object of government (Rose, 1999: 51-52). To comprehend what Foucault suggests in the notion of governmentality, then, it is imperative for us to pay attention to the issue of subjectivity. This point could be noticed easily if we look at what Foucault said, as follows: "...‘to govern’ means to conduct someone, either in the spiritual sense of the government of the soul...or,...., ‘to govern’ may mean ‘to impose a regimen’..."(Foucault, 2007: 121).

Following what Foucault said, we could see that governmentality does not treat power in a direction compatible with the separation between private and public spheres, or between the individual and political society. Instead, this notion regards power by portraying the problem of political society (regimen) through the problem of how each individual situates



his own self (soul) within the relationship he has with others (whether this relationship is in the public sphere or not). In this case, if governmentality is a form of rationality, its operation could be nothing but a formulation designating some certain relationships that induces one to subjectivate oneself as the object under the government of others. In other words, what concerns Foucault mostly in proposing the framework of governmentality is not the emergence of a political entity, or institution, but the mode of subjectivation, as the rationality that induces anyone to be constituted as the object of government (Foucault, 2007:108). Government and governmentality must therefore be taken in the field of power relation in a wider sense, namely, in the ethical relationship in which those who are governed put themselves as the objects of the government in the first place.

Here, it is important to indicate that though the production of subjectivity is already at work in Foucault's early treatment of power, governmentality looks at this subjectivity in a different light. This is because, while in the former case, subjectivity is an experience response to how its body is shaped under the mechanism of normalization, subjectivity in the latter case has nothing to do with that mechanism, due to its capability of rationalizing its existence by itself. As Rose pinpoints, the crux of governmentality's account of subjectivity is the appropriation of the role of freedom to the extent that it treats freedom to be the strategies for making individuals accountable to the order of government; governmentality does not function by entailing one to do something that one does not want, but by placing freedom at the heart of government, making one responsible to its order, which will, in turn, ensure one's freedom (Rose, 1999: 66-69). Subjectivity in the framework of governmentality is then part and parcel of the process by which one constitutes one's own identity by oneself.

What should be the focus here is not how an individual is subjectivated to be the object of government, but how he subjectivates himself to be that object.<sup>4</sup>

Dwelling on this explanation, we can see how Foucault uses the framework of governmentality to solve the problem he faces in his previous treatment of power. On the one hand, this framework is still proposed to account for the operation of power playing at the macro level of the state's institutions; yet, on the other hand, it does not take this operation from the upper aspect of state or its apparatus, but from the aspect of those who subjectivate themselves to be the object governed by the state. As Foucault remarked in his lecture at Collège de France on 1, February 1978:

After all, may be the state is only a composite reality and a mythicized abstraction whose importance is much less than we think. May be. What is important for our modernity, that is to say, for our present, is not then the state's takeover of society, so much as what I would call the "governmentalization" of the state...Governmentalization of the state is a particularly contorted phenomenon, since if the problem of governmentality and the techniques of government have really become the only political stake and the

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<sup>4</sup> This is the point that some scholar, such as Torben Dyrberg, highlights to show the change of Foucault's direction in treating the operation of power. By following Hans Slugas's reading, Dyrberg proposes that governmentality is the type of power operated in the supervenient level, presupposing the possibility of resistance, which allows Foucault to frame power in term of authority, as its positive shape that counteract the repressive one depicted in his previous framework (Dyrberg, 2016: 272-275). However, I think this reading is quite too far and out of context, given that Foucault, as I described in the previous part, proposes the framework of governmentality to change his scope in incorporating power in the macro level with his famous framework of disciplinary mechanism, which enables him to take bio-power, or the operation of power over life, into comprehensive account (Foucault, 2007: 363). Hence, what governmentality could provide us regarding Foucault's treatment of power should not be the idea of authority, as his positive understanding of power, but the shift of emphasis from the relationships that constitute subjectivity, to the mode or rationality that each individual subscribes to subjectivate their own self, as the object governed by others. This will be clearer if we pay our attention to the role of freedom associated with governmentality. While Dyrberg seems to view this freedom as a precondition from which Foucault's formulation of authority can be substantiated (Dyrberg, 2016: 274), he fails to realize that this freedom is a crux of power, which I will explain in the third part of this chapter, in conducting each individual to behave according to the command of government.

only real space of political struggle and contestation, the governmentalization of the state has nonetheless been what has allowed the state to survive (Foucault, 2007:109).

Not only does this passage confirm Foucault's view that I describe above, it also displays how a sovereign power gets supplanted by the problems of government. As Saul Newman proposes, through Foucault's framework of governmentality, sovereign power loses its transcendental status, and becomes the reflection brought into being by its functions whose tasks are nothing other than sustaining the mode subjectivating one to be the governed under the government of state (Newman, 2019: 113-114). This means that, in order to grasp the operation of power working at the macro level of state or legal institutions, we should look into the operation of rationality that concretizes the relationship modifying one to subjectivate oneself as an object governed by the state.

Power, viewed through the framework of governmentality, should hence be considered in terms of the ways in which the object of government is concretized. This might be the reason why Foucault pays a great deal of emphasis on the concrete performance of the '*raison d'état*', or the reason of state, as the feature under which that way of subjectivating one to be the object of government could be analyzed in a tangible fashion. However, it is crucially significant to present that, from Foucault's aspect, the performance of the reason of state is something derived from the form of power that was common throughout Europe before the sixteenth century. As he depicted in his lecture at Collège de France on 8 February 1978, before the sixteenth century the word 'Government' did not have the political connotation of indicating a collective association or political institution, because it contained only an ethical meaning concerning just the lives and activities of individuals, such as the movement of man in space, the material subsistence, the care given to the health of each individuals, etc (Foucault, 2007:120-122). Government, in that sense, was the power

operating through an ethical relationship between people, individuals, or groups of individuals, regardless of the political structure within which this relationship took place.

Thus, in order to grasp the character of power operated in the framework of governmentality, we inevitably need to understand the character of government before the sixteenth century, as its historical model. Foucault calls this form of government, or the type of power working in this form, the 'pastoral power'.

### Pastoral Power as the Prehistory of Governmentality

Foucault starts portraying the historical picture of pastoral power by showing that this form of power was originated in the ancient Mediterranean East, such as Egypt, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Hebrew. According to him, this type of power was derived from the relationship between God and his people, symbolized through the metaphor of the shepherd-flock relationship (Foucault, 2007:123-125). In this metaphor, the flock of men had to rely on God, as their shepherd, who would purify and lead them to the salvation. God, in this case, was not similar to the Greco-Roman gods, whose main target was nothing but subduing their enemies. Rather, the shepherd God gave a priority to the happiness of his people, by taking care of their lives, feeding them, and treating them when they were injured (Foucault, 2007: 126-127).

This entails Foucault to crystalize the feature of pastoral power, postulated from such a relationship, as the power focusing on the movement and multiplicity of its objects. On the one hand, this type of power was not exercised over a territory or town, but over men in their multiple movements. As Foucault quoted from "Psalm" and "Exodus", God appeared when his people was moving from one place to another, in order to guide them to the right direction

(Foucault, 2007:125-126). Thus, pastoral power was the type of power which made central both the movements of its objects, and the direction to which these object moved. On the other hand, pastoral power was also exercised on an individual scale. Not only did this power function at the level of the totality of its objects, but also responded to every detail of the parts of this totality. In this sense, pastoral power tended to view the totality as the summation of its parts, which would lose its ground as soon as its parts were destroyed, no matter how little these part were (Foucault, 2007:128-129). In short, the pastoral power, which took place throughout the ancient Mediterranean East, was a power aiming to promote the happiness of its objects, by monitoring all their activities, along with the way to which these objects would move.

This characteristic of pastoral power was retained for hundred years until the advent of the Christian church, as a result of the institutionalization of religious life in western civilization. This church set the pastoral relation to be the crux of its organization which, in turn, generated a rearrangement of the power drawing from that relation (Foucault, 2007:147-150). By theorizing the contents of the texts of Christian thinkers around the third to the sixth centuries, such as the works of Saint Benedict, Saint Ambrose, John Cassian, and Gregory the great, Foucault indicates that what interests him about Christian pastoral power is the intense degree of the relationship between the pastors, or shepherds, and their flocks. Definitely, this might be the result of the transformation, triggered by the church, of transferring pastoral power from God to the pastors of the church. Since pastoral power could be exercised through various pastors who had the mission of distributing their religious practice to numerous followers in different areas, the degree of its operation was more intensive than it had been previously. To demonstrate this, Foucault brings some specific element of Christian pastoral power into play, that is, the principle which makes a pastor be in charge of every action of his flock as if that action is his own act (Foucault, 2007:169-171). In this principle,

a pastor is responsible for the merits and faults of his flock. If there are sins in his own flock, the pastor has to take those sins as his own sins. As Foucault indicates, once the sheep do something wrong or inappropriate, the pastor will be ready to pay for the wrong, or inappropriate, action of his sheep (Foucault, 2007: 170-171). In this case, the flock, or sheep, is not solely the flock, but the burden or task that every pastor has to sacrifice their life for, both physically and spiritually, in taking care of.

This principle has a profound consequence for the intensity of the pastoral power. Insofar as the pastor takes responsibility for what his flock has done, he has an absolute authority to command them. Such authority does not depend on the law in an area where the pastor leads his flock. On the contrary, it depends on the purpose of the salvation of every sheep in his flock, which justifies him asking each sheep for pure obedience (Foucault, 2007:174-175). Concerning this, it is not hard to stress that, for Foucault, the pastoral power does not perform through physical violence preserving the laws. Instead, it performs through the process by which the flock is rendered to be subordinated completely under the authority of the pastor. Pastoral power, viewed from this perspective, is nothing, but the power that makes up the reciprocal relationship between the pastor and his flock. While the pastor sacrifices his entire life for the flock, the flock has to respond by paying him with their obedience. This means that it make no sense to talk about pastoral power without this sort of relationship; unless the relationship between the pastor and his flock is established reciprocally, the pastoral power will not come into being.

However, it is important to remark that the reciprocity in the pastoral relation does not make the relationship between the pastor and his flock symmetrical. In fact, as soon as the flock responds to their pastor by paying him their obedience, they put themselves into a submissive position in which they have to comply with the commands of the pastor, regardless of the absurdity of the command. Foucault describes this point evidently by

displaying the case of the relationship between an abbot and his novice in monastic life in the fourth century. In this case, a novice just entering a monastic community must be put into the hands of the abbot, or the master of novices, who would take total charge of him, and command him as to what he had to do at every point in time (Foucault, 2007:176). One of the most vivid examples was the story from John Cassian's book about a monk, John, who was given an order to water a dried-out stick, planted far from his cell, in the middle of the desert. In the story, the monk John was ordered to water the stick twice a day, just to find out that his attempt had failed since the stick did not flower as he wished. Yet, this failure helped John to be assured of his saintliness, because the real purpose of the order was not about a stick, but the test of his master. As Foucault summarized from this case: "the more sour the master, the less he (John) acknowledges the discipline, the less he shows gratitude, the less he congratulates the discipline on his obedience, the more the obedience is recognized as meritorious" (Foucault, 2007:176). Thus, it is clear that the main component of pastoral power is nothing but the inauguration of the mode subjectivating one into an asymmetric relationship, which obliges him to be an object ready to be governed by his master.

As this account reveals, the clue to understanding pastoral power lies in the practice in which one has to renounce oneself, in order to act according to the obligations one has to the master. This also sheds light on the self, as an object of which the pastoral power would like to take possession. The modification of the self, as Foucault depicts, lays at the heart of the operation of Christian pastoral power; it is the target of the pastoral power. One of the examples helping to describe this point is the way in which the notion of *apatheia* was Christianized. Originating from Greco-Roman tradition, *apatheia* was the ideal state to which the Stoic philosophers aimed to arrive, namely, the absence of passion, enabling one to eliminate from oneself all those impulses, forces, and storms, which one could not master. The Greek's *apatheia* was therefore an idea that related to self-mastery; with *apatheia*, one

could be assured that one's own self would be mastered despite the bad fortunes one would face (Foucault, 2007:178). Nevertheless, this meaning was reoriented by the Christian pastoral power. According to Foucault, the Christians did not view *apatheia* as the absence of passion. Unlike the Greeks, who considered the passion as the main problem, the Christian viewed it as a symptom caused by the will springing from the self. The self, then, must be the problem with which the Christians had to deal. In this way, the pathos needing to be kept at bay was no longer the passion but the existence of the self, paving the way for the alteration of the meaning of *apatheia* from the absence of passion to the absence of the self (Foucault, 2007:178-179).

Drawing from this illustration, it might not be exaggerated to state that the aim of pastoral power is nothing rather than the destruction of the (independent) self. If pastoral power relies upon a certain relationship obliging one to come under the authority of the master, this relationship will be nothing but the renunciation of the self, as Foucault said: "...in pastoral power we have a mode of individualization that not only does not take place by way of affirmation of the self, but one that entails destruction of the self" (Foucault, 2007:180). Here, someone might think that by pointing to the destruction of the self, Foucault presupposes the self as an authentic experience enshrined with one's existence. Yet, as I elaborate in the next chapter, this thought is completely wrong, since Foucault sees nothing in this self except some sort of experience activated by some certain forms of action, or practices. However, what I would like to present in this chapter is only the operation of rationality embedded in the type of relationship that modifies one to be the object of the government. In other words, I would like to present in this part that if there is a historical model of the reason of state, as the concretization of power framed through the notion of governmentality, it could be nothing except pastoral power, to the extent that it provides



Foucault the type of governmental rationality from which the reason of state could be derived.

At this point, it is important to remind ourselves that although pastoral power is the historical model of the reason of state, Foucault does not see its operation as political practices, insofar as the level at which it could operate is ethical; through the model of pastoral power, government could not be anything other than the life and activities of each individual. In this sense, in order to account for the way in which pastoral power was transformed to be the reason of state, we need to see how its governmental rationality was politicized, or how the forms of relationship that induces one to subjectivate oneself, as the object of government, was moved from the ethical level to the level of politics.

#### Reason of State as the Government in Political Form

Foucault began dealing with this puzzle in his lecture at Collège de France on 8 March 1978, where he referred to the historical event taking place in Europe around the fifteenth century: secularization. Generally speaking, secularization is seen as the breakdown of the church's authority in relation to political and civic life. It could also be the starting point for triggering the project of modernity, by which the freedom of mankind could be realized through the principle of toleration that permits everyone to live their religious life freely (Larmore, 1987; Wall, 1988; Kymlicka, 1995; Rawls, 1993). However, Foucault does not pursue this path of analysis, for he chooses to look at secularization by shedding light on the emergence of what he calls 'the insurrection of conduct', as the point at which the new form of government emerged (Foucault, 2007: 228).

As already pointed out, before the sixteenth century ‘Government’ was a word whose meaning encompassed only an asymmetrically ethical relationship among individuals, or groups of individuals. This word, in addition, was also equivalent to the word ‘Conduct’, which could capture and give expression to the activity of conducting, and the way one conducted oneself, or let oneself be conducted (Foucault, 2007: 193). Thus, it could be implied that while, before the sixteenth century, government was the notion, directed by the ecclesiastical authority, aimed at ‘conducting the soul’ through the form of pastoral relation, Foucault’s treatment of secularization, as the insurrection of conduct, could be nothing but the proliferation of government from the Christian reference (Foucault, 2007: 230-231). If secularization means something for him, it could be the proliferation of pastoral power, or the de-Christianization of government (see further in Foucault, 2017: 204-214).

This leads Foucault to give attention to the new form of government, that is, the political government, or government performing at the level of politics. He describes this by pointing out the decline of scholastic thought whose idea was used to afford the justification of the ruler in governing the people. Before the secularization, the scholastic idea, notably how God governed nature, was an analogy for the ruler to imitate, as it helped him to justify the right to rule his city (Foucault, 2007: 232-234). In this sense, God defined the political guidelines in such a manner that the ruler had only to follow without changing anything. No need for him, at that time, to mention another reference in justifying his political rights. However, as soon as the effect of secularization was dispersed, such guidelines were undermined and replaced, with the new political rationality, which Foucault called ‘the reason of state’, as he said that: “At the end of the sixteenth century, the emergence of the specificity of the level and form of government is expressed by the new problematization of what was called the *res publica*, the public domain or state (*la chose publique*)” (Foucault, 2007: 236).

Seen from this perspective, it is clear that the political government that Foucault wants to bring into focus, as the product of secularization, is the reason of state. He suggests that after the sixteenth century, the sovereign was required to govern in accordance with the new type of rationality, which was no longer God's action, but the reason of state (Foucault, 2007: 236-237). Political government, in this aspect, is nothing other than government manifesting through the notion of the reason of state. Politics, consequently, is something connecting with the way of positing, thinking, and programing the specificity of government in relation to the ruling of state (Foucault, 2007: 246). It is thus pointless to talk about politics without mentioning the state. If the form of government is originated from what Foucault calls 'the Christian pastoral power', the reason of state, as the political form of government, will be nothing rather than the form of government derived by 'the secularization of Christian pastoral power'.

Due to his treatment of politics as government relating to the reason of state, Foucault might be mistakenly understood as a theorist who subsumes politics to be something inseparable from the state. Yet, I would like to argue that there is a huge difference between making a theoretical analysis and endorsing some political position. What I mean is that by reckoning the reason of state as being the political form of government, Foucault is not pinpointing his own idea of politics, but rather he is displaying the historical reliability relating to it. As Maurizio Virolli, one of the prominent scholars in the studies of the history of political thought, proposes, the transformation taking place in Europe around the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had a profound consequence in changing the understanding of politics from the old conception focusing on the art of ruling a city according to justice, to the new concept centralizing on the reason of state, as the knowledge of the means to preserve and enlarge the ruler's interests (Virolli, 1992: 473-495). Drawing upon insight from this argument, it could be argued that the reason of state is not only the result of the de-

Christianization of government, but also the child of the revolution in the concept of politics (Foucault, 2007: 24-28). This might be the reason why Foucault's treatment of political government seems to share the same view with many scholars in the field of the history of political thought, particularly in the way they give a special place to the reason of state, as related to the development of modern political conception (Oestreich,1982; Skinner,1989; Virolli,1992; see also Saar, 2011).

However, in spite of these similarities, there remain significant differences regarding the theoretical orientation in accounting the reason of state between Foucault and those historians. As Dean rightly expounds, while many historians of political thought tend to essentialize the state in the transcendental direction, Foucault is eager to portray the state as the product of relationships of conduct, working through the organization of political government (Dean, 1999: 87).<sup>5</sup> As already explained, the state, according to Foucault, is not a thing that one could perceive objectively, nor could it be sublimated to the transcendental form of order. The state, as he said, "is only a composite reality and a mythicized abstraction whose importance is much less than we think" (Foucault, 2007:109).

Thus, it is understandable why Foucault does not favor Machiavelli, who reduces the reason of state to be an existence of the ruler.<sup>6</sup> This also explains why Foucault begins his treatment of the reason of state by referring to Giovanni Botero, an Italian priest, whose

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<sup>5</sup> This might entail someone to group Foucault with Louise Althusser, who considers the state as an ideological reference realized through the performance of its apparatus (Althusser, 1984). However, as Saar points out, Foucault does not share the same view with Althusser, because he does not see the state as a-temporal sets of ideological entity, but as the product of historical events taking place in modern conditions (Saar, 2011, pp. 38-40; see also Lemke, 2012, ch. 2.) For the relationship between Foucault and Althusser, see Eribon (1991: ch.10)

<sup>6</sup> Unlike some scholar who treats Machiavelli as the prominent figure concerning the notion of the reason of state, Foucault views Machiavelli's writings as only the manual for the prince in preserving his principality, rather than the doctrine seeking to ascertain how the reason of state works. (Foucault, 2007: 242-244) For those who views Machiavelli as the founder of the notion of the reason of state, see Meinecke (1984)

work—*The Reason of State*—is known as the main text for the anti-Machiavellian tradition. As the first sentence of this text makes clear, the reason of state could not be depicted to be the guideline that the prince could follow to preserve his principality, since the state itself is not identical to the prince, but identical to “the firm domination over people”; the reason of state should be considered as, “the knowledge of the means suitable to found, conserve, and expand dominion” (Botero, 2017:4). In this place, Botero’s doctrine is the model of Foucault’s treatment of the reason of state, in a way that it emphasizes a type of rationality that produces and confirms an existence of the state through its daily functioning in its everyday management (Foucault, 2007: 237-238). “The state is not a cold monster; it is a correlative of a particular ways of governing”, he said (Foucault, 2008: 6). Reason or rationality, here, does not function as means or instruments to fulfil the state’s interest; it functions as games, or a set of rules, which produces, and reproduces, the ontological condition of the state (Foucault, 2007: 24-28; Foucault, 2008:4).

Here, attention needs to be given to the role of reason or rationality expressed through some certain form of knowledge that acts as the basis for an existence of the state. As Lemke points out precisely, such rationality is the crux of state, as an embodiment of political government, because it could provide cognitive and normative maps, allowing the space of government to be materialized. “State’s agencies produce and proliferate form of knowledge that enable them to act upon the governed reality”, he wrote (Lemke, 2012: 28). This point could be affirmed in Foucault’s lecture at Collège de France on 15 March 1978, where Foucault underscored the emergence of the new form of knowledge in the seventeenth century, called ‘statistics’. According to Foucault, statistics are not only the knowledge operating through the form of numbers, but also the rationality embedded within the information about forces and resources that characterizes the state at a given moment (Foucault, 2007:274). Such information plays a key role in building and preserving the

strength of a state to the extent that it contains within itself the primary databases of things relating to the state, for instance the information about geography, medical expertise, architectural plans, bureaucratic guidelines, etc (Lemke,2012:28). This information does not merely serve as the databases indicating the factual evidence of things relating to the state; on the contrary, it functions to comprise the reality of the state itself. The sovereign's necessary knowledge (*savior*), as Foucault said, "will be a knowledge (*connaissance*) of things rather than knowledge of the law, and this knowledge of things that comprise the very reality of state is precisely what at the time was called 'statistics'" (Foucault ,2007: 274).

Furthermore, with respect to the realization of the state, statistics also invents the object on which the state could claim to govern. Since the state could not confirm its existence without the operation of its apparatuses, there must be an object on which its apparatuses could function, so as to materialize its incorporeal condition. This object could be nothing rather than public order, as Foucault once announced, as follows:

Finally,..., there is the problem of the public. That is to say, *raison d'Etat* must act on the consciousness of people, not just to impose some true or false belief on them, as when, for example, sovereign want to create belief in their own legitimacy or in the illegitimacy of their rival, but in such a way that their opinion is modified, of course, and along with their opinion their way of doing things, their way of acting, their behavior as economic subjects and as political subjects (Foucault, 2007: 275).

This passage is very important in bringing to light the role of public order as the field of the relationship in which the reason of state, as the concrete form of political government, takes place. It shows that, in addition to the everyday performances of the state's institutions and agents, public order is another concrete feature in which the form of relationship realizing the existence of state takes shape. In this fashion, public order is not the sphere existing outside, and countering, the state. In opposition to a scholar, like Jurgen Habermas,

who cherishes public order as the domain for balancing a state's power, along with nourishing humans' capability of reasoning, Foucault tends to view public order as an extension of the reason of state (See further in Ashenden, 1999). Accordingly, public order is not the sphere in which any individuals could exercise their freedom of speech; it, rather, is constructed as the political object designated for being governed by governmental rationalities. Public order, in short, is nothing but the object of political government.

Following this direction, it is inevitable not to mention the crucial role of the population, acting as the materiality of public order, as Foucault suggested in his lecture on 25, January 1978:

The public,... is the population seen under the aspect of its opinions, ways of doing things, forms of behavior, customs, fears, prejudices, and requirement; it is what one gets a hold on through the species up to the surfaces that gives one a hold through education, campaigns, and convictions. The population is therefore everything that extends from biological rootedness through the species up through the surface that gives one a hold provided by the public. From the species to the public; we have here a whole field of new realities in the sense that they are the pertinent element for mechanism of power, the pertinent space within which and regarding which one must act (Foucault, 2007:75).

Population, then, is served as the summation of the database, referring to the collective body of people who live within the same political order. Seen from this perspective, population plays both as the empirical data of public order, and as the field of reality, of which the state, for confirming its existence, has to take care. In other words, if the reason of state is the concrete form of political government, the infrastructure allowing it to be realized is nothing but the population; though political government is the product of secularization, which releases the government from Christian reference, its concretization through the existence of public order, as the main component of the reason of state, could not

be completed without the appearance of population. Population, for Foucault, is nothing other than the object employed to realize and re-assert the existence of political government:

While I have been speaking about population a word has constantly recurred...and this is the world “government”. The more I have spoken about population, the more I have stopped saying “sovereign”. I was led to designate or aim at something that again I think is relatively new, not in the word, and not at a certain level of reality, but as a new technique. Or rather, the modern practical problem, the privilege that government begins to exercise in relation to rules, to the extent that, to limit the king’s power, it will be possible one day to say, “the king reigns, but he does not govern”, this inversion of government and the reign or rule and the fact that government is basically much more than sovereignty, much more than reigning or ruling, much more than the imperium, is, I think, absolutely linked to the population (Foucault, 2007:76).

By pointing to the role of population, we can clearly see how the relationship modifying one to be an object of government is moved from the Christian conduct of the soul to the political government of man. That is, while in the former case, this relationship is explained through the model of pastoral power, where each individual who wants to live in salvation submit themselves to be an object under the government of their pastor, such a relationship in the latter case could be viewed through the role of population, according to which this population is the collective body into which each individual could propel themselves with the aim of wealth and leading prosperous lives. This might explain why among many disciplines in statistics, Foucault places much concern on the birth of the political economy, as the only form of rationality that takes the wealth of population to be its problem (Foucault, 2007: 76-77). The constitution of political economy, as he said, “was made possible when population emerged as a new subject from the different elements of wealth” (Foucault, 2007: 106). In sum: if each individual want to have a wealthy life, they must subjectivate and entail themselves to be subsumed into the population, as the collective body serving to be the object of political government.



At this point, we could see how far the framework of governmentality takes Foucault from his previous treatment that approaches the macro scope of power through the logics of war-repression. As already delineated, while through the logics of war-repression Foucault views population as the object produced by the medical and biological regulations allowing the sovereign to exercise his power, population in the framework of governmentality does not have anything to do with such medical and biological knowledge. Instead, what allows it to take place is the science concerning the field of economics. This point is very crucial in capturing the way Foucault advances his analysis of power based on his historical account of the reason of state that I just described. It could be argued that, though the framework of governmentality could help Foucault to undertake the operation of power at the macro level of the state's apparatuses, this sort of operation is not what Foucault would like to critique, since he regards the way it deals with population as something historically incomplete. As he remarked:

*Raison d'Etat* is a relationship of the state to itself, a self-manifestation in which the element of population is hinted at but not present, sketched out but not reflected...In other words, I think *raison d'Etat* really did define an art of government in which there was an implicit reference to the population, but precisely population had not yet entered into the reflexive prism (Foucault, 2007:277-278).

This comes as no surprise at all, considering that the unit of Foucault's analysis is the form of rationality which, albeit using the state as the point of its concretization, does not need to be exhausted by the performance of state. It means that while Foucault uses the reason of state to be the historical point at which governmental rationality is actualized at the political level, what he really wants to tackle is the operation of that rationality playing with population in his contemporaneity. Henceforth, in order to grasp the operation of governmental rationality that Foucault intends to counter, we must comprehend the highest

form of political government that surpasses the reason of state in dealing with population, the form of political government that Foucault calls 'bio-politics'.

### **Bio-politics: Economic Reason and the Government of the Market**

At first glance, reckoning bio-politics to be the target of Foucault's critical project, as it is the form of power operated in his contemporaneity, might seem confusing, since this notion was already used in his previous framework before governmentality. As elaborated in the first part of this chapter, Foucault firstly mentioned the notion of bio-politics in his Collège de France lecture on 17 March 1976, where he stressed the birth of population, as the collective social body into which individual bodies were subsumed. Foucault's bio-politics, or bio-power, could thus be nothing other than the operation of power that takes the population to be its object. However, while in that lecture Foucault regarded this population as the object on which the sovereign could impose his power, he reorients it through the framework of governmentality, as an object of governmental rationality, rather than the object of the sovereign or the state (Lemke, 2011: 48-49).

This could explain why through the reorientation of bio-politics, Foucault changes the knowledge's mechanism associated with the population from medical regulation to the role of economic activity. He clarified this point in the lecture on 4 February 1978, where he showed how population was unblocked from the juridical metaphor, by a series of problems in the eighteenth century, such as demographic expansion, the abundance of money, and the expansion of agricultural production, which led to the expansion of economic problems from the domain of the family, to the public domain (Foucault, 2007: 103-105). In this respect, if there is a historical condition under which population could take place, this condition is not the advance of biology or medical science, but the de-privatization of economic activities.

Historically, prior to the eighteenth century, economics had usually been treated as an activity relating to the survival of humans under the management of families, for its linguistic root—‘*oikos*’—could be translated as the private realm of the household. However, with the introduction of statistic, as the rationality of political government, economics could no longer remain within the domain of the family. Released by statistics, economics is the new field of political government, since its existence could provide the framework to reveal the true characteristics of population, as the source of those problems, irreducible to the family. Statistics, as Foucault suggests, not only show the economic effects of population, but also quantify the specific phenomena of population, as something bigger than the capability of family to deal with (Foucault, 2007:104).

Certainly, this might mean that, in some certain respects, economics is the component serving to confirm the strength, and legitimacy, of the state. Yet, it should not be forgotten that, for Foucault, the state is nothing but the product of the specific form of rationality, as the concretization of governmental rationality at the political level. Then, it could be argued that in shedding light on the advent of the economic domain, as the field bringing the character of population into play, Foucault no longer views state, or the reason of state, as the main concrete form of political government. Rather, he seems to pay attention to a new and higher form of political government, called ‘the economic’, or ‘the economic reason’. This point becomes clear in his lecture on 5 April 1978, where he commented on the rise of population, as the main problem of political government, that drew out some specific types of nature, or naturalness, into which the reason of state was incapable to subsume, and thus gave rise to the economic reason, as the only type of rationality competent to ascertain those types of nature. This type of nature, definitely, did not appear like the cosmos framing the rationality in justifying the political order of the middle ages. Nor did it play as the artificial reality, constituting a specific form of rationality in producing the ontological condition of state.

Instead, such types seemed to reside within the relationship among men, or within the level of interaction where men cohabited, exchanged, worked, and produced something together (Foucault, 2007: 349). In this way, economic reason could be nothing but the type of nature, designating a series of interactions among individuals who were united within the body of population.

Furthermore, this economic reason not only actualized an abstract juridical body of population into the concrete form of reality, but also set up certain rules to which the state had to conform, rather than to command (Foucault, 2007: 351-353). Through the emerging of economic reason, according to Foucault, the state and its reason no longer acted as the main political form that concretized the governmental rationality. Even though it still had some role in realizing the operation of political government at this stage, the state did not act in accordance with its own reason; on the contrary it had to follow through the rule arising out of the economic reason, as the higher stage of political government. Economic, then, was not the component serving to confirm the strength of the state. The state no longer played the leading role in concretizing the political form of government rationalities; conversely, it was turned into being an agent whose purpose was to complete the task ordered by an economic reason (Foucault, 2007: 353).

Viewed from this perspective, we could grasp how Foucault transforms the notion of bio-politics. Through the lens of economic reason, the conceptual place of population is inverted from the object of sovereign power to the source of laws to which the state is enforced to subscribe. In spite of being the ground for augmenting the sovereign power, bio-politics, for Foucault, is concerned with how the population's life is governed through the operation of economic reason. Bio-politics, hence, is not the politics in the way of how the sovereign regulates the life of population. Rather, it is the politics of conducting how those who belong to the body of population live their lives through an economic mechanism.

Essentially, bio-politics could not be anything except the political government working concretely through the operation of an economic mechanism. In terms of the political government, there is thus no distinction between politics and economics.

Certainly, fusing the distinction between economics and politics might lead Foucault to stand against the position of some political theorists, such as Hannah Arendt, who views the development of modern condition as the rise of an economic management, which supplants the political realm of public argumentation (Arendt, 1958: 28-37). This view, in one or another, has been shared by many scholars.<sup>7</sup> Wendy Brown, for example, defines bio-politics as the process by which an economic reason is generated to infringe on the realm of politics (Brown, 2015: 53-70). Rose, in the same vein, proposes that Foucault's highest form of power could be described through the function of economic reason, which could promote a new type of political government, regulated by economic enterprise at the expense of the state (Rose, 1999: ch.4). However, if bio-politics is defined in terms of how politics was economized, this bio-politics will not be the bio-politics that Foucault would like to explain, since he does not position politics and economics as something against each other. In fact, he tends to associate these two activities in the first place, for he identifies politics with the operation of power, while regarding power to be the operation of rationality working originally in the economic management of household activity (Foucault, 2007:192-194; see also Leshem, 2016).

Following this, bio-politics should therefore be pictured as the culmination of politics whose essence is nothing but the operation of management on the political level. Rather than the way in which the political realm is usurped by the rising of economic reason, bio-politics is an idea showing how political government operates through the economic administration.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, see Sandel (2013), Habermas (1989), Wolin (2004).

In this fashion, economics is inseparable from politics; they complete each other. This point becomes apparent in Foucault's lecture at Collège de France on 24 January 1979, where he treated the market as the concrete form of political government, not merely as the economic mechanism. In that lecture, Foucault began to put forward his idea of the market, by picturing the function of the market from the Middle Ages to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as 'the site of justice'. By calling it the site of justice, he brought out the double features of market during that period: the distribution of goods as justly as possible, and the protection of buyers from the fraud of a person selling bad items (Foucault, 2008: 30-31). In this light, market appeared as a political mechanism to the extent that it was the juridical management that the political authorities could employ for regulating the conduct of their citizens in respect of the principle of justice; the market was nothing but the parts of political management. This is the reason why the rise of the market in the eighteenth century, along with the advent of economic reason, should not be viewed as the replacement of politics by economics. Instead, it should be viewed as the highest form of politics whose purpose was nothing except escalation that made political government as effective as possible.

Viewing the market as the concrete form of political government not only confirms the fusing of politics and economics in Foucault's treatment of bio-politics, but also helps to lay the groundwork for explaining the performance of the market in generating the highest stage of governmental rationality. This might be the reason why Foucault explains more about the unique character of market in the eighteenth century, as the site of truth. This characteristic, as Foucault puts it, relied upon the harmony between the market and nature, as the precondition allowing truth to be its character. It sets out the new political function of the market, which is no longer the site of jurisdiction, but the medium that renders nature as bearing the cost of production and the extent of the demand to be intelligible (Foucault, 2008:

31). The market, in this manner, is not just the site of exchange; it could also be the point that reflects the truth underlying the nature of the things involved.

By grounding the procedure through which everyone has to participate to exchange their products with one another, the market is in effect the ground that generates the truth which they have to obey. In this regard, it is indubitable that Foucault conceives of the market as being akin to the concretization of political government at the highest stage, inasmuch as the market brings the truth into play, and employs it to regulate the conduct of everyone. Absolutely, this does not mean that he sees the market as the vehicle bringing forth the absolute truth in political society. Nor does he view it to be the means for making society to be just. Conversely, Foucault regards the market as the site embodying the condition under which the line separating correctness from falseness could be drawn. As he said:

But what is discovered at this moment, at once in governmental practice and in reflection on this governmental practice, is that inasmuch as prices are determined in accordance with the natural mechanisms of the market they constitute a standard of truth which enables us to discern which governmental practices are correct and which are erroneous... In this sense, inasmuch as it enables production, need, supply, demand, value, and price, etcetera, to be linked together through exchange, the market constitutes a site of veridiction, I mean a site of verification—falsification for governmental practice (Foucault, 2008: 32).

In this respect, it is impossible to disregard the market as the main mechanism in mobilizing the governmental rationality at the stage of bio-politics. Through its engagement with truth playing under the nature of things involved, the market not only embodies the economic reason, as the highest form of political government, but also creates the model of self-regulating government, where the conduct of those who participate in it are put under the process of verification/falsification in consonant with their own natures. This means that in order to be a good government, too much intervention in the practices of its object should be

abandoned; there is no need for the market to intervene in the things involved, insofar as nature is posited to be the point of reference in regulating the movements of those things in the first place. What needs to be considered, then, is not how to intervene in the object of government, but how to undertake and respect its nature, by allowing this nature to regulate its movement, as well as falsifying everything that violates that nature.

Drawing from this insight, we can notice that the crux of market, in being the highest form of political government, is nothing but the new outlook of freedom. Foucault demonstrated this point clearly in his lecture at Collège de France on 24 January 1979, where he suggested that the new form of political government could not function without the existence of several types of freedom, such as freedom of the market, freedom of exchange, freedom of property rights, and free speech, etc. “The new art of government therefore appears as the management of freedom”, he remarked (Foucault, 2008: 63). Surely, this new outlook of freedom is not the same as the liberal principle proposed by philosophers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Insofar as that principle is something arising out of the movements trying to limit the power of the sovereign, it has no connection with the freedom that Foucault takes as the crux of the new form of political government. For Foucault, this type of freedom neither relies on the doctrines of natural law asserting the basic right of the individual, which the authorities are not able to transgress, nor the universal value ascribing to all humans who are capable of reason. Rather, such freedom is part of the government inasmuch as it is nourished by the market, as something nobody could intervene in, except its own nature, whose regulation is obliged to make the most effective—but less interfering—political government (Foucault, 2008:40-42). Freedom, in this sense, serves as the regulator of government. By referring to nature, such freedom is needed to be continually invented, in order to legitimize the performance of the market. Without this outlook of freedom, the market would never function as the highest form of political government. In short, if market



is the highest form of political government, its content is nothing but the freedom, as the form of regulation according to nature. The more there is freedom, the more the market looks legitimate, and the more government there is.

Given this premise, it is essential for Foucault to give priority to the thoughts of Adam Smith, a moral philosopher, whose work, *The Wealth of Nation*, is crucial not only to assert the outlook of freedom described above, but also to promote the role of the market in performing its governing function in consonance with that outlook. As a matter of fact, paying attention to Smith's thoughts on the role of the market, and its relation with freedom, is nothing new in the field of political theory. Some theorists, for example, take Smith's description of the market to be the core of the project to employ the republican discourse for popularizing the vision of liberalism (Winch, 1978; Cropsey, 1957; Kalyvas and Katznelson, 2008, ch.2). Meanwhile, others conceive this issue in terms of the moral order that promotes human progress realized through an expansion of commerce (Himmelfarb, 2004: ch.2; Boucoyannis, 2013: 1051-70).

However, those interpretations are not something which Foucault wants to follow. In contrast to those theorists, Foucault neither places Smith's description of the market on the dispute between republicanism and liberalism, nor situates it within the scholastic tradition. Instead, he tends to contextualize such description within the tradition of British empiricism, whose doctrine of freedom is equivalent to the notion of interest. In this fashion, Smith's thoughts on the market are considered, by Foucault, as an idea in response to the work of British philosophers— like John Lock, William Blackstone, and David Hume—who places the interests of the individual to be the basis of their notion of freedom. It follows that Smith developed his thoughts within the tradition, which treats freedom as something derived from the principle determined by the feeling of pain and pleasure, as the irreducible and non-transferable subjective will (Foucault, 2008: 271-273). The source of freedom, seen from this

view, could be nothing but the interest of each individual, that is, the feeling of pain and pleasure regulated by the nature residing within each individual.

Undoubtedly, this raises the question of how to govern according to the principle of interest, leading to the following question on the form of political government that is not at odds with that principle. This question, for Foucault, is the background on which Smith's thoughts are posited. According to Foucault, Smith starts answering the question by remarking the state's incapability of performing its governing function, due to its natural constraint for responding to the interests of its subject (Smith, 1976: 687; Foucault, 2008: 281-283). For that reason, Smith proposes a new form of government driven by what he calls 'the invisible hand', or the market. Surely, this makes Smith's thoughts more discerning to the extent that he emphasizes the market's capability, in replacing the state, to perform the task of government, without violating each individual's freedom to pursue their interests. Smith's market, as conceived by Foucault, is the point at which the whole is transparent and capable of drawing together all separated interests, rendering each individual's actions into a single direction that will escalate the common interest (Foucault, 2008: 278-279).

This market, then, operates by establishing the rule that each individual, in pursuing their own interest, will help to promote the interest of the whole society, whether they have an intention or not. Understood in this way, it is clear that Foucault takes Smith to be the only thinker who could settle the question about a proper form of government relating to the notion of freedom as interests, by indicating how the invisible hand could work in uniting any dispersed interests of each individual into a single common one. There is no need for the market to infringe on each individual's freedom, since the increase of this freedom might lead to the increase of common interests which, in turn, entail the market's performance of government as effective as possible.

Echoing Smith's idea as the blueprint for the role of the market in performing its governing function is very significant to bringing out how Foucault characterizes the specificity of political government in the stage of bio-politics. This specificity could be nothing but the operation of freedom in constituting the condition of the new form of subjectivity. If freedom is the crux of the government of the market, its role is nothing but to construct the form of subjectivity that makes one compliant to the market's command. Foucault calls this form of subjectivity 'homo economicus', or the economic man. He explains this form of subjectivity by pointing to its character as being something helping an individual who takes it to be the one who is capable of pursuing one's interests by oneself. As Foucault pointed out in his lecture at Collège de France on 28 March 1979, 'homo economicus' was nothing other than someone who could pursue his own interests (Foucault, 2008: 270). It is therefore clear that homo economicus consists of two elements: the freedom of the individual, and the working skill to pursue his interests.

Here, it should be said that while the element of the freedom of the individual is already teased out carefully above, the working skill to pursue his interest is no less crucial in accounting human labor directly, inasmuch as Foucault identifies the worker's skill to pursue his interests with his own labor. On this basis, labor is viewed as part and parcel of the subject whose skill will rise and fall regarding his energy, in different points of times and in diverse environments, directed by his own strategy to overcome the others in market competition, which will, in turn, help him to win the interests he wants (Foucault, 2008: 224-225). Labor is hence something belonging to the life of a worker; there is impossible to separate the worker from his labor, since it is a sort of enterprise for himself. This means that homo economicus, in essence, is an entrepreneur who has to compete against his competitors in the market, by managing his labor, as an enterprise, to get his own rewards or interests. Homo economicus is an entrepreneur of himself. He is, as Foucault puts it, an entrepreneur to

the extent that he is to himself his own capital, his own producer, and his own source of earning (Foucault, 2008: 226).<sup>8</sup>

In this light, it is clear that homo economicus is the object of government operated at the stage of bio-politics through the performance of freedom regulated by the market. It is the object of government to the extent that it entails individual who takes it to double himself, and changes part of himself to monitor and punish his other part in favor of the command of the market. In other words, the worker, in order to be the winner of the market competition, needs to subjectivate himself as homo economicus, who could dissociate his own self, before making that self an object of his own government, under the supervision of the market. No one has more authority over him than he has himself. Homo economicus, thus, appears precisely as someone manageable. He, as Foucault concluded, “is someone who is eminently governable” (Foucault, 2008: 270). In short, if the regulation of freedom is the specificity of the market in performing its governing function, this regulation will be expressed in nothing other than the form of subjectivity called homo economicus.

In this respect, it could be argued that homo economicus is the form of de-governmentalization, or what Foucault calls ‘the governmentalization of the government’, to the extent that it subjectivates each individual to let himself be the object disciplined and falsified by his own self, as the agent who has to regulate himself in the service of market. It is hence undeniable that at the stage of bio-politics there is no need to stress the role of population, as the political objects of government. Though population is the condition giving rise to the advent of bio-politics, it seems to have no role when the operation of bio-politics is developed fully through the emergence of homo economicus, who could complete the task of

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<sup>8</sup> This has inspired some scholars to propose a new framework to analyze the capitalism in terms of subjectivity, rather than the structure on which the capitalism has worked, such as the class-struggle, for the details see Stimilli (2017).

governing, and being governed, by himself. What is at stake, for Foucault, is then no more than the society comprising of each individual who is disposed, by the market, to be a part of the governmental mechanism in monitoring himself, by subjectivating his own self to be an object of such an act of monitoring. The more each individual monitors and punishes themselves, the more effective their society is at being governed by the market, and the highest degree of power is exercised through the form of bio-politics.

At this point, we can grasp a full picture of Foucault's treatment of power, especially the feature of bio-politics, as the operation of power in Foucault's contemporaneity. But, although we can comprehensively ascertain Foucault's procedure of power, there remain the unresolved puzzles, that is, the feature of power which Foucault regards as the problem. What is wrong with being the object of government? If bio-politics is the highest form of political government whose operation is to render one to monitor oneself, as the object of the market's government, to what extent is this operation bad in Foucault's eyes? Why is it regarded to be something he has to critique? To put it in a formal way, since bio-politics is the highest form of power that Foucault problematizes as his critical target, what is the real point of this problem that needs to be encountered? Why must he encounter it?

### **Concluding Remarks**

In 2014, Daniel Zamora, a Belgian sociologist, gave an interview to the Jacobin online magazine about his edited book, published in Belgium in that year, on the relationship between Foucault and his lectures on bio-politics, which was compatible with neoliberalism. By highlighting the French contexts of the late 1970s, when the intellectual tendency was preoccupied by the seduction of anti-statism, Zamora argued that Foucault's lecture on the government of the market was no more than part of his political mission to transcend the old

program of socialism that made central the role of the state (Zamora, 2014; see also Zamora and Behrent, 2016). On this score, neo-liberalism was approached as the vehicle driving each individual to realize their freedom without being constrained by the iron cage of the state. Foucault, according to Zamora, “seemed to imagine a neoliberalism that wouldn’t project its anthropological models on the individual, that would offer individuals greater autonomy vis-à-vis the state” (Zamora, 2014).

To some extent, what Zamora said about Foucault is not strange, considering that there are some scholars who used to show the relationship between Foucault’s thoughts and the neoliberalism way of thinking, such as those of Michael Behrent, or Colin Gordon (Behrent, 2010; Gordon, 1991). Yet, this interview has triggered the debate about Foucault’s position, and how to evaluate him. For example, Ewald, in his lecture in 2015, responded by indicating Zamora’s impotence in separating the content of what Foucault said about neoliberalism—or the government by the market—from his intention of talking this topic in the first place, that is, the intention to portray the operation of power, as the object he wants to critique (Ewald, 2015). So does Elden who blames Zamora for not being able to discern the way Foucault used to reconstruct the logic of his object of critique, and his real position toward that object (Elden, 2014). Certainly, in my opinion, Zamora’s interview is likely untenable. Yet, if there is something we can learn from this case, it might be the ambiguity regarding the extent of Foucault’s critical manner.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how Foucault problematizes the operation of power, as the object of his critical project, by reconstructing his procedure of power, as well as the way he adjusts it. However, what I have still not shown in this chapter is the extent to which Foucault regards power as the problem: *Why is power the problem? To what extent is being the object of government the problem for Foucault? What is the main feature of Foucault’s framework of power that he considers to be the real stake he has to tackle? If bio-*

*politics is the form of power Foucault would like to encounter, to what extent are these politics the problem for him?* These questions are comprehensively dealt with in the next chapter, where I describe the ethical feature of truth playing in Foucault's framework of power. This feature of truth, as I argue in the chapter, serves to be the condition under which the experience of self-alienation is emerged. Thus, it could say that self-alienation is the main point that makes power Foucault's object of critique. To critique power, then, is to critique self-alienation.

But what is self-alienation in this case? To what extent could it be called self-alienation? And if this self-alienation is something we can discern from Foucault's description of the ethical feature of truth, what is the relationship between this feature and self-alienation? How does this ethical feature play in the operation of power? What is the relationship between power, truth, and the experience of self-alienation?

## Chapter Three

### **There is no Government without Truth: Truth and the Self-Alienation in Michel Foucault's Framework of Governmentality**

#### **The Truth of Oedipus and Foucault's Treatment of Power**

But if you shall keep silence, if perhaps some one of you, to shield the guilty of friend, or for his own sake shall reject my words—hear what I shall do then: I forbid that man, whoever he be, my land, my land where I hold sovereignty and throne; and I forbid any to welcome him and cry him greeting or make him a shearer in sacrifice or offering to the Gods, or give him water for his hand to wash. I command all to drive him from their homes, since he is our pollution,.... So I stand forth a champion of the God and of the man who died. Upon the murderer I invoke this curse—whether he is one man and all unknown, as one of many—may he were out his life in misery to miserable doom! If with my knowledge he lives at my hearth I pray that I myself may feel my curse.

Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*<sup>1</sup>

The passage that I quote above comes from *Oedipus the King*, the Greek tragedy written by Sophocles. The protagonist of this tragedy is the king Oedipus, who rules the city of Thebes in the time of it being attacked by an outbreak of plague. This tragedy begins its story when Oedipus, after investigating the cause of the outbreak, finds out that the spreading of the disease is related to the death of Laius, Thebes's former king, who was murdered unjustly, as it is regarded to be the god's punishment for the injustices of the city. Striving to save his city

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<sup>1</sup> The translation that I used here comes from Sophocles (1942)



from the epidemic, Oedipus then announces to his people that he will find and banish the true murderer of the former king, as this murderer has polluted the city and put it in a risky situation (Sophocles, 1942: 216-251). For him, the task of the king, who is supposed to rule the city, is tantamount to seeking the truth. Power is thus inseparable from truth, to the extent that there is a connection between Oedipus's kingly role, and his mission of truth-seeking which takes the disclosure of the murderer's true identity as its end. To solidly affirm his power, Oedipus needs to show his people that he knows, or is capable of attaining, the truth. He is the man who treats the problem of truth to be the problem of power or, to put in other words, plays the game of truth only to the extent that his power is put into question.

Seen from this aspect, it comes as no surprise that *Oedipus the King* is one of Michel Foucault's favorite stories, as he uses this story to illustrate his arguments in several lectures.<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, *Oedipus the King* has been perceived by many readers as the tragic story of Oedipus who finally finds out that the killer who killed Thebes's former king was himself, and that he is responsible not only for the city's disaster but also the patricide and incest, since the king whom he unknowingly killed was his true father, while the wife of that murdered king— whom he has married and has had children with —is his true mother. However, in spite of focusing on the issues of patricide and incest, what concerns Foucault is the character of power displayed in the story. This is the case with his first Collège de France lecture in 1971, where Oedipus was read by Foucault, not as the Freudian hero whose life could be recounted as the truth of human desire, but as the figure who could illustrate a relationship between power, knowledge and truth (Foucault, 2013:192-193). The more Oedipus realized the truth, the content of which was nothing but his unawareness to know the truth about himself, the more he lost his power to rule the city. “Do not seek to be master in

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<sup>2</sup> For the details of Foucault's dealing with this text several times, see Foucault ( 2012: 43, fn. 2)

everything, for the things you mastered did not follow you throughout your life”, Creon said to Oedipus, after the truth about Oedipus had been revealed (Sophocles, 1942: 1623).

From the point pursued here, it is not too exaggerated to say that *Oedipus the King* is the text Foucault uses to visualize the role of truth in his treatment of power. This is why he constantly keeps using this tragedy in his middle and late works. Yet, although this tragedy has continually been used by him, there is some modification regarding the way Foucault portrays it. This was asserted in the Collège de France lectures in 1979, where Foucault used Oedipus’s tragedy to illustrate the theme he would deliver in that year. Here, it should be noted that these lectures took place after he had completed his lecture on governmentality, as the culminated framework to undertake the operation of power. Thus, the way in which Foucault framed Oedipus, in these lectures, was not merely to show the role of truth in his treatment of power, but to pinpoint its performance as serving an ethical condition, under which the object of government could be constituted as a form of subjectivity.

Foucault described this point by shedding light on a specific condition that posited Oedipus to be the king of Thebes. As explained in the lectures, the justification for Oedipus to exercise his kingly power was not the norm external to Oedipus himself, but the relationship that he had with the people of Thebes. This relationship stemmed from his own capability both to protect Thebes from the invasion of the monster, and to lead its people along the right path (*orthosai polin*), which would earn him the absolute right to rule the city (Foucault, 2012: 62-65). What made Oedipus king, according to Foucault, was not then his birth right, but the need of Thebes’s people who wanted to be governed by him. But how could he govern his people without knowing the truth? Could it be possible for Oedipus to be the king if people did not take his word as the truth they could regard to be the guideline for their happy life? This was the reason why truth was the important condition of Oedipus’s royal status. Without it, no vertical relationship between Oedipus and his people would ever

have come into being. Oedipus could govern the people of Thebes, not because he acted according to the norm which gave him the right to rule the city, but because he acted as if he knew the truth for guiding the people to attain their prosperity.

Understood in this way, the real stake in *Oedipus the King*, as Foucault proposed in the lectures, was nothing rather than the way in which Oedipus loose his capability to govern, due to his incapability to know the truth of his own self, which consequently withdrew him from the relationship subjectivating him to be the king; throughout the story, Oedipus forced other people to manifest the truth, implying that he had never known the truth, and thus was not eligible to govern. “Oedipus is someone who, at a given moment, actually saved the town, not by using the knowledge of discovery, the *tekhne tekhnēs*, (but) by his *gnomē*, his judgment, by the juridical activity, and it is when he wanted to use the method of discovery of the truth within the exercise of tyrannical power linked to the game of fortune and misfortune, that the game of the truth led him precisely to misfortune”, Foucault concluded (Foucault, 2012: 67).

Drawing upon the insight from Foucault’s treatment of *Oedipus the King* described above, we could put forward an element, which seems to be overlooked when depicting Foucault’s framework of governmentality: truth and its ethical effect in laying the foundation for the mode of subjectivity. As presented in the previous chapter, governmentality is the framework helping us to account the operation of power through the performance of rationality that establishes the relationship, in which the object of government is subjectivated. However, it seems to me that by scrutinizing the extent to which this rationality entails the mode subjectivating one to be the object of government, nobody has paid attention to the operation of truth in this process. In fact, they all tend to regard truth as merely the epistemological background unrelated directly to Foucault’s framework of governmentality

(Lemke, 2012: ch.2; Dean, 1999: ch.4).<sup>3</sup> Thus, to comprehend the ethical function of truth in Foucault's framework of governmentality, we have to pay attention to the forms of action, or practice that materializes truth in the process by which one could renders oneself to be the object of government.

This is the mission of this chapter, written to elucidate the role of truth, and its performance, within Foucault's account of governmentality. Structurally, this chapter is divided into four parts. The first part deals with Foucault's portrayal of Christianity's practice of confession, as it is a complement of pastoral power, which, according to my presentation in the previous chapter, Foucault takes to be the historical source of governmentality. Central to this part is the way Foucault attaches truth to some certain forms of practices, making it to be the materiality of the self, which will be alienated as soon as those practices are acted out. By looking through the practice of confession, the effect of the ethical role of truth is then nothing but the condition under which an experience of self-alienation is activated. In the second part of this chapter, I elaborate the feature of self-alienation, which I propose as something underpinning the operation of truth in Foucault's framework of governmentality. Against the general manner of self-alienation, which presupposes the existence of the authentic self, I turn to the recent argument of Rahel Jaeggi, who proposes the way to deal with self-alienation in a non-essential fashion, by defining it as the specific feature of relationship that deprives a human's capability to be consonant with his being. Using Jaeggi's

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<sup>3</sup> Here, it should be noted that among various scholars, Nikolas Rose seems to be the only one who recognizes the importance of truth in Foucault's framework of governmentality. As he puts forward, truth plays a crucial role in Foucault's description of the mode that subjectivates one to be the object of government, to the extent that it acts as the ground of rationality that posits the way humans conceive reality (Rose, 1999: 24-28). Yet, in my eyes, Rose's argument still relies on the assumption that takes truth as an epistemological character of the governmental rationality. Truth, then, is only a supplement given to fulfill the performance of rationality. It therefore loses its own feature, since it is posited to be the dependent factor following the act of rationality, rather than something determining that rationality in the first place.

formulation as the reference, Foucault's insight of self-alienation, as I suggest, is the experience activated by some form of action, rather than the loss of the authentic self.

The third and fourth parts focus on this experience of self-alienation, enshrined with the practices, working as the crux of the operation of political government, both in the form of reason of state, and in the form of the market. Respectively, while I emphasize the practice of avowal in the third part, I put a lot of my labor into investigating the task of homo economicus in managing or discarding the risk, in the fourth part. From my perspective, both are important elements, in their own stages, which allow me to grasp the way in which the self-alienation could be activated through the ethical performance of truth. Only by understanding this can we yield the problem of power Foucault would like to explicate through his framework of governmentality, the problem, which is nothing except self-alienation and its being concretized by the ethical role of truth.

### **Confession and the Christian Practice of Government**

It is generally known among scholars of Foucault's studies that confession is one of the topics in which Foucault is interested, as he touched on it in several lectures during the first half of the 1970s, before fully thematizing it in his book, titled *History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, published in 1976.<sup>4</sup> Yet, it could be underlined that while in that book Foucault emphasized the Christians influence in the practice of confession, as a historical model of the modern sexual practice, that emphasis was something happening before his proposal of the notion of governmentality in 1978. Thus, it would not be wrong for us to claim that together with reconsidering the operation of power through the framework of governmentality, as I

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<sup>4</sup> For the brief overview of Foucault's treatment of the practice of confession, from the early 1970s up until the publication of *History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, see Elden (2016: 71-78)

presented in the previous chapter, Foucault also reuses his treatment of the Christian practice of confession. To the extent that it could help him to grasp the ethical role of truth working in the pastoral power, the Christian practice of confession could be nothing for Foucault except the practice of truth that subjectivates those who takes it to be the object of government. As Foucault commented in his lecture on 8 February 1978, governmentality, or the idea of government, originated not only from the pastoral power but also from the practice of spiritual direction that concerned the soul of those who were the object of power (Foucault, 2007: 123). It must then relate to the practice of confession, as it makes one render oneself to be the object governed by the other.

This point becomes clear when Foucault pinpointed that one of the specificities in the Christian pastoral relationship was the event when the novice came to his master and confessed to him the guilt that he had done or thought. In other words, the novice, in order to shield himself from any temptations, needed to examine his conscience, so as to objectify it, before conferring it to his master (Foucault, 2007:182). Here, by mentioning the role of confession as the practice operating beneath pastoral power, it seems to me that Foucault was bringing the ethical role of truth, and its relationship to the self, into the picture. Truth, in this respect, had nothing to do with the revealed truth of the Holy Scriptures. Nor did it relate to something transcending from the way in which humans spent their lives. Rather, it was something belonging to one's conscience, in the sense that one had something or some thought, as the hidden truth inscribed only within oneself.

In this regard, what the novice did was nothing less than the affirmation of the pastoral power, not because he conferred to the master his hidden truth, but because he conferred to him his self-entwinement with that truth. As Foucault described, "if Christianity, the Christian pastor, teaches the truth, if he forces men, the sheep, to accept a certain truth, the Christian pastorate is also absolutely innovative in establishing a structure, a technique of,

at once, power, investigation, self-examination, and the examination of others, by which a certain secret inner truth of the hidden soul, becomes the element through which the pastor's power is exercised, by which obedience is practiced, by which the relationship of complete obedience is assured, and through which, precisely, the economy of merits and faults passes" (Foucault, 2007, p.183). Thus, it looks clear that truth should be viewed as the point at which pastoral power was activated. The more one conferred a hidden truth to the other, the more one destructed his autonomous self, which subsequently subjectivated him to be a mere body, as an object, without any purposes except the purposed of being governed by the other. Yet, by conferring his hidden truth to the other, what was the condition under which the activation permitted one to destruct his self? Why could conferring a hidden truth lead to self-destruction? What was a connection between the truth and the self in relation to this matter?

Foucault did not give his answer until the lectures at Collège de France in 1980, where he revisited this point in a comprehensive manner. As he commented excellently, while confession was generally regarded as the verbalization of the sin committed, organized around the institutional relationship between the one who confessed and the other who was eligible to hear and fix that sin, he saw nothing in confession other than the result of the process, by which Christianity set to oblige the followers to manifest their own truths (Foucault, 2012:102-103). In this manner, confession should be viewed as the confession of self (avue), or the way one made oneself by verbalizing what one thought. This point was delineated further, when Foucault shed light on the double meanings underpinning Christianity's practice of confession: the confession as the act of faith, and the confession as the truth-act, or the truth-manifestation.

According to Foucault, confession was basically the word referring to someone who was ready to make a profession of his faith, despite the risk he must take in return (Foucault, 2012: 83-84). It, then, was an action of the one who wanted to demonstrate his faith by virtue

of some certain content he regarded as true. The truth, in this case, belonged to the content conforming to the tradition of revealed religion. But, was it possible for someone to demonstrate his own faith without treating such demonstration as something truthful? Was it possible for him to isolate his own self from professing an adherence to some certain content he himself regards to be true? This was the reason why Foucault moved to another sense of the confession: the reflexive truth act, or the action that exposed oneself through the word one verbalized. In this sense, truth did not reside within the content that one believed; instead, it resided as a secret part of the self. In confession, as Foucault said, “it is not at all a matter of adhering to the content of truth, but of exploring individual secrets, and of exploring them endlessly” (Foucault, 2012: 84).

Defining confession as a reflexive truth act also enabled Foucault to lay the groundwork for dealing with the problem of the relationship between truth and the self in Christianity. As Foucault proposed, this problem had not been set at the center of Christianity until the accession of the problem of ‘*discretio*’, or the discretion, which was introduced in the fourth century, by John Cassian, whose work was very significant in connecting the idea of spiritual direction to the practice of confession (Foucault, 2012: 261-262, 291). Thus, in order to be able to grasp the full feature of the relationship between truth and the self in Christianity, Foucault needed to bring the problem of *discretio* into light. Etymologically, *discretio* was a Latin word equivalent to the Greek, ‘*diakrisis*’, which meant an ability to separate what was mixed (Foucault, 2012, p.290). *Discretio* was therefore designated as a way of resolving the problem of mixing. Originally, this problem was located, in Greek-Roman tradition, as the inability to distinguish reason from passion when judging what was good and bad relating to any subject matter one had to face in everyday life. However, in contrast to that tradition, Cassian, as Foucault conceived, christianized this word by changing



the character of the problem from the inability to distinguish reason from passion, to self-impotence in warding off evil, which deceived one's perception by rendering some illusion as real. The problem of *discretio*, seen from the Christian aspect, was not the problem of passion, but the problem of illusion, which stopped the ability to discriminate the representation coming from God, from the representation coming from Satan (Foucault, 2012: 296-297).

Without doubt, this problem of Christianity's *discretio* had a profound consequence for another problem, namely, the uncertainty of cogitations, or the uncertainty of thought. Due to the inability of the self in drawing the line between reality and illusion, the status of thought was removed as the ground on which one could deploy to measure any subject matter one faced. Thinking, as Foucault indicated, could not be used to be the criteria to judge anything because it was the product created by the self (Foucault, 2012: 297-299). In this respect, thought, and the reason drawn from thought, was something one should not rely on; it could not be used to affirm the truth of what one thought. This might be the reason why thought was treated by the Christian as an excess, in relation to truth; since what one regarded to be true might be the result of evil, it was impossible for one to assert the truth on the content-level of one's thought.

But, if thought could not be used as the criteria to attain the truth, what would the element in attaining the truth be? What was the way one could use to attain the truth if one could not affirm it by pointing to the content of one's thought? By replying these questions, Foucault called attention to the feature of truth in this case: the materiality of the self. He elaborated this by showing that, in the case of Christianity, truth did not play at the level of thought's content but played at the level of the self of those who thought (Foucault, 2012: 302-303). Once one started to think, the truth to which one was related was not the content of

what one thought. Instead, such truth was related to him at the level of his own self, in the way that he himself was the one who thought. As Foucault described excellently:

In Christian examination... you can see that the question does not bear on the objective content of the idea, but in the material reality of the idea in the uncertainty of what I am, the uncertainty of what is taking place deep within myself, and while searching—for what? Whether my idea is true? Not at all. Whether I am right to hold this or that opinion? Not at all. What is in question is not the truth of my idea: it is the truth of myself who has an idea. It is not the question of the truth of what I think, but the question of the truth of I who thinks (Foucault, 2012, p.303).

This description was significant in capturing the way Foucault treated the relationship between truth and the self in Christianity. It confirmed that Foucault regarded truth, in Christianity, as the materiality of the self. Instead of being something arising from the self, truth seemed to be the ground, on which the self needed to depend, to affirm its existence. In this sense, truth tended to be viewed like an instrument helping one to bring himself into light. Truth did not come through the content of one's thought; on the contrary, it came through the way one thought. This insight could be brought into an engagement with the problem of Christianity's *discretio*. If the problem of Christianity's *discretio* was the self-impotence to discriminate the truth from the illusion, it would surely be resolved by verbalizing the truth playing as the materiality of the self.

This was the reason why Cassian, and Christians since the fourth century, made central to the confession. For Cassian, as Foucault elucidated, confession was the form of *discretio*, which entailed one to expulse the hidden truth belonging to oneself into the discourse that everyone, especially God, could inspect (Foucault, 2012: 306-307). Such confession, then, played a leading role in purifying the self from the contamination of evil, by offering the way one could discriminate the truth from the illusion built by Satan. Through the confession, one had to put oneself into the verbal discourse, which posited oneself under

the eyes of God, enabling one both to expel the evil, and to realize one's own truth situated deeply in oneself. As Foucault commented, in the confession, "it involves revealing something in me that I could not know and that become known through this work of self-exploration. It involves actually producing a truth, a truth that was unknown" (Foucault, 2012, p.308).

However, far from Cassian, who regarded the confession as an action one could take to reveal the truth to one's own self, Foucault viewed the confession as an action one could use to start the renunciation of the self. This renunciation was caused by the fact that truth was nothing but the self that one would like to disengage. This led Foucault to unfold the paradoxical relationship between truth and the self that resided in the confession, as he said, "It is insofar as I must renounce entirely my own wishes by substituting another's will for my own, it is because I must renounce myself that I must produce the truth of myself, and I produce the truth of myself only because I am working at this renunciation of my self" (Foucault, 2012: 308-309).

Given this premise, it is obvious not to perceive confession as an act of self-affirmation, but an act of self-alienation. Through the confession, one does not affirm oneself by committing the truth confessed by one own self, but one needs to alienate that self in order to objectify it as an object of one's confession. Hence, the truth performing in the confession, for Foucault, is the truth playing in a negative manner. It does not play as an instrument one could deploy to affirm oneself; contrastingly, this truth plays to materialize the self-negation by inscribing that self through the discourse one could speak, so as to disengage it. Here, Foucault seems to see in the confession a close connection between the truth act and self-alienation. The more one confesses one's truth, the more one alienates oneself. In short, the confession is nothing other than the act one could take for endorsing the truth, as the materiality of the self, in order to start an alienation that causes one to be at odds with one's

own existence. If there is the ethical role of truth playing beneath the practice of confession, this role is nothing but the condition under which the self-alienation could be taking place.

But, what is the main feature of self-alienation in this case? By mentioning self-alienation, am I supposing that behind Foucault's investigation of the ethical role of truth, there is an authentic existence of the self? Does it mean that I view Foucault as an essentialist thinker? What is the self in this picture? Is it the same with what the essentialists presuppose? Or if it is not, what is the specific character of this self?

### **Alienation without the Authentic Self: The Case of Foucault**

At first glance, introducing the notion of self-alienation for grasping how Foucault scrutinizes the ethical role of truth, as described above, might make my reading of Foucault controversial. Given that Foucault is usually regarded as poststructuralist, who posits himself as an anti-essentialist, it is understandable why he is considered to be the thinker, who views the critique of self-alienation as something outdated. In her ground-breaking work that takes on the form of self-alienation in contemporary society, Rahel Jaeggi puts Foucault with the group of thinkers who question or reject the viability of alienation critique. By emphasizing how Foucault discredits the traditional idea of subject, she sees in Foucault's thought nothing connecting to self-alienation. "If the subject...is both subjected to the rule of power and at the same time constituted by them..., then the distinction that alienation critique requires between self and what is alien, between an unrepressed (or undistorted) subject and a repressive (or distorting power), is no longer tenable", Jaeggi wrote (Jaeggi, 2014: 31).

To some degree, Jaeggi seems to derive an understanding of Foucault from the premise of her mentor, Axel Honneth, who follows Jurgen Habermas's critique of Foucault in

reducing the entirety of social life—including its form of subjectivity—to be the product of the operation of power (Honneth, 1991: 149-175).<sup>5</sup> Yet, as Rudi Visker nicely notices, Foucault’s analysis of power would not have a critical feature without an appeal to the matter of self-alienation. Foucault’s genealogical critique of power, as Visker depicted, “threatened to turn every order into an inauthentic order: into a ‘field of alienation’ which must disappear if one wishes to restore contact with the truth of madness or of the body (Visker, 1995: 125).” Of course, although Visker’s reading does not have an intention to account the full picture of Foucault’s self-alienation, it still provides me with a glimpse to anticipate the way Foucault would develop his analysis of power by referring to the notion of self-alienation. This anticipation looks more plausible if I turn to the current manner of alienation critique, which no longer presupposes the non-alienated subject preceding alienation, but rather makes central to the process of alienation that brings the subject into existence (Tomsic, 2019: 121).

Here, among many recent works that account alienation critique, I have found that Jaeggi’s formulation of self-alienation is the most suitable account in framing the way I speculate on how Foucault probes the character of self-alienation.<sup>6</sup> My reason for choosing Jaeggi’s account rests on the same intellectual antecedent she has with Foucault. That is, whereas Jaeggi’s formulation of alienation critique could be described as the spiritual perpetuation of Theodore Adorno, who takes self-alienation as the social fact against which he would like to develop his critical theory to fight (Honneth cited in Jaeggi, 2016:vii-x )<sup>7</sup>, Foucault’s account of power is also engaged with Adorno’s thought, in terms of his focuses on the pathology of reason and its social effect; indeed, someone rhetorically calls him the

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<sup>5</sup> For the Foucauldian response to Honneth, see Kelly (2018: 109-124)

<sup>6</sup> For other recent accounts of alienation critique, see Lazzarato (2012), Žižek (2017), Han(2017), and Tomsic (2019).

<sup>7</sup> For Adorno’s account of self-alienation, see Horkheimer and Adorno (2002: especially 35-62 ); Adorno (2017)

other son of ‘Adorno’s other son (Allen, 2016: 163).<sup>8</sup> In this light, though Jaeggi herself might differentiate her position from Foucault’s, this difference might not be as big as she thinks. In fact, it seems that her formulation could excellently help me to articulate the vision playing beneath Foucault’s problematization of power. But, what is Jaeggi’s formulation of self-alienation? How could this formulation help her to define the specificity of self-alienation in contemporary society? And how does it relate to the insight of alienation in Foucault’s thought?

Jaeggi begins her account of self-alienation by outlining the history of the concept. Historically, self-alienation was the concept sketched in two modern philosophical traditions, all of which were descended from Rousseau’s portrayal of the deformation of human being by the progress of society (Jaeggi, 2016: 6-8). The first tradition, according to Jaeggi, began with Karl Marx who described alienation as the failure of the process of externalizing labor, by which humans could appropriate themselves and the world. Meanwhile, the second tradition was brought into being by Martin Heidegger’s analysis of the condition of inauthenticity under which one’s life-world was misapprehended in term of the thingness—rather than the authentic mode of existence—which made one alienated from one’s own self, along with one’s own life (Jaeggi, 2016: 11-21).

Certainly, these two traditions have their own foundation, and philosophical lexicons; Marx, for instance, grasps the alienation through the concept of labor, while Heidegger tends to highlight the mode depriving one of an authentic mode of inwardness. Yet, for Jaeggi, both traditions share the same feature regarding the condition of alienation, namely, a “relation of relationlessness”. This means that, in her eyes, the

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<sup>8</sup> For the philosophical affinity between Foucault and Adorno, see Cook (2018), Dew (1987: 176-207).

conditions of alienation, in both the philosophies of Marx and Heidegger, rest neither on the property nor the authentic self-attunement. By contrast, it depends on some unique kind of relationship that defects the capability of human to be consonant with his being. Alienation, as Jaeggi put in, “is itself a relation, even if a deficient one” (Jaeggi, 2016: 25) . It, thus, denotes relationlessness of a particular kind, that is, “a detachment or separation from something that in fact belongs together, the loss of connection between two things that nevertheless stand in relation to one another” (Jaeggi, 2016: 25) .

This surely leads Jaeggi to define the effect of alienation as the loss of power, since the relation of relationlessness could deprive the capability of self-determination. She asserts this point by indicating that when one is in an alienated relation, one is disconnected from one’s capability to determine oneself. “Only a world that I can make “my own”, she explained, “is a world in which I can act in self-determined manner” (Jaeggi, 2016: 23). The concept of alienation, thus understood, is the concept to identify the condition that obstructs one to render oneself as the master of one’s own life. It, then, should not be seen as the loss of true self. Instead, it should be viewed as the relation that makes one incapable of determining one’s life.

Putting a great deal of emphasis on the issues of determination here is fruitful to rescue Foucault from being misconstrued as an essentialist. Though he has an insight of self- alienation, this does not necessarily entail him confirming the existence of an authentic self. The self, for Foucault, is something modified according to the form of relationship, whose reflection could serve to be the point that attributes its character. The self, then, should not be regarded as the origin; it is not the cause, but the result, of the alienation. What I mean by proposing Foucault’s insight of alienation is therefore not something as if there was once an un-alienated state of the self, which has been corrupted by the operation of power. Rather, what I would like to underline is the form of practice

or action that renders one to be the object of government, produced by the form of relationship that robs one of the capability of determining one's own life. It is not the case that one loses the connection to the authentic and meaningful self. Contrarily, it is the case that there is a form of practice or action that, by taking it, transforms oneself to becoming an object of government, who could not determine one's life at all.

Bearing this in mind, it could be said that both Foucault and Jaeggi have the same way to frame alienation as an effect attached to some certain forms of action. By dwelling on the form of action, in spite of the true or authentic self, they are successful in pinpointing the form of alienation in a non-essentialist fashion. For Jaeggi, as for Foucault, alienation will be processed as soon as one takes the action that will ironically undo one's capability to act; the act of alienation is its own-defeating act. She delineates this point by showing in the phenomenological manner that when one experiences one's own life as alien and does not feel "with oneself", one is not 'present' in that life, where taking part in it is rendered as participating like one is an agent. "His lack of presence can be traced back to a lack of awareness of the possibilities of action that are open to him", Jaeggi described (Jaeggi, 2016: 56). Surely, this does not suffice to say that there is no action, or the alienated person is one who cannot act. Instead, such a person could act, but acts in a way that "he has not even understood his situation as one in which action is called for or possible (Jaeggi, 2016: 26)." This point is epitomized beautifully when Jaeggi conclude that: "...the apparent paradox that one at once acts and does not act, that the life one leads is at once one's own and alien life, can be resolved as follows: to be sure, one does something here oneself, but it is not, we could say, action in a full sense; it is one's own life, but one has not, in crucial respects, made it one's own (Jaeggi, 2016: 57)."



At this point, I find it very important to stress the slight difference between Jaeggi and Foucault. Like Jaeggi, Foucault treats alienation in term of the action; yet, unlike her, his insight of the act of alienation is not just about the incapability of self-determination. True, those who are the object of government cannot determine their lives. But, it must be noted that this loss of determination, for Foucault, is due in the first place to their being active to subjectivate themselves as the object of the government. This is the point at which we should bring the case of Foucault's investigation of the ethical role of truth into the picture. By underlining how this truth plays as the ethical condition of the Christian practice of confession, we could grasp the extent to which Foucault's insight of alienation could proceed. Since truth in this case is the materiality of the self, self-alienation will not be emerged unless this truth is confessed and conferred to the other, as if it is something needing to be discarded. Self-alienation, following this, is an experience of losing the capability to determine life, activated by its own act. It is then unlikely that one loses one's presence in the experience of alienation since one is by oneself the one who acts to disregard one's own self. What is at stake, in Foucault's case, is thus not so much about the loss of presence, as about the presence of self-destruction. This means that while Jaeggi tends to regard alienation in the sense of one's failure to develop one's capability to determine one's own life, Foucault seems to focus on the way in which one could confer oneself to the other, through the act of confessing one's truth, according to which it is the act one must enact to let oneself be subjectivated as the object of government.

In short, if Foucault portrays the Christian practice of confession as an act of self-alienation, it is not because this practice alienates those who practice it from their authentic selves, but because such practice entails them destructing their capability to determine their lives. An experience of self-alienation, as we could draw out from

Foucault's insight, has thus nothing to do with the non-alienated subject preceding alienation, insofar as this non-alienated subject is the fiction created and projected retroactively when one is subordinated and turned to be the object of government. Only in this way can Foucault's insight of self-alienation be grasped appropriately. Concerning this point, we can clearly see how truth serves to ground the condition of self-alienation in Foucault's case. It could also function as a crux of what Foucault problematizes in his analysis of power, since this truth could entail one to alienate oneself, by oneself.

This leads to summarizing my argument as: what Foucault regards as the main problem in the operation of power is the ethical operation of truth, which serves as the ground for self-alienation. It means that if Foucault's target is the power operated through the framework of governmentality, and if the real stake of this operation of power is the matter of self-alienation, then what we need to ascertain is the feature of self-alienation that works with the power operated through the framework of governmentality. Henceforth, the remaining parts of this chapter are nothing but my portrayal of the ethical role of truth exercising with the avowal and the homo economicus' administration of risk, as both are practices derived from the Christian practice of confession. To capture how self-alienation operates in Foucault's analysis of power, we must then inspect the transition of the ethical role of truth from the Christian practice of confession to the secularized practice of avowal, as well as the role of homo economicus, as an agent of bio-politics.

### **Avowal and Self-Alienation in the Political Government**

According to my arguments proposed in the previous chapter, the logic underlying Foucault's explanation of the emergence of the government at the political level, or the political

government, is the expansion of the governmental rationality from the pastoral relation to the relation that confirms the existence of state. Of importance in my point is the population acting to be the materiality of public order, whose being could sustain the reality of state. Population, then, is the cornerstone of Foucault's notion of governmentality, to the extent that it could let the reason of state take a concrete shape. Thus, in order to locate the proper place of the ethical operation of truth, along with its effect of self-alienation in this stage of political government, it is inevitable for us to look into the role of the population. Unlike the Christian practice of confession, the truth in political government plays not only through the vertical relationship between the authorities and its object of government, but also through the horizontal relationship between individual bodies and the population, as their collective ones. This could imply that while self-alienation in the case of the Christian practice of confession is about the way one subjectivates oneself as the object governed by the other, self-alienation in the case of political government is the way one subjectivates oneself to be part of population, appearing as the object of political government.

But what is the practice, which we can use to investigate the ethical role of truth playing in the stage of political government? To what extent could this practice allow us to fathom the relationship between truth and population, which could project the feature of self-alienation in this stage? Here, it is worth noting that Foucault does not provide any answers to these questions in his lecture courses on governmentality. Nor do we find it in another lecture at the Collège de France. Yet, it seems to me that he gives some hint of these answers in his lectures at the Catholic University of Louvan, in 1981, under the theme of avowal practice and its location within the historical trajectory of European juridical institution. Generally speaking, avowal is the practice defined as the verbal acts, with which one manifests one's own sin; it is regarded as the practice of penance in both religious institution, and civil jurisdiction. Yet, Foucault does not see avowal as simply a verbal act of the sins committed.

Not only does he treat avowal as the practice of manifesting one's own sin, Foucault also views it as the way one makes out the self, by verbalizing what one (has) thought. "Avowal is a verbal act through which the subject affirms who he is, binds himself to this truth, places himself in a relationship of dependence with regard to another, and modifies at the same time his relationship to himself", he said (Foucault, 2014: 17).

Thus, it is not inaccurate to equate the avowal with the Christian practice of confession, for both relate to the practice of truth-confessing, which affects how those, who confess it, could create their own subjectivity. Moreover, Foucault also emphasizes how the avowal is incorporated within the practices of penance, functioning as the core of the sacramental structure in Christian juridical organization. By commenting on the extension of the avowal practice in the juridical process of penance from the beginning of 'fixed penance' in the seventh century, to its sacramentalization taking place around the thirteenth century, he is successful in shedding light on the juridical place of the avowal, as the verbalization of the fault, in ecclesiastical institutions (Foucault, 2014: 178-191). In this sense, it is clear that avowal is not only another version of confession foregrounding the way one starts one's alienation of oneself, but also the modality that produces the entanglement of the accused with the juridical edifice, which administers the justice within the monastic community.

This point is very crucial in setting the path to pursue a feature of truth, and its relationship to the population, performing as the political embodiment of governmental rationalities. As Foucault suggested in the lecture on May 20, 1981, avowal practice did not limit its juridical performance within an ecclesiastical institution. Instead, its operation was considered as the formula from which the modern political authority was built to justify their judicial power in order to settle disputes among the people (Foucault, 2014: 202). Avowal, then, was nothing other than the way one subjectivated oneself to be the object within the juridical enterprise of political government. This might be the reason why Foucault pays his

attention to the scene of the trial, where the accused tells the judge about their truth, as he renders his own self into the juridical edifice of modern political government. As Foucault said:

The problem was no longer simply one another to settle or end their conflict according to a given number of rules that needed to be respected. Once it was up to the sovereign to settle the dispute, the problem was one of establishing the truth and of determining the sanction based on the established facts...And as soon as the establishment of truth became an essential element of the procedure, the affirmation of the truth by an accused himself would become an important element (Foucault, 2014: 203).

In his brilliant Foucauldian analysis of the court practice, Frieder Vogelmann suggests that the trial scene, where the accused is presented in the court proceedings, by which he is attributed to be punished for the wrong he has committed, is the self-staging of the law, in which the asymmetrical relationship between the judge and the accused is represented and confirmed. By stressing on the spatial design of the courtroom, he shows how the accused is located in the submissive position before the judge. “Thus, the architectural and ceremonial features are not meant to express the equality of judges and accused as citizens, but the submission of the accused to the judges as representatives of the people in whose name they make use of the discursive operator “responsibility””, Vogelmann argued (Vogelmann, 2018:145). Referring to this argument, it could be said that if avowal is the action through which one subjectivates oneself as the object under the government of juridical enterprise, it is nothing other than the form of rationality that renders one into the hierarchical structure, where one is inferior to the judge. As soon as the accused avows his wrong-doing, by verbalizing the truth entwined with his own self, he is subjectivating his own self into an object of the judge’s determination (Foucault, 2014: 208).

However, although Vogelmann's argument is useful to unfold the hierarchical relationship, into which the avowal could entail those who make it, he seems to pass over the virtually horizontal dimension attached to the relationship between the judges and the accused. This horizontal dimension stems from the fact that the judges are nothing but the personification of the will of all. "For in modern and contemporary legal codes", as Foucault remarked, "the foundation of the law is or is supposed to be the will of all, which is supposed to express itself in this law, decided and validated by an act of legislative body in its capacity as a sovereign body" (Foucault, 2014: 207). Mentioning the notion of the will of all that takes shape through the sovereign body might make someone argue that Foucault is referring to the theory proposed by some philosopher of public laws, such as Jean Jacques Rousseau.<sup>9</sup> Yet, I would like to argue that what Foucault really means here is the juridico-political metaphor of the social body whose concrete form is nothing less than the population. As I already repeated above, population is the materiality of the social body playing as the field through which the state, as the political government, could be realized. Viewed from this aspect, when the accused avows the wrong that he did, he is not only subjectivating himself to be the object of the judge's determination, but also pacifying himself with the body of population, as part of the object of political government. Turning the accused to be an object of political government, regulated by the modern juridical institution, avowal is the act that, in addition to drawing him into an inferior position under the judges, incorporates the accused into the body of population; avowal could not be anything except an act of entailing oneself to be a part of the population. With it, the accused asserts his existence to be incorporated within the body of population, as an object of political government. The truth which is avowed, then, appears as the vehicle carrying the accused's existence into the collective body of population.

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<sup>9</sup> For the Rousseau's influence on Foucault, see Balke (2011).

Not only does it place the accused into the submissive position before judges, this truth also entails the accused to be subsumed as part of the population.

Emphasizing the place of the population here is significant for us in grasping the condition under which the modern practice of self-alienation is at play. As Foucault said:

So what serves as the foundation of the law is the will of all. And, as a consequence, one of the most frequent and most essential themes in the penal theory of the eighteenth century, but also in contemporary penal theory, is the principle that when someone has committed a crime, he himself punish himself—through the law to which he is supposed to have consented or that he is supposed to support of his own free will—and punished himself through the institution of the tribunal that delivers the sentence in conformity with the law that he supposedly has will. In the modern penal system, the one who commits a crime is, in a certain way, the one who punishes himself. This fiction that you must recognize yourself in the law that punishes you—which is equally, for that matter, a necessity—this fiction explains both the symbolic and role of avowal (Foucault, 2014: 207).

Following this passage, the alienation taking place through the modern avowal practice is nothing but the experience of self-destruction. This means that when the accused avows, he confirms his self-alienation by asserting his double selves, before lets its one part destructing its other part. “In the modern penal system, the one who commits a crime is, in a certain way, the one who punishes himself” (Foucault, 2014: 207). Thus, as Foucault said, “avowal “consists not simply of recognizing one’s crime, (but) at the same time recognizing, through the recognition of one’s crime, the validity of the punishment that one will suffer” (Foucault, 2014: 207). Here, it is necessary to note that, in opposition to the previous stage, avowal is conceived not simply as an act of self-alienation, but as an act of *re*-alienation of the self. The specificity of this point comes from the fact that when an avowal is performed, it does not start the process of self-alienation. Rather, it unfolds the pre-given stage on which everyone had to alienate their selves, as the price for being subjectivated into the body of population. Without doubt, unfolding the pre-given stage of alienation does not make avowal

to be an act of resistance, since avowal is in itself an act that is inseparable from an acceptance of guilt or wrong-doing. Hence, avowal is the practice that does not operate with the purpose of dissent; it, on the contrary, unfolds such a stage as something great from which the accused was excluded, and wants to be reincorporated. Through its operation of that unfolding, avowal then confirms the higher status of a pre-given stage of self-alienation.

Viewed in this light, avowal should be seen as an act of confirming the stage of self-alienation, which, through its gesture of confirmation, tries to reintegrate the accused into that stage by reactivating its self-alienation. Once one avows, one not only confirms the higher status of the pre-given stage of self-alienation from which one was disengaged; one also re-alienates oneself by accepting one's desire to be included into that stage again:

Avowal is in this sense the reminder of the social contract, it is its restoration—such that through these words of avowal, the guilty party can at the same time...seal the punishment that separates him from the social body or deprives him of his rights; and at the same time, the avowal make the first step of his reintegration (Foucault, 2014: 207-208).

Avowal, then, is an act of reactivating the self-alienation, or an act that brings the accused, who avows, back to the pre-given stage of self-alienation within which he, as a part of the population, was before. At this point, we could imply that apart from the re-alienation of the self, avowal is the act of unearthing the collective state of self-alienation. This becomes apparent if we bear in mind that through the confirmation of his previous self-alienation, the accused not only accepts his ethical condition that subjectivates him to be included as a part of the population, but also exposes the political condition under which every person has been drawn into the body of population, as the object of political government. Suffice to say that to re-alienate himself by avowing his wrong-doing, the accused has to refer connotatively to his previous self-alienation, which was used to subjectivate him to be a part of the population. In this sense, when the accused makes an avowal, he not only confesses his truth so as to bind



himself, enshrined with that truth, with the body of population, but also reveals the ontological condition under which the population is created. That said, the population is the stage of self-alienation, in which each individual is supposed, in the first place, to be part of the object of political government through the presupposition of truth, in the form of rationality, that subjectivates them to being part of the single collective body. Viewed from this perspective, avowal comes to be perceived as the point of illustrating the ethical role of truth located within the body of population, as the political embodiment of governmental rationality. It could also be employed to display the operation of truth, as the ground above which the entire edifice of the modern juridical system, as well as the reason of state, is constituted. Without an understanding of avowal in this way, the modern form of self-alienation playing in political government would be left unclear.

But, if the self-alienation in the stage of political government is something we could draw from the reflection of the accused's act of avowal, how would this self-alienation look like in the case that the population loses its status as the reference of government? As demonstrated in the previous chapter, though population has a central role in Foucault's treatment of power under the framework of governmentality, its role is played down in the stage of bio-politics, as the highest stage of political government, where the reason of state is replaced by the economic reason of the market. This means that while in the case of government under the modern juridical enterprise, as part of the reason of state, we could use the body of population to be the reference for explicating the operation of self-alienation, this population can no longer be used as the reference for ascertaining the form of self-alienation when this government is advanced to the stage of bio-politics. This inevitably leads us to the question of the feature of self-alienation in bio-politics, as the highest stage of political government: What is self-alienation operated in the stage of bio-politics? What is the element in Foucault's treatment of bio-politics that we could use to grasp the form of self-alienation in

this case? If the population does not serve as the main mechanism in bio-politics, what is the way in which we could pursue to tease out the ethical role of truth as the condition of self-alienation?

### ***Homo Economicus, Risk Management, and the Self-Alienation in Bio-politics***

In opposition to the previous sections, the analysis of the ethical role of truth in the stage of bio-politics cannot be done through some forms of practice, like confession, or avowal. This is because Foucault views the market, according to which it is the concrete form of government in this stage, as the site of truth. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the market is the highest political form of governmental rationality, to the extent that it is the site of truth operating firstly by ascertaining truth underlying the nature of the things involved, before establishing it to be the ground for regulating the conduct of everyone. Thus, in bio-politics, there is no specific action that each individual is required to take for subjectivating themselves as the object of government. This means that, in spite of the confession or the avowal, what the market needs, in order to perform its task of government, is the form of subjectivity compliant to the truth it ascertains. What we need to understand of the ethical role of truth at this stage, then, is not the form of practice or action, but the form of subjectivity, which performs according to the truth informed by the market.

This surely leads us to pay attention to homo economicus, as the form of subjectivity that plays an immanent role in the stage of bio-politics. As argued in the previous chapter, homo economicus is Foucault's object of government operated at the stage of bio-politics through the performance of freedom regulated by the market. It creates the type of individual that obeys the commands of the market by conforming to the outlook of freedom, which relies on an account of each individual's interest. Homo economicus is thus a free man, to the

extent that he can pursue his interest, by making his working skill as valuable to the market as possible, without any interventions by third parties. Homo economicus can, therefore, claim his freedom only by following the truth informed by the market; he cannot be free unless he submits himself to the truth of the market, which imposes on him the interest he regards as something true to himself. Once one subjectivates oneself to be homo economicus, one not just accepts the form of life that takes the pursuit of one's interest as its crux. One also regards the desire for such interest as something true to oneself, so as to submit oneself to the reality, fabricated by the market, as the precondition permitting one to rationalize his way of life in line with the market's government (Foucault, 2008: 269-270).

Considering an importance of homo economicus here could help to shed light on the matter of self-alienation in Foucault's treatment of bio-politics. It could be implied that this alienation is an experience realized in homo economicus itself. This surely could trigger a debate on the locus of alienation, given that it relates to the character of the market in generating the condition of alienation. At this point, it is impossible for us to not thinking about Karl Marx, whose doctrine of alienation is known as the most popular explanation of the interrelation between market and self-alienation. According to Marx, alienation is nothing but the economic fact of a worker, whose labor is alienated from himself (Marx, 1959: 28-29). This fact begins with the externalization of the worker's labor, by which the worker could not claim his ownership toward the product produced by his own labor. Marx describes this as the result of the inequality between workers and employers. Due to this inequality, the product which contains the worker's labor is forcefully taken from him, and rendered as a commodity in the market. Hence, what lies beneath Marx's exposition of the alienation of labor is the exploitation, according to which it is grounded on the relationship that places one above the other, and hence allows the former to extract what the latter makes. "If the product of his labor, his labor objectified, is for him an alien, hostile, powerful object independent of

him”, as Marx said, “then his position towards it is such that someone else is master of this object, someone who is alien, hostile, powerful, and independent of him” (Marx, 1959: 33).<sup>10</sup>

However, seen from Foucault’s aspect, Marx’s understanding of alienation is not derived from the economic fact of the worker, as it is derived from his intention to counter classical political economists, by stressing what those economists ignore in their theories, namely, the process by which the worker’s labor is externalized and abstracted from himself (Foucault, 2008: 221). This leads Foucault seeing Marx as the one who puts much energy into treating economic process as the mechanism into which human labor is inserted like a mere object. Marx’s famous undertaking of labor in term of labor power,—as an object measured by time and price—rather than giving an account to the practical experience of such labor itself, is an example of this point (Foucault, 2008: 221). It could thus be concluded that because of having the intention to critique those economists, Marx’s achievement of proposing his theoretical basis against classical economics makes him losing sight of the real activity of economic reason initiated by those economists. As Foucault solidly stated:

Abstraction is not the result of the real mechanics of economic processes; it derives from the way in which these processes have been reflected in classical economics. And it is precisely because classical economics was not able to take on this analysis of labor in its concrete specification and qualitative modulations, it is because it left this blank page, gap or vacuum in its theory, that a whole philosophy, anthropology, and politics, of which Marx is precisely the representative, rushed in. Consequently, we should not continue with this, in a way, realist criticism made by Marx, accusing real capitalism of having made real labor abstract; we should undertake a theoretical criticism of the way in which labor itself became abstract in economic discourse. And... if economists see labor in such an abstract way, if they fail to grasp its specification, its qualitative modulations, and the economic effects of these modulations, it is basically because classical economists only ever envisaged the object of economics

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<sup>10</sup> For the full account of Marx’s treatment of alienation, see Comminel (2019); Balibar (1995: ch2).

as processes of capital, of investment, of the machine, of the product, and so on (Foucault, 2008: 222-223).

Bearing this in mind, it is not difficult for us to postulate how Marx's account of self-alienation is considered by Foucault as a shortcoming. This also explains why Foucault proposes the new perspective that views economic process as the worker's activity, other than the mechanism, since it could allow him to treat worker's labor in term of its own experience (Foucault, 2008: 222-223). Self-alienation, for him, is not something relating to the exploitation that one experiences in an unfair working condition, but as the form of subjectivity to which one has to subjectivate in order to rationalize one's activity according to the regulation of the market. Self-alienation is the problem of subjectivity; it is not the problem of exploitation. Following this scenario, labor should not be considered through the process of abstraction. It, instead, should be understood in terms of the resource that every worker has in their pursuit of interests; labor is inseparable from their lived experience (Foucault, 2008: 224-225). In this sense, it comes as no surprise that if homo economicus is Foucault's form of subjectivity that has an experience of self-alienation, it is the case because this form of subjectivity could operate by rendering one to be the market's agent in disciplining oneself to be the worker who competes with the other in selling one's labor. Given the premise that homo economicus follows the market's command, he has to alienate himself and let that self be the object governed by his other self, who acts as the servant of the market.

But if homo economicus is the agent who follows the command of the market, to what extent does he need to follow that command? If homo economicus alienates himself for making that self an object monitored by his other self, as a task assigned by the market, at what point must his objectified self be monitored? Most importantly, if homo economicus is the form of subjectivity enabling one to alienate oneself as the object of government, what is

the point of that self that he must alienate and govern ? These questions require Foucault to bring forth the degree of risk, or danger, as the criteria that homo economicus must use to measure his own action. He mentioned this point in his Collège de France lecture on 14 March 1979, where he demonstrated that homo economicus, in order to perform his task informed by the truth from the market, needed to know how to keep the risk in himself as low as possible (Foucault, 2008: 228). Risk, in this place, appeared as some certain degree of problem bestowed within each individual, and then needs to be managed cautiously. It, hence, was nothing but the factor causing him to lose his interest, since it could affect him by persuading him to not working as much as he could. Being homo economicus, he must find the way to discard anything that might draw him a risky situation, that is, a situation causing him to work less, which will, subsequently, make him lose interest. If the task of homo economicus is to monitor his own self according to the market's government, this task can be nothing but to inspect his own self uninterruptedly, for it could enable him to see in himself at what point the risk might emerge, so that he could reduce it as soon as he could.

But, what will happen if it turns out that the source of such risk not only lies within the homo economicus himself, but also comes from other people, who might produce the damage, which causes him some interest? What will happen if those who monitor themselves find out that what must be discarded, as the source of risk, is the existence of someone to whom they could not monitor, or govern, by themselves? These questions entails Foucault to put forward his new framework of society, which operates through the bond drawing individual together, by connecting any individual interests with the interest of the whole. By referring to Adam Ferguson, the political economist who tries to introduce the idea of the market to be a touchstone of political administration, Foucault explicates his framework of society by showing that the society should not be viewed as a sphere in which each individual associates with the others, before transferring their right to the authorities. Rather, it should

be framed in terms of the whole, whose purpose is nothing but to promote the happiness of all. “It is likewise true, that the happiness of individuals is the great end of civil society”, Foucault asserted (Foucault, 2008: 301).

In this sense, confirming an importance of the whole in promoting the interests of all also brings out the other function of society: the dissociation of those who might create a negative effect on the whole. Foucault proposed this point clearly in his Collège de France lecture on 4 April 1978, by saying: “In the civil society, the bonds of sympathy and benevolence between some individuals are the correlates of contrary bonds of repugnance and the absence of support for or benevolence towards others” (Foucault, 2008: 301-302). Thus, it could be surmised that through this framework those who tends to produce a negative effect to the whole, by drawing the risk or danger to the interest of all, will be punished or banned from the society. This also helps to ensure that apart from the purpose of getting the interests they want, those who subjectivate themselves as homo economicus will perform themselves with respect to the market’s performance, in order to make sure that they will not be counted as a risk or danger, which will cause them to be banned from the society.

To be sure, putting the spot light on Foucault’s account of the risk, and the thought of discarding it, is not something innovative among scholars of Foucault’s studies. Thomas Lemke, for instance, presents that Foucault’s notion of risk could project the role of fear in maintaining the operation of government regulated by the market (Lemke, 2012: 41-55). Meanwhile, others, such as Mitchell Dean and Pat O’Malley, make a fascinating point to show how Foucault’s problematization of risk could give way to the rise of undemocratic regime (Dean, 1999: 175-227), or the privatization of social responsibility as the neo-liberalism paradigm of security (O’Malley, 1996). Yet, it seems to me that they all fail to acknowledge the implication of how Foucault’s description of risk could illustrate the intensification of the process of alienation from the individual level to the level of society.

This intensification, in addition, not only allows us to pose the collective expression of self-alienation in the stage of bio-politics, but also provides us a glimpse of how this self-alienation gets concealed from our eyes. This point is not strange, comparing to the previous stages where the act of self-alienation, either in the case of avowal or of the Christian practice of confession, was regarded to be the act of accepting the wrong that one had made. Thus, in the same manner as those cases, risks in the stage of bio-politics must be viewed as something bad, needing to be expelled from society as far as possible

This point becomes confirmed as soon as the feature of the risk, as something entailing an individual to be categorized as a criminal, is highlighted. As Foucault remarked in his lecture on 20 May 1981, at the Catholic University of Louvain, risk was nothing other than some certain sort of feature that could entail those who carried it to be the criminal, implying that everyone was a born criminal, since it was something bestowed within the self of all individual (Foucault, 2014: 226-227). Nobody, seen from this point, is safe from being the risk, meaning that everyone is a potential criminal, who could be excluded from society. It follows that those who subjectivate themselves as the homo economicus not only alienate themselves to be an object of their monitoring in the pursuit of their preferred interests, but also monitor themselves in order to avoid being regarded as a criminal. On this basis, the self-alienation activated by homo economicus could serve both as the way one subjectivates oneself as the object regulated by the performance of the market, and as the way in which one could break away from being regarded as a criminal. Hence, to the extent that the risk is the trace of criminality, it is understandable as to why self-alienation happening within homo economicus is difficult to catch, since it might be considered as the process of shielding oneself from the possibility of being excluded from society. In short, if the act of self-alienation is in itself the performance of truth in falsifying some certain degree of risk residing within oneself, this performance would be impossible to take place without the



consideration of the risk as the symptom of being a criminal, from whom one must disengage by oneself in order to remain within society.

To sum up: self-alienation in bio-politics has different characteristics when comparing with the previous stages. Since it is no longer an experience activated by some forms of action, such as confession or avowal, self-alienation in this stage is something inseparable from the life of those who subjectivate themselves as homo economicus. This life mainly has the task of performing the truth of market, in monitoring oneself to the point that one could keep the risk residing within oneself as low as possible. Truth in this case is not something conferred from each individual, as it is determined by the market through the entire course of action that homo economicus, to confirm its existence, must continually perform. Homo economicus, then, is the man in truth, to the extent that he incorporates the truth of the market as his own truth; it is alienation in the name of truth. If bio-politics is the highest form of power that Foucault would like to tackle, and if the main feature of self-alienation in bio-politics is homoeconomicu, whose life is the life that follows the truth of the market, then the real stake of power against which Foucault derives his philosophy to counter is nothing but homo economicus, as the form of subjectivity that takes the truth of the market as its absolute horizon.

But how could Foucault counter this form of subjectivity? What is the manner that Foucault proposes to start his critical philosophy against homo economicus? If homo economicus is the form of self-alienation grounded by the market, as the site of truth, how could Foucault's critical philosophy articulate the way to undo that form of self-alienation? And what is the way in which his critical philosophy can counter the truth advocated by the market?

## **Concluding Remarks**

In her article published in 2017, Rahel Jaeggi took her framework of alienation to examine the contemporary form of alienation emergent in our contemporary situation of capitalism. She began that examination by defining this form of alienation as ‘the pathologies of work’: the pathological condition under which workers could not use their actions, or the role they occupy in their work, to appropriate and realize their self-determination (Jaeggi, 2017: 62-66). Borrowing from Hegel’s approach, Jaeggi regarded the general sense of work, less in the form of a relation that anyone could be paid for participating in it, than in the concretization of the relation, by which they could take part in sharing the universal resource of society, earning them not only their wealth but also their being recognized as a member of society (Jaeggi, 2017: 61). Following this, what concerns Jaeggi in thinking about the contemporary form of alienation lies in the bad conditions of work, which blocks all workers from taking part in the universal resources of society. This means that alienation, for Jaeggi, is something posited against the concretization of the relation, within which those who participate in it will realize their self-determination, as the citizens who reciprocate with their fellow citizens, through the form of receiving and reconstituting the resource of their society (Jaeggi, 2017: 70-73).

Alienation, for Jaeggi, is hence the problem seen from the normative stance, for the simple reason that it is caused by the bad working conditions, which obstruct the actualization of what the work should normatively call into play. The critique of alienation, then, must have the normative position served to be the standard on which this critique is based, as it regards alienation as something obstructing the normative realization (Jaeggi, 2016: 128-129). In other words, Jaeggi’s critique of alienation has the normative character, to the extent that it has the normative position in fuelling the critical energy, since this norm could provide an expectation for what it should be, hence giving

both the inspiration and the criteria for those who want to perform such a critical task. When one exercises one's critical performance, one not only condemns the poor condition of what the thing is, but also exhibits one's expectation for what this thing should be. "The frustration of the poor", as Jaeggi illustrated, "is not caused by the brute fact of a lack of resource but the lack of resource as it is conceived of through these normative expectations..." (Fraser and Jaeggi, 2018: 142).

Talking about Jaeggi's manner of alienation critique here provides me with an advantage when reflecting on Foucault's critical approach toward self-alienation. As argued throughout this chapter, by probing Foucault's stake in problematizing the operation of power as self-alienation, I apply part of Jaeggi's framework of alienation to conceive Foucault's insight of alienation as an experience of losing the capability of self-determination. Yet, despite helping me to ascertain Foucault's formulation of self-alienation, Jaeggi's style of alienation critique, in my view, is not something that could run along with Foucault's manner. As I demonstrated, while Jaeggi bases her alienation critique on the normative perception of what things should be, Foucault does not explicate the normative standpoint in his explanation of self-alienation. Indeed, his insight of self-alienation is not described as an anti-normative realization, as it is the self-destruction activated by the ethical operation of truth. Foucault's point is not the theoretical standard of norm, but the practical effect of truth. His treatment of the Christian practice of confession, avowal, or homo economicus, as the undoing of one's capability to determine one's life, in spite of the hindrance of normative actualization, is an example of this case.

Understood in this way, it seems that Foucault's insight into alienation is not depicted in terms of a normative fashion. Since Foucault does not view this alienation as something obstructing 'the ought' to be realized, there is no need for him to view self-alienation from

the normative standpoint. This leads us to the question of Foucault's manner of critique: If Foucault's critical project toward power is nothing but the critique of self-alienation, and if his style of critique could not be described in terms of the normative critique, what is the way Foucault could pursue to start his critique of self-alienation? How could this self-alienation, and power, be critiqued? And how could he derive his own way of critique that is different from the normative manner?

## Chapter Four

### From Critiques of Philosophy to the Philosophy of Critique: Michel Foucault in Search of the Philosophical Path against Power

#### Foucault's Philosophy, as The Philosophy against Power

Perhaps philosophy might still play a role on the side of counter-power, on the condition that it no longer consists to lay down the law but to face the power; philosophy stops to think of itself as prophecy, pedagogy, or legislation, and thus perform the task of analyzing, elucidating, highlighting, and intensifying the struggles taking place around power, that is, the strategies of adversaries within the relation of power including the employment of tactics, and the sources of resistance, which leads philosophy to stop posing the question of power in terms of good and evil, but posing it in terms of existence.

Michel Foucault, 1994<sup>1</sup>

During his Japan trip in the summer of 1978, Michel Foucault delivered the lecture titled “La philosophie analytique de la politique”, which took the new political role of philosopher, as its theme. In this lecture, as shown in the above passage, he proposed that the political task of philosophy should no longer be the founding act of laws, or any forms of political legislation. Rather, it should be performed to unveil and disrupt the form of power operating

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<sup>1</sup> The original version of the passage is: “Peut-etre la philosophie peut-elle jouer encore un role du cote du contre-pouvoir, a condition que ce role ne consiste plus a faire valoir, en face du pouvoir, la loi meme de la philosophie, a condition que la philosophie cesse de se penser comme prophetie, a condition que la philosophie cesse de se penser ou comme pedagogie, ou comme legislation, et qu’elle se donne pour tâche d’analyser, d’élucider, de rendre visible, et donc d’intensifier les luttes qui se déroulent autour du pouvoir, les stratégies des adversaires a l’intérieur des rapports du pouvoir, les tactiques utilisées, les foyers de resistance, a condition en somme que la philosophie cesse de poser la question du pouvoir en terme de bien ou de mal, mais en terme d’existence”. In Foucault (1994: 540).

inconspicuously within political society. In this respect, Foucault's philosopher was not the one who used rationality only to pursue the eternal truth; on the contrary, his philosopher must complete the political mission of showing how one could counteract the power. Being a philosopher was not different from being one who could both uncover the existence of power and counter it. Contemplation, as the traditional way of philosophic life, was therefore not enough for Foucault to be the task of a philosopher, for his philosopher not only practiced the contemplative life, but also took courageous action in facing against power.

This point is very significant in clarifying the main target of Foucault's philosophical project in his last decade. It also shows that Foucault's philosophy should be viewed as the philosophy of critique, since what he tries to do is nothing less than to propose the way of criticizing power, as the new task of philosophy. This point becomes more intriguing when we consider that the context, around which the lecture was launched, was just a couple months after Foucault had finished his lectures on the beginning of governmentality, and before he would start the lectures on the birth of bio-politics, as governmentality's highest form. As the previous chapters demonstrated, these lectures were crucial for Foucault, since it was the first time when he presented his culminated treatment of power, through the framework of governmentality, as the object against which he would like to counter. Following this, it could be said that if Foucault's philosophy is the critical philosophy against power, his philosophy could be nothing but the philosophy that takes governmentality as a character of its critical object. But what is the character of critical philosophy that Foucault wants to propose? How could it be used to counter power, or governmentality? And what sort of philosophical tradition does he reorient to build the ground of this character?

In order to answer these questions, this chapter is written to elucidate the way Foucault derives his critical philosophy against power. The structure of the chapter, apart from the introduction and conclusion, is divided into three parts. The first two parts are about

the background of Foucault's critical trajectory, especially from the 1970s onward. It focuses on Foucault's notion of genealogy and its transformation. The first part shows that genealogy is not merely Foucault's proposed method for unravelling the operation of power acting as knowledge, but the character of his critical position toward philosophy, which reflects his Nietzschean style of thought. The second part focuses on Foucault's lecture of the reorientation on genealogy in 1978, where he shifts his critical manner from the Nietzschean line of arguments to a Heidegger-influenced position. Using Heidegger as the new philosophical reference, I argue in the third part that freedom is the ground for Foucault's critical philosophy. This freedom is far from what liberalism advocates, insofar as it does not rely on the presupposition of an individual's endowment of autonomy. Instead, it is the condition beneath an ontological understanding of being, which was firstly grasped by Heidegger. Foucault's basing his philosophy on Heidegger's, then, could be implied that he is addressing freedom to be the source of his philosophical energy. What divides him from Heidegger is while Heidegger treats that freedom in terms of an ontological issue, he seems to politicize it, as the crux of his philosophy, by making it critical towards power.

### **Genealogy as the Critique of Philosophy and the Shadow of Nietzsche**

Viewing Foucault's works as works of critique to philosophy is not as easy as it looks. Despite plenty of works trying to unfold his attitude on this issue, Foucault seems to avoid accepting it in his work. In fact, until 1971, he favored "the history of ideas", rather than "philosophy", as the field against which he would like to situate his project (Foucault, 1972). This might be the reason why Foucault's inaugural lecture at Collège de France on 2 December 1970 is very crucial. As I elaborated in chapter 2, this lecture was the point from which Foucault started to set the operation of power as his critical object. However, there was

a little point in the lecture that Foucault touched on, but left unthematized—the point to which few scholars have paid attention: bearing the discourse analysis as the way to critique the traditional philosophy.

Foucault presented this point in the fifth section of the lecture. In that section, he bore an existence of philosophy as the force acting continually in the form of order, which justified its modality to exclude its own otherness. Philosophy, as Foucault mentioned, reinforced “the limitation and exclusion by denial of the specific reality of discourse in general” (Foucault, 1981:65). In this sense, philosophy was nothing but the force constituting the act to affirm its identity by eliding the otherness of its own self. This force manipulated the show of philosophy throughout the course of its history, from the philosophical idea of founding the subject, to the philosophy of experience, as well as the philosophy of universal meditation (Foucault, 1981:65-66). Thus, philosophy, according to Foucault, should not be understood as the play of the desire for truth devoid of any power; rather, it should be understood as the will to enclose, and master, everything that might be irrupted from its regulation. Though philosophy was said to be an ideal truth serving as the grounds for an ethic of knowledge, it was actually the product of power in so far as it was invented with the purpose of effacing all possibilities that brought all forms of disorder into play:

Yet it seems to me that beneath this apparent veneration of discourse, under this apparent logophilia, a certain fear is hidden. It is just as if prohibitions, barriers, threshold and limits had been set up in order to master, at least partly, the great proliferation of discourse, in order to remove from its richness the most dangerous part, and in order to organize its disorder according to figures which dodge what is most uncontrollable about it. It is as if we had tried to efface all trace of its irruption into the activity of thought and language (Foucault, 1981:66).

As this account reveal, it is clear that the project that Foucault would like to pursue in his subsequent research is not merely the study of the operation of power through the



organization of knowledge (*savoir*), which will be culminated through the framework of governmentality in 1978. Moreover, he also links such study with the mission of critique toward philosophy. The more he unfolds the operation of power lying beneath the distribution of knowledge in political society, the more he challenges the role of (traditional) philosophy, by revealing the true face of such philosophy, which is nothing but the product of power invented to make political society submissive.

This insight could be brought into engagement with the double task of genealogy, as the way Foucault proposes to undertake such operation of power, alongside of critiquing the traditional form of philosophy. Generally speaking, genealogy is usually viewed as the method in disclosing the operation of power in political society. Some scholars might suggest that it is the result of Foucault's methodological development to overcome an epistemological limit of his earlier works (Dryfus and Rabinow, 1983; Dean, 1994). Yet, if genealogy is the method designated for resolving Foucault's epistemological problem, it also furnishes the way Foucault could pursue the critique of the operation of power. As David Howarth correctly argues, the main central object of genealogy is power exercised to constitute knowledge, as the discursive operation (Howarth, 2000: 72). This point becomes confirmed in an essay published in 1971, titled "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", where Foucault defines the character of genealogy as the "gray, meticulous, and patiently documentation" (Foucault, 1991: 76). This definition, at first sight, seems to treat genealogy as only the method for Foucault's historical analysis. However, by emphasizing its historical character, he deems such genealogy to be the foothold for challenging the operation of power, as it searches a descent (*herkunft*) that forms a network, which could expose the operation of power beneath the formation of knowledge. "The search for descent is not the erecting of foundation: on the contrary, it disturbed what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was

thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself ”, Foucault wrote (Foucault, 1991: 82).

Genealogy, then, is the critical examination of power, to the extent that it unravels the operation of power beneath the production of subjectivity. It turns the historical analysis into the militant practice, since it aims to shed light on the event when power constitutes itself as knowledge, or when the relation of domination renders itself to be the ground of universal rule. The relation of domination, according to Foucault, “establishes marks of its power and engraves memories on things and even within bodies; it makes itself accountable for debts and gives rise to the universe of rules, which is by no means designed to temper violence, but rather to satisfy it” (Foucault, 1991: 85). History, for Foucault, is thus not history in the traditional sense, for he views traditional history as something directed by the supra-historical perspective, which manipulates the form of historical inquiry, through the ideas of origin, unity, continuity, and self-recognition. On the contrary, his historical investigation is history in the effective sense, that is, history which discontinues that supra-historical attitude, by demonstrating the event where knowledge could be dismantled or created according to the ‘Will’ operating pervasively at that time (Foucault, 1991: 86-90). Genealogy, with this respect, is the way Foucault proposes to liberate historians from the ahistorical purposes framed by many metaphysical doctrines; it makes historians historical to their mode of profession. The historical sense, as Foucault remarks, “can evade metaphysics and become a privileged instrument of genealogy if it refuses the certainty of absolutes” (Foucault, 1991: 87).

This point is important when reflecting on not only how Foucault uses genealogy to critique power, but also on the way he could counter traditional philosophy. Since genealogy could be conceived as something against metaphysics, it could also be the method driven against philosophy. If genealogy is the key Foucault chooses to activate his critical mission

towards power, this concept will be nothing other than the way to present that any metaphysical doctrines are vague, due to its being originated by the philosophers who, like the demagogue, desire to conquer the world by using their own wills, disguised in the form of timeless ideas or the universal forms of truth (Foucault, 1991: 91-92). In this way, while genealogy places the field of its operation on historical documents, such an operation is urged by an anti-philosophical motive to disclose the true face of metaphysical doctrines, the true face which is nothing but the production of a philosopher's will to power. This means that any universal ideas—such as justice, goodness, freedom, and truth—are just the fiction constituted by the force coming from the will of philosophers (Foucault, 1991: 91-92). There is no such thing as 'Truth', insofar as this truth is the tool for philosophers in asserting their power to rule the world. In short, genealogy is nothing but research on documents that record, and expose, any operations of the will as the true face of knowledge and truth; the research which, in turn, could bring Foucault to the frontline against philosophy.

This might explain why Foucault regards Platonic philosophy as the point against which genealogy is designed. For him, metaphysics—as the dominant form of philosophy—is the result of Plato's attempt to invert the loss of Socrates from the battle against Athenian political life, to be the victory of philosophy, by creating the fictional ideas of immortality and the goodness of the soul (Foucault, 1991: 93). This means that philosophy is nothing other than the veil designated to conceal the shame of Plato's teacher, by turning his political loss to being the internal success of the philosopher's soul in not being affected by the fear of physical death. Viewed from this perspective, it is indisputable that genealogy is the way to counter Plato's philosophical project. Apart from exposing the role of the will in constructing any metaphysical form of truth, genealogy also offers the way to challenge Platonic philosophy. If genealogy is the way Foucault takes to show that every metaphysical idea is the product of the will of a philosopher, this way will be nothing but the way to critique

philosophy in Platonic tradition. “It is necessary to master history so as to turn it to genealogical use, that is, strictly anti-Platonic purposes”, he wrote (Foucault, 1991: 93).

Here, it is clear that despite positing himself against philosophy, Foucault is far from being devoid of certain philosophical positions. On the contrary, he derives his position from the influence of Nietzsche, who presents a proper use of genealogy to counter the Platonic tradition of philosophy. As many scholars agree, one of the trends of thought that Nietzsche takes to be his enemy is the Platonic philosophy, motivated by the philosophic life of Socrates (Kaufmann, 1974; Nehamas, 1985; Tejera, 1987). According to Nietzsche, this philosophy gives birth to the delusion in capturing the abyss of being in terms of the rational principle that only thought could comprehend and correct. It also grants the standard on which any western theoretical conducts must rely, entailing the replacement of the tragic art—in playing as the way to enquire the truth—by the origin of metaphysical edifices (Nietzsche, 1999: 71-71). However, as Nietzsche insists, this philosophy is unable to grasp even the grips of truth, for it is invented by the delusion that has nothing to do with truth; thanks to its essence, this philosophy will be broken as soon as it tries to overcome its own limit (Nietzsche, 1999: 75).

Philosophy, for Nietzsche, thus comes to be viewed as the enterprise creating an illusion of truth for hiding the real desire of a philosopher, that is, the desire to just exist in the world. Nietzsche makes clear this point in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, where he shows that any peculiarities of philosophical attitude—such as denying the world, hating life or doubting the sense—does not really stem from the philosopher’s desire to pursue truth, as they usually claim; it is, on the contrary, the cloak that philosophers must wear to conceal their dispensability to earth (Nietzsche, 2006: 85). Only through that sort of cloak, could philosophers affirm their existences. Without the claims to pursue the truth, philosophers would not be able to give any reasons for their own being. What philosophers really want,

seen from Nietzsche's perspective, are nothing less than to guarantee their existence. "Let the world perish, but let philosophy exist, let the philosopher exist, let me exist", is the true voice of a philosopher that he claims to hear (Nietzsche, 2006: 77, n.76).

This portrayal of philosophy is very important to show how Nietzsche locates genealogy in his thought. To be sure, Nietzsche does not just employ genealogy to counter the philosophy mentioned above, since he also uses genealogy to unfold the root of all moral visions, which commands how people should spend their common life (Nietzsche, 2006: 18, n 20). Yet, it does not mean that putting a great deal of emphasis on philosophy is something exaggerating, since a scholar, such as Robert Pippin, points out excellently that the main reason causing Nietzsche to develop genealogy is not just to critique any moral visions, but to complete his project of transvaluation of values, by uncovering that all moral values are an expression of the perspective of those who possess the will to power (Pippin, 1991: Chapter 4; see also Owen, 2014). In this way, genealogy should be perceived not only as the method Nietzsche takes to challenge the value of morality, but also as the weapon to fight against any forms of truth, especially the truth coming from philosophical doctrines, which play beneath that value.

Drawing upon an insight described above, it could be said that Foucault, through his application of genealogy, tends to enliven Nietzsche's project, especially an affirmation of the views that all forms of truth are an expression of the will to power. This becomes clear in his Collège de France lecture in 1970, where he overturned an entire erudition of western philosophy, by de-implicating the nexus between knowledge and truth, and confirming the Nietzschean formulation centralizing on the will to power, as the source out of which both knowledge and truth could arise (Foucault, 2013: 25-27). The will to know (*savoir*), as Foucault contended:

refers not to knowledge(*connaissance*) but to something altogether different, that behind the Will to know there is not a sort of preexisting knowledge that is something like sensation, but instinct, struggle, the Will to power. The Nietzschean model, moreover, claims that the will to know is not originally linked to the truth: it claims that the Will to know composes illusions, fabricates lies, accumulates errors, and is deployed in a space of fiction where the truth itself is only an effect, it claims, furthermore, that the Will to know is not given in the form of subjectivity and that the subject is only a kind of product of the Will to know, in the double game of the Will to power and to truth (Foucault, 2013: 197-198).

In this regard, it is adequate to show how crucial the thoughts of Nietzsche are in Foucault's project. This could also be amplified to the point at which Foucault's works from the early 1960s to the middle 1970s could be epitomized as work influenced by Nietzsche, who wants to destroy any forms of knowledge, by revealing that such knowledge is the result of the will to power. Hence, the crux to understanding Foucault's critical mission toward philosophy lies within his use of Nietzschean genealogy to unfold the will to power, which hides behind philosophy.

However, although Nietzsche's genealogy could offer Foucault the direction to ground the mission of critique, this Nietzschean direction gets him entangled in the aporia of nihilism. As Rudi Visker rightly detects, Foucault's use of genealogy, albeit its contribution to prescribe how one could critique, could not provide the reason why one should take this critical stance: *for why should we refuse what we are? Why not simply acknowledge it? Can we really step outside the identity we have developed in western civilization? Is it worth the trouble?*(Visker, 1995:101). To put it another way, if genealogy can expose the will to power working as truth in giving the condition under which all forms of knowledge, including philosophy, are built, why will it not arouse the suspicion that it might not be worth the trouble of destroying all foundations of knowledge for just being in an empty situation waiting to be saturated (again) by another's will to power?

Genealogy, then, could not help Foucault breaking away the web of power he would like to counter; it is just a motor, which prepares the ground to turn one's chapter of the will to power to another's, and thus ends up in affirming ironically that there is no way to break off the will to power. This is the reason why scholars, such as Jurgen Habermas, criticize Foucault's use of genealogy. According to Habermas, Foucault's failure comes from the reduction of the 'ought' to the 'is', making him unable to lay down the normative foundation of the critique, especially the value of his own way of critique when comparing to other's (Habermas, 1995: 276-286). Genealogy, as Habermas argued, "brackets normative validity claims as well as claims to propositional truth and abstains from the questions whether some discourse and power formations could be more legitimate than others" (Habermas, 1995: 282).<sup>2</sup> Hence, in order to rescue himself from an encroachment of the will to power, Foucault needs to formulate the normative framework in yielding the values of his critique. But, is it possible for Foucault to formulate the normative framework, and connect it with his use of genealogy? How could he be sure that this normative order will not lead to another chapter of the will to power? Does this attempt, finally, entail him destroying his own way of critique?

### **When Genealogy gets Reoriented: Eventalization, and the Trace of Heidegger**

In spite of following Habermas's suggestion, Foucault still insists on the significance of genealogy in his critical enterprise. What Foucault decides to respond, then, is not to show the normative foundation of his critical performance. On the contrary, he chooses to reorient his use of genealogy to the extent that he can disengage it from the influence of Nietzsche.

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<sup>2</sup> For scholars who share the same concern with Habermas, see Honneth (1991:149- 175); Fraser (1989: ch.1); Taylor (1986).

This orientation, so to speak, becomes apparent in the lecture Foucault delivered at the French Society of Philosophy on 27 May 1978, titled “What is Critique” (Foucault, 1997b). Chronologically, this lecture was preceded by the lecture Foucault had given in Japan. As already explained in the introduction, the content of that lecture in Japan was Foucault’s proposal for the new philosophical task in countering power. Thus, it is not hard to postulate that “What is Critique” will follow the line of argument in elucidating details of the way philosophers could use to activate that countering. This might be the reason for Foucault to start the lecture by indicating the nexus between power and critique, implying that it is impossible for the critique to exist without power, inasmuch as the latter is the target against which the former is designed. “After all, critique only exists in relation to something than itself...”, he said (Foucault, 1997b: 42). What takes place in Foucault’s manner of critique, then, does not involve the normative presentation displaying the rational grounds on which one must register, so as to challenge some certain form of domination. Rather, it needs the existence of power as the target giving the reason for its operation. Critique, for Foucault, is the counterpart of power; it will vanish as soon as the power is dissolved.

This entails Foucault applying his genealogy to locate the historical concretization of the nexus between power and critique that he wants to regenerate, namely, the nexus between the governmentalization and the critical attitude, which took place around the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As already made clear in previous chapters, governmentality is the culminated framework Foucault uses to undertake the operation of power. By highlighting the process of modifying one to subjectivating oneself as the object of government, power, in this framework, is nothing rather than the rationality that renders one to identify oneself into a form of asymmetrical relationship. It is hence clear that the character of power in Foucault’s thoughts, when presenting his manner of critique, is the operation of governmental rationality, which one could use to subjectivate oneself into the political form of an



asymmetrical relationship. Drawing from this point, the critical attitude, according to which it is the counterpoint of power and the form of critique that Foucault would like to take, is nothing less than the critique of governmental rationality. In other words, if the form of critique that Foucault intends to perform is something inseparable from power, and if this power is described through the notion of governmentality, it will be easy for us to argue that Foucault's critical attitude is nothing other than a way of not being governed. The more governmentality proliferates, the more such critique, as the way of not being governed, is furnished. As Foucault said:

So, this governmentalization,..., cannot apparently be dissociated from the question "how not to be governed?"...I mean that, in this great preoccupation about the way to govern and the search for the ways to govern, we identify a perpetual question which would be: "how not to be governed like that, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such as objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them." And if we accord this movement of governmentalization of both society and individuals the historic dimension and breadth which I believe it has had, it seems that one could approximately locate therein what we could call the critical attitude...I would therefore propose, as a very first definition of critique, this general characterization: the art of not being governed quite so much (Foucault, 1997b: 44-45).

To critique, for Foucault, is to live as those who could "not be governed quite so much". Arguably, this allows Foucault to propose his style of critique without mentioning any normative foundation, since it has nothing to do with the normative expression. What it is really concerned with, instead, are some practices that help one to re-consider the asymmetrical relationship, so as to de-subjectivate oneself from the mode subjectivating one to be the object of government. Understood in this way, Foucault displays his manner of critique as the relationship between power, truth and the subject, in such a way that those who subjectivates themselves as the object of government begin to de-subjectivate, by questioning

the truth of those who governs them, permitting them to disrupt power and start the way of not being governed:

And if governmentalization is indeed this movement through which individuals are subjugated in the reality of social practice through mechanism of power that adhere to truth, well, then! I will say that critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth (Foucault, 1997b: 47).

Here, it comes as no surprise as to why some scholars use this point to characterize Foucault's manner of critique as the critique of truth. Judith Butler, among others, argues that the main stake of Foucault's critical manner is no more than the act of resisting the role of truth (Butler, 2004b: 314-315). By reading Foucault's lecture on the critique, she depicts Foucault's critical manner, not as the way to seek a normative foundation for making the judgment, but as the way of exposing the limit of epistemological conditions, under which that normative foundation was made possible in the first place (Butler, 2004b: 305-308). Foucault's critical manner, according to Butler, is then the manner that activates some certain form of practice in transcending the epistemological horizon. It opens the space in which each individual could delimit the operation of power, not by relying on rational inquiry, but by activating practices carrying him beyond his epistemological perception, which allows him to transform his experience of subjectivity (Butler, 2004b: 310). This might be the reason why Butler regards the suspending of ontological certainty to be the main feature in Foucault's manner of critique. "A subject", as she said, "will emerge in relation to an established order of truth, but it can also take a point of view on that established order that retrospectively suspends its own ontological ground (Butler, 2004b: 314)."

To some degree, Butler's interpretation seems to pursue the line of Foucault's genealogical critique that I described in a previous section, especially when she underlines Foucault's negative position to truth. It could thus be said that what she does in her

interpretation is nothing more than radicalizing Foucault's earlier position; Butler's Foucault is still the Nietzschean Foucault. This point becomes apparent when she indicates that the source of Foucault's critical manner is a will of not to be governed, materialized only through the form of fiction that inspires one to have a lifestyle that artistically ironizes the form of subjectivity produced by power (Butler, 2004b:316-319). "We are not told what sort of fiction this will be, but it seems clear that Foucault is drawing on Nietzsche and, in particular, the kind of fiction that genealogy is said to be", she said (Butler, 2004b:317).

However, despite insightful and thought-provoking, it seems to me that Butler's reading tends to neglect an important issue in Foucault's lecture of the critique, namely, the reorientation of genealogy through the notion of eventalization (*evenementialisation*). Schematically speaking, 'eventalization' is the word that Foucault opposed in his early works, to the extent that he regarded it as the "fact" that many historians uncritically accepted and were content to provide their description of. Yet, since the late 1960s, this word has been given a positive connotation when Foucault refined it as a crystallization of historical determinations that had taken place, and have continually repeated to our present lives (see further in Revel, 2002: 30-32). Most importantly, this connotation still echoed in this lecture of critique, when Foucault identified eventalization as the framework, whose aim was to mark out the process rendering the form of power to be intelligible as the form of knowledge, by using historical documents to investigate the temporal condition around which such power began to take on an effect of knowledge (Foucault, 1997b: 59-65).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that a word that the English translation of this lecture use for translating *evenementialisation* is 'eventualization', which, in my view, does not properly express the full sense of the French word, especially an implication to the notion of 'event'. Thus, rather than following an English word used in the translation, I prefer to follow Robert Hurley, who once translated *evenementialisation* as 'eventalization', see Foucault (2000: 226-229).

From the vantage point pursued here, we can see how Foucault reckons eventalization with genealogy, since he treats genealogy as the historical method that exposes the operation of power playing beneath the proliferation of knowledge. Furthermore, by framing it through the lens of eventalization, genealogy not only serves to expose the form of power lying beneath any forms of knowledge, but also opens the condition to reflect on the mode that subjectivates one to accept that knowledge. “There are two correlative operations to perform: bring out the conditions of the acceptability of a system and follow the breaking point which indicates its emergence”, Foucault said (Foucault, 1997b: 62). Genealogy should then be conceived as an act to re-create the event of subjectivity which, at the same time, projects the possibility of de-subjectivation, by making visible the limit of that event. Once one applies such genealogy to show an exact event where the knowledge emerges through the exercise of power, one creates not just an event where power subjectivates itself as knowledge; one also reflects upon oneself the possibility of de-familiarizing the mode that subjectivates one to take that knowledge as something true. “The identification of the acceptability of a system cannot be dissociated from identifying what made it difficult to accept: its arbitrary nature in terms of knowledge, its violence in terms of power, in short, its energy”, Foucault suggested (Foucault, 1997b: 62).

Here, far from focusing on Nietzsche’s notion of the will, what I would like to present, by rendering genealogy as the eventalization, is the moment at which subjectivity is deconstructed through genealogical investigation. This moment, so to speak, is an effect emerging from an ontological reflection of the self. My point, hence, does not begin with the will or the desire not to be governed, but with the reflection that the experience could act on itself when the eventalization is activated. Through this eventalization, Foucault’s critical attitude does not operate by suspending the ontological certainty; on the contrary, it is founded on an experience as the ontological status of the self. As Thomas Lemke rightly

captured, the term of experience “refers to a “critical ontology of ourselves” that seeks to make new historical experiences possible by moving beyond the limits of the present”(Lemke, 2012: 65). As soon as one uses eventalization, one could reflect to what one knows and what one is, allowing one to disengage oneself from the horizon dominated by the power. At this point, it could be seen that the heart of genealogy, as the eventalization, is the temporal reflection, acting as the ontological basis for triggering the moment when the subjectivity could be de-subjectivated. It also means that what is added as the new element in Foucault’s reorientation of genealogy is nothing less than the condition of temporality, as the ontological condition bringing self-reflection into play with his manner of critique.

This is the reason why I do not place Nietzsche as the philosopher who foreshadows Foucault’s revision of his manner of critique, since by mentioning the idea of the condition of temporality, the only philosopher that comes to my mind is Martin Heidegger. As Stuart Elden argues, though Nietzsche might provide an initial glimpse of the condition of temporality, this condition had not been developed in great detail until Heidegger used it to ground his philosophical treatment, which, subsequently, shapes the philosophical character of subsequent thinkers, including Foucault (Elden, 2001: 12-14). Certainly, for the general reader, it might be a surprise to view Foucault in the light of Heideggerian philosophy. Yet, this view is not something strange for many scholars in the field of Foucault’s studies, since there are many works showing the connection between Foucault’s thoughts and Heidegger’s philosophical project (such as Dryfus and Rabinow, 1983; Rayner, 2007; Han, 2002; Eldren, 2001; Visker, 1999). Even Foucault himself used to accept on many occasions that the philosopher from whom he had learned a lot, including the way to understand Nietzsche, was Heidegger (cited in Rayner, 2007: 117-118). Considering this, if Heidegger is the one who plays a crucial role in Foucault’s philosophical formation, there is no more suitable place to

express this role than with the way Foucault incorporates the condition of temporality into his reorientation of genealogy.

But what is Heidegger's treatment of the condition of temporality? How is this treatment important to Heidegger's philosophical character? As Elden claims, one of the topics that concerns Heidegger in his philosophical career is an experience of the temporal condition, and its relation to the way being (*sein*) understands itself as Being (*Dasein*) (Elden, 2001: 13). Against the background of Aristotelian tradition which considers time as something counted within the movement between points of no-longer and not-yet, Heidegger derives his definition of time by emphasizing the moment when one reflects to oneself the temporality which determines the condition of one's own understanding of oneself. In this fashion, time comes to be viewed not as the succession of a temporal continuity, but as the experience of present—that is to say, an experience of the taking place of an event in disrupting the flow of durability. Heidegger expresses this point clearly in his magnum opus, *Being and Time*, where he described that Dasein, or the condition that being understands itself as Being (or 'Being of being'), would not come to be realized without the reflection on the present:

Dasein temporalizes itself in the way the future and having been are united in the Present. The Present discloses the "today" authentically, and of course as the moment of vision (Heidegger, 1962: 397).

Hence, Heidegger's treatment of the temporal condition is nothing other than the reflection on an experience of the present, which produces the rupture within the flow of temporal continuity, bringing back any imaginations of past and future into its horizon of the present. Present, from Heidegger's point of view, appears to be crucial to understanding such treatment. It could be said that unless the present is treated in this Heideggerian manner, the condition of temporality could not be grasped ontologically.

Putting a spotlight on how Heidegger treats the condition of temporality could help to display the parallel between Heidegger and Foucault, especially in the way they stress on an experience of the present, as the temporal reflection, in driving their manner of critique. Similar to Foucault, Heidegger's demonstration of a reflection on the present could be used as a framework to situate the direction of critique. He puts this most clearly when he proposes the character of historical experience, which reflects the potential of the present in determining its own future:

Here, by "history", we have in view that which is past, but which nevertheless is still having effects. However the historical, as that which is past, is understood to be related to the 'Present' in the sense of what is actual 'now' and 'today', and to be related to it, either positively and privately, in such a way as to have effects upon it...What 'has a history' in this way can, at the same time, 'make' such history. As 'epoch-making', it determines 'a future' 'in the present'. Here "history" signifies a 'context' of events and 'effects', which draws on through 'the past', 'the Present', and the 'future' (Heidegger, 1962: 378-379).

Accordingly, it would not be too much of an exaggeration to claim that Foucault tends to take on a Heideggerian characteristic in order to reorient his use of genealogy as the eventalization. This taking of Heideggerian character also goes hand in hand with the taking of Heidegger's insight in dealing with truth, for the reason that when the present, as the condition under which being understands its own existence authentically, is grasped in an ontological manner, the locus of truth embedded within that understanding is inevitably brought into view. Once one reflects upon oneself the present that grounds ones understanding of one's own existence, the truth enshrined as the concealed part within oneself will be revealed through the mode of that understanding. Thus, Foucault's taking of Heideggerian characteristics could lead to the reformulation of truth within his critical

manner. But what is Heidegger's insight of truth? How is this insight crucial to Foucault's critical project?

According to Heidegger, truth is neither the proposition working on an agreement between words and things, nor the invention of the will to power; instead, it is the 'Aletheia', which could be translated as the un-concealing. This truth, then, should not be posited as something transcending the way ordinary people live in everyday life. On the contrary, it seems to belong to the moment of disclosedness (*erschlossenheit*), as the moment when the concealment in everydayness is unconcealed, letting being be understood through the presence of Being (Heidegger, 1962: 214-226). There is no need to find the truth, since it is part and parcel of our everyday experience, particularly when we come to understand something, which entails us being in the moment when that thing is disclosed to us as it is. Truth, in this sense, is essentially nothing but an authentic moment when an existence of being is determined ontologically. To think about truth is to think about the moment when truth let itself be presented as something unconcealed. This point is accounted fully in Heidegger's late works, where he reckons truth with lighting (*lichtung*), which is the moment when the thing enclosed is traversed by the light and opened to be presented as it is. Light, in this depiction, has nothing in common with the word 'bright', for Heidegger relates the meaning of 'light' to the word 'to open' (*licht*), in the sense that when one makes something light, one is opening that thing (Heidegger, 1972: 65). Truth or aletheia, hence, must be equated with the opening or the moment that something is opened. As Heidegger said:

The opening grants first of all the possibility of the path to presence, and grants the possible presencing of that presence itself. We must think aletheia, unconcealment, as the opening which first grants Being and thinking and their presencing to and for each other (Heidegger, 1972: 68).



To be sure, the passage quoted above captures one of the main issues that Heidegger seems to tackle in his late life: the ground of thinking and its entwinement with truth as the withdrawal (*seinsentzug*).<sup>4</sup> However, what should be emphasized here is the feature of truth that runs throughout his works from earlier to later periods. This passage, moreover, also confirms the correspondence between truth and the reflection on the present, since that reflection is nothing but the reflection on the opening moment when any presences come to be presented. Without this temporal condition, no truth would have ever come into view.<sup>5</sup>

Given this point, it is clear that, by taking Heideggerian character into his use of genealogy, Foucault could ascertain to himself the new premise of truth. It also means that alongside the reflection on the present, he proposes the new feature of truth as something stemming from his reorientation of genealogy. As eventalization, genealogy explicates its critical content through the creation of double events. Not only does genealogy expose the event on which power turned itself to be knowledge claiming to be true, it also affirms the event of reflection in which that nexus of power/knowledge is disclosed and presented as something untrue. When one uses genealogy to challenge any forms of knowledge claiming to be true, one does not just expose the untruth of that form of knowledge; instead, one also

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<sup>4</sup> For a brief summary of the dynamic of Heidegger's philosophical project, including the way he deals with truth, see Trawny (2019: 33-116)

<sup>5</sup> However, it is worth bearing in mind that though Heidegger constantly gives an account of truth in terms of the moment of opening, the way he describes the condition allowing this moment to take place, between early and later works, seems to slightly change. For example, Heidegger describes in *Being and Time* that this moment is nothing but the moment of resoluteness (*entschlossenheit*), when truth is discerned from the state of everydayness's concealment through the facing of death, permitting Dasein to view its own totality, which brings the truth into play (Heidegger, 1962: 255-260). Yet, this description is changed in later works, where He traces back the original meaning of the word 'truth', and recovers it through the metaphor of light, focusing on the moment when one withdraws oneself, so that one could let the thing be presented as it is (Heidegger, 1972: 64-69).

confirms that one has passed the opening moment when such knowledge is disclosed and presented as nothing concerning truth.

Following this, it could be seen precisely where Foucault detaches himself from the influence of Nietzsche. This detachment, so to speak, lies in the way he shifts his account of truth from Nietzsche's will to power, to Heidegger's opening moment.<sup>6</sup> If truth plays a vital role in grounding the condition under which one can de-subjectivate oneself from the subjectivity produced by power, its feature could be nothing but the opening moment when any form of power, appearing as truth, is disclosed and presented to be something untrue. Foucault's reorientation of genealogy could therefore be considered both as the way he disentangles himself from Nietzschean's trap of power, and as the way to re-found truth serving to ground the direction of his critical mission against power. In addition, this point is crucial to exhibit how Foucault revises the relationship between philosophy and power. Insofar as truth is saved from an encroachment of power, philosophy should be rescued from that encroachment too. In this respect, Foucault's not only reorients his uses of genealogy, including the relationship between truth and power ascribing to it, but also reorients the position of philosophy in dealing with power. Philosophy, then, is no longer placed to be something against which Foucault would like to set his project. Rather, it is turned to be consolidated as the vehicle he could drive to complete his critical mission against power.

But, if philosophy could be used to critique power, what is the main character of this philosophy? How could this philosophy critique power? And if Foucault's salvaging of truth

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that my argument at this point seems to run against Elden, who treats Heidegger's philosophical arrangement as something arising out of Nietzsche's philosophical project (Elden, 2001:ch.4). However, in my view, Elden grounds his argument here by overlooking the distinction between Nietzsche and Heidegger, particularly the way Heidegger constructs his position by deconstructing Nietzsche's philosophical content, see this detail in Pippin (1994: ch.5)

from power is the point allowing him to derive his critical philosophy, what is the feature of such truth that makes his critical philosophy possible?

### **Freedom and the Ground of Foucault's Critical Philosophy**

Before answering the above questions, it is important for me to clarify my point regarding the normative position of Foucault. As I described in the previous part, though Foucault's reorientation of genealogy could provide him the new premise of truth, different from Nietzsche's will to power, he still keeps his critical philosophy from being described as normative. This, in my view, is due to the character of the new premise of truth on which he relies, since it is the moment of opening, which is not something ontologically graspable through the theoretical construction; Foucault's new premise of truth is the matter of practical-concrete life, not the theoretical-normative one. Yet, the fact that he does not expose the normative stance does not automatically entail us viewing his critical operation as something devoid of normative grounds. For how could it be possible to make a critique without bearing its object as something bad? Is it really possible for Foucault to critique power by not treating this power as the problem in the first place?

This is the reason why my position is opposed to Mark Kelly's, who names Foucault's critical approach as 'the non-normative approach', to the extent that he views in Foucault's unmasking of the operation of power nothing concerning the normative basis in making judgment (Foucault, 2018: 148-150). Though I find his argument very interesting, Kelly's position is too extreme, especially in his sweeping claim that Foucault does not have the normative commitment playing beneath his critical approach. Definitely, Foucault does not advertise his normative aspiration when he exercises the genealogical investigation. But,

he must have some normative ground, which—though incapable to articulate in terms of theoretical formulation—frames him to regard power as worth being critiqued.

At this point, I would like to argue that the inarticulate ground of Foucault's critical philosophy is freedom serving as the essence of truth. My argument here is logically plausible, considering that Foucault's new premise of truth is foreshadowed by Heidegger, who views truth as something ontologically impossible without the presupposition of freedom. "The essence of truth...is freedom", Heidegger said (Heidegger, 1998b: 142). But what is this freedom? How does it play as the ground of Heidegger's treatment of truth? Heidegger manages to provide some answers in the lecture titled "On the Essence of Truth", whose theme is the feature of freedom playing to be an essence of truth. He begins the lecture by claiming that truth, insofar as it is the opening moment when a thing comes to be viewed as it is, could not be brought into light without freedom. The main reason why he claims this is because he sees that when one is disclosed into the opening moment, one is drawn into an open region where things stand distantly from what they are supposed to be, allowing one, in turn, to free oneself from any presuppositions in everyday experience (Heidegger, 1998b: 142-144). When the thing enclosed is disclosed to me, I am drawn into the authentic state where I have to grasp it as it is, rather than putting it into the order of category that I have learnt from my everyday experiences. In this state, I am free because I am unlocked from the inauthentic state of everydayness, to the moment of disclosedness of beings. Following this, it could be said that, for Heidegger, truth—as *aletheia*—could not stand on anything except freedom, for the reason that it discloses the un-comprehended disclosedness of beings.

In this light, if Foucault's critical philosophy is grounded on the premise of truth, as the opening moment, and if the essence of this premise of truth is freedom, it could then be said that the ground of Foucault's critical philosophy is nothing rather than freedom. At this point, I would like to emphasize that this freedom must not be considered either as the matter

of choice nor an absence of constraint imposed by others. Rather, it is what Heidegger calls ‘the letting being be’, that is, an engagement with “the open region and its openness into which every being come to stand, bringing that openness...along with itself (Heidegger, 1998b: 144)” In this sense, freedom should not be seen through the liberal viewpoint as the property of human beings. On the contrary, it should be understood as the condition under which the existence of humans could be attained in truth. “Freedom, understood as letting being be, is the fulfilment and consummation of the essence of truth in the sense of the disclosure of beings” (Heidegger, 1998b: 146). To be free, then, is to engage with truth—that is, to engage oneself with the opening moment, allowing one to disengage from what one has been disposed to be.

Freedom, for Foucault, could then not be anything other than the un-comprehended state of relation, which is unable to be exhausted by the power. He delineated this point in an interview given in 1984, where he emphasized the incapability of the relation of power to suture freedom, as follows;

In order to exercise a relation of power, there must be on both sides a certain form of liberty. Even though the relation of power may be completely unbalanced or when one can truly say that he has “all power” over the other, a power can only be exercised over another to the extent that the latter still has the possibility of committing suicide, of jumping out of the window or of killing the other. That means that in relation of power, there is necessarily the possibility of resistance, for if there were no possibility of resistance—of violent resistance, of escape, of ruse, of strategies that reverse the situation—there would be no relation of power (Foucault, 1988b: 12).

This passage is significant to capture Foucault’s insight of freedom. Like Heidegger, this insight is nothing but the shedding of light on the un-comprehended moment that remains open to any possibilities. Yet, unlike Heidegger, such freedom is not just about the disclosure of being, since it also serves to ground the conditions of possibility for the resistance against

power. This could then imply that while Heidegger approaches freedom in term of ontology, Foucault tends to cast a spotlight on the political feature of that freedom. This means that apart from acting as the ground of being, freedom, for Foucault, also plays the role of justifying the philosophical mission of countering power. If genealogy as the eventalization is the hallmark of Foucault's philosophy of critique, the condition allowing it to take place is not only the account of truth as *aletheia*, but also the insight of freedom as the un-comprehended moment that power cannot suture (Foucault, 1988b: 11-13).

But, how could this insight of freedom be used to counter power? If this freedom is nothing but the un-comprehended moment that power cannot suture, what is the ground that entails those who perceives such a moment to take a critique against power? Here, I think it is important to indicate the arbitrariness of the link between the practice of de-subjectivation, as the result of eventalization, and the critique of power in such a way that the former does not automatically lead to the latter. To disengage oneself from the operation of power is one thing, but to challenge that power is another thing. At this point, it could say that there is a limit in the implication of Heidegger's philosophy to act as the ground for Foucault's critical mission toward power, since this philosophy was arguably not designated to countering power in the first place. As Herbert Dreyfus suggests, while Heidegger derives his philosophy to deal with the problem of Being, Foucault aims his philosophical mission in countering the operation of power (Dreyfus, 1992: 80-95).

Mentioning this is fruitful for me to pinpoint how Foucault surpasses the limit of Heidegger's philosophy, by inverting the relationship between truth and freedom. Whereas Heidegger uses freedom to be the ground of truth, Foucault turns that truth to serve as the actualization of freedom. That is while Heidegger seems to satisfy in grounding his account of truth by introducing his insight of freedom, this freedom—for

Foucault—needs to be confirmed externally through the practice of truth, which, by condensing truth into the form of action, could help those who perform it to realize their freedom. Seen in this context, the insight of freedom that I would like to ascertain through commenting on Foucault's application of Heidegger's premise of truth is not only about the moment that unlocks one from the operation of power performing as truth, but also the condition of possibility allowing one to determine one's life by speaking one's truth. In this regard, apart from being understood as the un-comprehended moment that power cannot suture, Foucault's insight of freedom should be conceived as the moment when power is disrupted concretely (Foucault, 1988b: 2-4). This implies that he furthers the insight of freedom, proposed by Heidegger, not only by indicating its un-comprehended moment but also by confirming its quality in countering the operation of power, through some certain form of action that actualizes truth into the form that the actor could objectively realize.

But what is the feature of this action? How could such a feature provide the concrete illustration that Foucault could use to complete his philosophical, and critical, project against power?

### **Concluding Remarks**

In 1984, Foucault published an essay extracted from one of the lectures he had presented at Collège de France one year previously, where he had mentioned the feature of the philosophical ethos he would like to present as the framework for his demonstration of the philosophical practices, or actions. This essay was titled, "What is Enlightenment". Certainly, as the title suggests, the essay shows how Foucault both revisits the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and reconnects it with his philosophical project against power. At first glance, this

might look strange, given that Foucault spent a lot of his labor in his works during the 1960s on destructing Kant's system of philosophy, for he saw in it the basis of human science, which created the representation making man double and be in tension with his own self (see further in Han, 2002: 17-69; Dryfus and Rabinow, 1983: ch.2). However, if we pay more attention to the essay, we will see that Foucault's revisiting of Kant does not indicate any alteration of his thoughts on Kant's philosophical content. As Foucault suggests, what interests him is not the content of Kant's philosophy, but the condition entangled with the question of enlightenment that Kant tries to give an answer to. In other words, while Kant founds the direction of critical philosophy that thematizes on the condition of the possibility of knowledge, Foucault find another direction of critical philosophy that Kant discovers—but leaves untouched—namely, the reflection on the present, or, as Elden puts, the present field of possible experience (Foucault, 1997a: 97-98; Elden, 2016: 195).

Kant's philosophical element that Foucault would like to reconnect with his critical project is, then, the problem of the reflection on the present. This reflection on the present, as Foucault elaborates, is nothing other than the reflection on the temporal condition allowing any philosophical project to exist. It is not an event belonging to some certain world's era, nor the transition to some definite future coming (Foucault, 1997a: 98-99). Instead, such reflection appears as something relating to the contemporary status of philosophical thought. As Foucault conceptualized below:

The hypothesis I should like to propose is that this little text is located in a sense at the crossroads of critical reflection and reflection on history. It is a reflection by Kant on the contemporary status of his own enterprise. No doubt it is not the first time that a philosopher has given his reasons for understanding his work at a particular moment. But it seems to me that it is the first time that a philosopher has connected in this way, closely and from the inside, the significance of his work with respect to knowledge, a reflection on history and a particular analysis of the specific moment at which he is writing and because of which he is writing. It is in the reflection on "today" as different in history



and as motive for a particular philosophical task that the novelty of this text appears to me to lie (Foucault, 1997a: 104-105).

From this passage, it is quite clear that this reflection on the present is nothing less than the reflection on the temporal condition, as the ontological status, which constitutes the self of philosopher actualized through his philosophical writing.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Kant's critical direction, which Foucault tries to draw out and rearticulate here, seems to play at the temporal experience where philosophers could determine their own self through the reflection on the relationship between their own works and the historical reality with which these works must relate. This means that Kant's philosophical modality, on the one hand, stresses mainly on an experience of the constitutive moment, when the self is formulated, and reformulated, through reflection on the limit of its temporal ontology. On the other hand, it also offers the new dimension of critique that Foucault would like to pursue, that is, the philosophical ethos to examine the self from the point of its historical experience. "I have been seeking to stress that the thread that may connect us with the Enlightenment is not faithfulness to doctrinal element, but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude—that is, of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era", he remarked (Foucault, 1997a: 109).

In this way, it comes to be regarded that Foucault articulates his style of critique, which emphasizes the reflection on the present, with the Kantian tradition of critical philosophy, as the enlightenment's other thread. It also expresses the way he deconstructs

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<sup>7</sup> At first sight, talking about the temporal condition in Kant's philosophy is not something surprising because his philosophy does not abandon the significance of the temporal condition. For example, when he proposes his manner to critique the pure operation of reason, Kant treats the temporal condition as the main element in grounding the schemata, as the device to direct the act of pure understanding (Kant, 1929: b176-b187) Yet, insofar as this treatment tends to posit that condition as the internal structure of the operation of reason, it is different from the reflection on present that Foucault proposes, since such reflection does not serve as the internal operator of reason, but the external circumstance upon which the reason has to act.

Kant, by using Kant's modality to be a springboard for releasing the philosophical ethos from the closure of Kant's critical content. That is to say, while Kant's critical content relies mainly on the imposition of self-constraint through an establishment of the limit of knowledge, his critical modality, as Foucault presents by emphasizing the reflection on the limit of the temporal ontology of the self, opens the possibility of undoing such constraint by providing the way to transgress that limit of knowledge. The more one knows one's limit, the more one can transgress it by examining oneself, enabling one to live in the way of not being governed:

Criticism indeed consists of analyzing and reflecting upon limits. But if the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge has to renounce transgressing, it seems to me that the critical question today has to be turned back into a positive one: in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints? The point, in brief, is to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of possible transgression (Foucault, 1997a: 113).

In this respect, it is clear how Foucault provides the feature of his philosophical ethos as well as establishing it in relation to the Kantian tradition of critique. Moreover, this also brings out Foucault's trick in associating his Heideggerian philosophical character with Kant's philosophy of critique. As argued in the previous sections, Foucault, after his reorientation of genealogy in 1978, shifts his philosophical reference from Nietzsche to Heidegger. It could then be speculated that he endorses his Heideggerian backdrop to deconstruct Kant. In short, it could be said that by looking through the way Foucault revisits Kant on the questions of enlightenment, we could see how he derives his manner of critical philosophy, which rests on the affiliation between his Heideggerian character and Kant's critical project. This philosophy, so to speak, is not located in a metaphysical dimension, but

takes the form of practices as its crux. As Foucault presents, the main concern in his philosophical ethos is the form of practice, or action, that could unfold the limit of what one is, along with the contingency of that limit, allowing the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what one is, does, or thinks (Foucault, 1997a: 113-114).

Foucault's philosophy, then, is inseparable from politics to the extent that its practice could permit one to challenge the limit set by the operation of power. To philosophize is to politicize; the more one could philosophize, the more one could overcome one's limit, and the freer one is to determine one's being. "I shall thus characterize the philosophical ethos appropriate to the critical ontology of ourselves as historical—practical test of the limit that we may go beyond, and thus as work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings", Foucault emphasized (Foucault, 1997a: 115).

But what is the main element of the practice in Foucault's critical philosophy? If Foucault's critical philosophy is nothing but the practice against power, or governmentality, what is the model designated to guide this practice? What is the source Foucault could learn from and derive into his philosophical practice? And to what extent could this practice be concretely used to fight against power?

## Chapter Five

### Telling Truth to The Self: Truth-Telling, Care of the Self, and Michel Foucault's Return to Ancient Philosophy

#### Allegory of the Cave and the Battle of Truth

In 1942, Martin Heidegger published an essay, which was part of the lecture he had given ten years previously, entitled "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" (Heidegger, 1998a).<sup>1</sup> Though the title might lead readers of this essay to expect that Heidegger will probe some of Plato's texts, which deal directly with truth, it turns out that he only reads a tale from the first half of the seventh book of *The Republic*, the tale which is one of the most popular stories among students of politics and philosophy, 'the allegory of the cave'.

In terms of the content, the allegory is the story of a man whose life, among others, is nurtured in a cave, with his legs and head bound so that he sees only the shadows cast on the wall in front of him. Unable to turn his head around, this man tends to regard what he sees on the wall as something true, until he is unchained and compelled to turn his neck around, to walk and to ascend toward the light outside the cave. After finishing the ascension, he finds out that what he regarded to be the truth whilst in the cave was merely the shadow of anything outside. "The truth", he realizes, is not something projected on the wall of the cave; rather, it lies outside the cave. Nothing in the cave has anything to do with truth. The only way to follow the truth relies first on being unchained, and then on being compelled to turn around. Thinking that he knows how to make the people in the cave realize "this truth", this

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<sup>1</sup> For the details of this lecture, see Wrathal (2011: 72-91)

man descends into the cave for his mission of releasing them from their chains, and thereby from the shadows cast on the wall. However, things are not as easy as he thinks. As soon as he goes down into the cave, his eyes are corrupted by its darkness, making him an object of a mockery for the people in the cave. The more he tries to persuade others to go up and outside, the more alienated, strange, and even dangerous, he looks. Worst of all, since what he declares is nothing but the “untruth” of the picture on the wall, he seems to provoke the people in the cave, who respond by killing him. His mission of liberating people from the shadows, as something untrue, finally kills him (Heidegger, 1998a: 156-163).<sup>2</sup>

To be sure, it is undeniable that the allegory that I just described above has been one of the most important key notes for scholars who wish to discover Plato’s intentions, especially the political stance related to his philosophical project. However, what draws Heidegger to pay attention to this allegory is nothing relating to Plato’s intentions. Nor does he want to grasp the political implications of Plato’s philosophy. As Heidegger proposed at the beginning of the essay, what he intended to explicate from the allegory was something Plato had left unsaid in his writing, namely, the alteration of the essence of truth (Heidegger, 1998a: 155). Heidegger started this explication by pointing to the original Greek meaning of truth, ‘*aletheia*’, translated as the un-hiddenness or the un-concealing (Heidegger, 1998a: 168). As un-concealing, this truth could not stand separately from anything untrue; it needed to be attached with the *letheia*—or the concealing—as something against which it was set. In this sense, even the cave, for Heidegger, had some grip of the truth, for the truth was an un-concealing, which rendered the shadow to be seen as something presented in its appearing to the eyes of those who belonged to the cave (Heidegger, 1998a: 172). According to those who belonged to the cave, the shadow of things cast on the wall was part and parcel of their everyday life, and hence related to their truth, for the reason that they were not aware that

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<sup>2</sup> For the original version of this allegory, see Plato (1991, 514a-517a)

they were living in the cave and everything they saw were just the shadows of the things outside (Wrathal, 2011: 81). The passage that happened in Plato's allegory of the cave, then, should not be viewed as the passage from the place of untruth to the place of truth. Rather, this passage was nothing but the passage of the un-concealing to the more un-concealing.

This is the reason why Heidegger sees in this allegory how Plato displaced the un-concealing from being an essence of truth. This point is confirmed when Heidegger explains that what Plato tried to do in such an allegory was to demote the un-concealing, as the character of truth, to be a mere element within the appearance of 'Idea'. "Certainly unhiddenness is mentioned in its various stages, but it is considered simply in terms of how it makes whatever appears be accessible in its visible form (*eidōs*) and in terms of how it makes this visible form, as that which show itself (*idea*), be visible", Heidegger wrote (Heidegger, 1998a: 172). Consequently, un-hiddenness or un-concealing, as truth, is disposed to be a part of the shining forth of the Idea, according to which this Idea is the source of visibility of anything presented. This leads to altering the essence of truth from the un-concealing to the correctness. Since Plato's notion of Idea concerns only the ability to shine as well as its being referential to the thing that appeared, according to Heidegger, the essence of truth is no longer the un-concealing. It is, on the contrary, the correctness arising out of the identical relationship between the Idea and its appearing (Heidegger, 1998a: 174-177). Only in the light of this new essence of truth could Plato's allegory be viewed as the passage from the untruth to the truth.

Viewed from this insight, it comes to mean that what is at stake when a man who is unchained—and goes outside of the cave—descends back to the cave is not the battle between truth and untruth. Instead, it is the battle of two versions of truth: the battle between truth as un-concealing and truth as correctness, the battle which ends with the victory of the latter at the expense of the former (Heidegger, 1998a: 176-177). Here, it could be said that

despite the death of a man who was the representative of Idea or the truth as correctness, such a death is just a trick of Plato's to win the war of truth, in altering the essence of truth from the un-concealing to the correctness (Heidegger, 1998a: 178-182). What Plato contributes, in Heidegger's perspective, is therefore nothing more than the alteration of the essence of truth, which has designed the destiny of western philosophy for more than two thousand years.

Drawing from this, it could be said that Heidegger not only contributed to philosophy in a new manner in thinking about truth, but also applied it to recast an entire tradition of western philosophy, which has influenced many subsequent philosophers. And one of those who have been influenced is Michel Foucault. As unfolded in the previous chapter, Foucault's reorientation of the use of genealogy in 1978 could be viewed as the beginning of his treatment of truth in accordance with the premise of Heidegger. This treatment also helped him to deconstruct Kant's "What is Enlightenment", which gave him the possibility of proposing his own form of critical philosophy. In this sense, if returning to Plato's allegory of the cave could allow Heidegger to open a space for the original sense of truth by recasting an entire tradition of philosophy, it is not hard for us to consider Foucault's presentation of his philosophical manner, by returning to ancient Greek philosophical texts, as his guideline. As Foucault once described in the lecture at Collège de France on 3 February 1982, he would use the lens of Heidegger's manner of truth to reread the ancient Greek philosophical texts, as part of the model of his philosophical project. "What is the subject of truth, what is the subject who speaks the truth...? Personally, myself, you must have heard this, I have tried to reflect on all this from the side of Heidegger and starting from Heidegger", he said (Foucault, 2005: 189).

However, despite the similarity in their direction of returning to ancient Greek philosophical texts, it does not mean that Foucault solely conforms to Heidegger's interpretation without proposing anything conflicted. Thinking about the way they might be

different in approaching Plato's allegory of the cave might help us to understand this point. True, Foucault does not directly provide us with the way in which he read that allegory of Plato. Yet, it is not difficult for us to speculate that while Heidegger's recasting of the allegory could disclaim the authority of a man who went outside the cave, Foucault might wager on him, for the reason that he might regard the truth of this man as the vehicle driven to fight against power, disguised under the name of truth, which is operated in the cave. In my view, what would lead Foucault to pursue this line is the extent to which the battle that emerged in the cave is not a battle among different characters of truth, as Heidegger proposes. Instead, if there is a battle in the cave, this battle should be nothing other than the battle triggered when a man who came back from outside actualizes his truth by telling it.

Seen from this perspective, what is at stake in the battle is not the essence of truth, but the act of telling the truth. Because of the lack of evidence to prove the correctness of what he tells people in the cave, the truth-teller does not have any external sources on which his truth could rely; only he himself is the source of his own truth. In this way, it could be said that the truth told by a man who comes back from the outside is something true *to him* other than the truth *as such*. Following this, what makes him different from the others in the cave is not exactly the essence of truth, insofar as his truth is not something correcting, as it is something un-concealing. The true difference, from my aspect, is then the courage, which pushes a man who comes back from outside to risk his life by disobeying manifestly what the others regard to be true, the courage which not only makes him identical to his own self, but also confirms him as the free being. In summary, if Foucault interpreted the battle of truth that happened in Plato's allegory of the cave, he would not consider it as a battle between the un-concealing and the correctness, but as a battle between the product of power and something disrupting it.

Postulating how Foucault might read Plato's allegory of the cave, with respect to Heidegger's interpretation, could help to clarify the way he deals with ancient Greek



philosophical texts. It shows that in opposition to Heidegger, who treats ancient philosophy as the way to withdraw the self in order to contemplate with the truth, what concerns Foucault in reading such texts is the truth-telling, according to which it is an action which allows one to explicate one's truth, along with the assertion of oneself—as the free being—through that kind of explication. Truth-telling, in short, is the framework that Foucault employs in reading ancient Greek philosophical texts. It means that, for Foucault, ancient philosophy is not only about the theoretical eruditions of truth, but also about the sets of practice entailing those who perform it to live in line with that kind of truth. But what is truth-telling? If truth-telling is Foucault's framework in understanding ancient philosophy, what are the features of truth-telling? How does Foucault discover and employ it to understand the character of ancient philosophy? And to what extent does this ancient philosophy yield him the way to critique power?<sup>3</sup>

In order to answer these questions, this chapter is written to elucidate how Foucault frames his reading of ancient philosophical texts through the notion of truth-telling. The main content of this chapter is the relationship between truth-telling and care of the self, as the scheme within which the notion of truth-telling is understood. Apart from the introduction and conclusion, the chapter is structured into two parts. The first part deals with basic elements of truth-telling and care of the self, together with how it could be used to understand the character of ancient philosophy. I also use this part to show how the framework of care of the self could underline the ascetic dimension of ancient philosophy. Ancient philosophy, for

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<sup>3</sup> At this point, I would like to admit that my reading of Foucault runs against the reading of some scholars, who view Foucault's return to ancient philosophy as the shift from politics to ethics (such as May, 2006: 96-122; Dunn, 2002: 123-153; Detel, 2005). It could also be said that my reading goes hand in hand with scholars, who seek to ascertain Foucault's political insight from the way he comments on ancient ethical precepts (such as Bernauer, 1990; Kelly, 2009; Simons, 1995). However, these scholars, in my view, tend to focus mainly on the feature of practices that transform the mode of subjectivity rather than truth and its actualization through the act of truth-telling, which is the main direction I intend to propose in this dissertation.

Foucault, is then not merely the theoretical proposition of knowledge. Rather, it is also the manual that advises the form of practice one should perform to make one's life philosophical.

The second part of this chapter is about the ontological feature playing beneath Foucault's framework of care of the self. The main point in this part is how Foucault, through his employment of Heidegger's treatment of care, discerns the ontological assumption of care of the self. The main element here is the role of the other acting as the condition under which care could allow truth to be actualized in the form of truth-telling. This means that apart from the premise of truth and the insight of freedom that I elaborated in the previous chapter, Foucault also reorients Heidegger's treatment of care to frame his account of ancient philosophical texts. It could be considered that although there is a difference among their philosophical targets, it would have been impossible for Foucault to derive his way of accounting the ancient's philosophical texts without the Heideggerian ontological understanding.

### **Philosophy as the Act of Re-Subjectivation: Foucault's Discovery of Truth-Telling and Its Relationship to Care of the Self**

Truth-telling, or 'parrhesia', is the notion that Foucault first described in the second hour of the Collège de France lecture on 3 March 1982. In that lecture, he identified parrhesia to be the principle that commanded the way of speaking, as part of the spiritual exercise, or *ascesis*, in the Hellenistic philosophical practices, whose target was to realize the self, according to which the self was an object available to be cared (Foucault, 2005: 365-368). This comes as no surprise given that the theme on which Foucault wanted to take in the lectures of that year was the precept of 'care of the self' and its role in ancient philosophy. Contextually, this precept was the reformulation of what Foucault had announced to pursue in the previous

year: the place of truth in the process of subjectivation presented in the collections of ancient doctrine, called ‘the art of life’. As announced in the lecture on 14 January 1981, Foucault had a plan to thematize the modality, or some certain forms of practice, that produced an effect of modifying the ontological status of those who practiced it (Foucault, 2017: 26-36). However, this plan was exhausted by Foucault’s own style of lecture, which, in that year, paid too much attention on the sexual experience, as the means to illustrate his thoughts. This led him, one year later, to reframe the way he took on the relationship between truth and subjectivity, by stepping back from the case of sexuality, and using the notion of care of the self to be the new scheme (Foucault, 2005: 507-550). Thus, it could be said at the outset that truth-telling, since it was something belonging to the precept of care of the self, could be nothing less than the specific type of action which took the new form of subjectivity as its aim.

Treating truth-telling as the action relating to the new form of subjectivity is not something strange for scholars, who work on Foucault’s late writings. Nancy Luxon, for instance, views Foucault’s notion of truth-telling as the new manner of subject-formation, offering modern individuals a set of practice to transcend any impasses created by any operations of power (Luxon, 2008). Edward McGushin, in the same fashion, suggests that truth-telling is part of Foucault’s mission of searching for the pre-Christian experience of subjectivity, as the device to displace the modern form of subject (McGushin, 2007: 11-15). Certainly, this form of subjectivity is not something universal, nor pre-given. Subjectivity, as Foucault clarified, “is not conceived of on the basis of a prior and universal theory of the subject.” Instead, it should be “conceived as that which is constituted and transformed in its relationship to its own truth” (Foucault, 2017: 12). Using this understanding as the background, truth-telling could mean nothing but the way of action, by which those who accomplish it could acquire the new form of subjectivity. Truth-telling should not then be

considered solely as an advice on the way one could act, but rather as the way of being that one could be, through an act that lets one's truth be spoken. In other words, truth-telling could be nothing but some certain form of modality, which permits an acquisition of a quality of experience, making the modification of the self possible. Once one tells what one has thought in one's mind, one not only acts in line with the truth enmeshing in oneself, but also transforms oneself through re-subjectivating it with one's own truth. The more one manifests one's own truth, the more one could begin the mode of re-subjectivation, which could establish an identical relationship with one's own self.

Conceiving truth-telling as the act of self-resubjectivation is fruitful in capturing the insight of Foucault's recovery of the ancient imperative of care of the self. As McGushin presents, Foucault's notion of the self does not have any relationship to the idea that situates the self to be the fundamental essence, such as the substance, or the form (McGushin, 2007: 32). Instead, it is something ambivalent and dispersing among different states of experience, which will be unified only through some form of action in triggering the process of re-subjectivation. The self, according to Foucault, has never been a permanent state of existence waiting to be discovered and cared for; on the contrary, it is the object which will never come into being unless some required form of action is activated. The self, then, is the product—rather than the cause—of action. This point will be asserted if the original word, translated by Foucault as 'care', is examined thoroughly.

As delivered in his lecture at Collège de France in 1982, Foucault's use of the term 'care', as part of the precept 'care of the self', was equivalent to the Greek term '*epimeleia*', which could etymologically be referred to a physical action, or some certain series of exercises (Foucault, 2005: 82). "Epimeleia also always designates a number of actions exercised on the self by the self, action by which one takes responsibility for oneself and by which one changes, purifies, transforms, and transfigures oneself", he explained (Foucault,

2005: 11). It is therefore understandable why Foucault chose this word to lay down his framework in reading ancient Greek philosophical corpuses, for it could allow him to grasp those corpuses in a full manner, that is, in grasping ancient philosophical texts both as the theoretical edification of cosmology, and as a practical guide for concretizing the form of subjectivity in consonant with such edification. As he described:

With this theme of the care of the self, we have then, if you like, an early philosophical formulation, appearing clearly in the fifth century B.C. of a notion which permeates all Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman philosophy, as well as Christian spirituality, up to the fourth and fifth century A.D. In short, with this notion of *epimeleia heautou* we have a body of work defining a way of being, a standpoint, forms of reflection, and practices which make it an extremely important phenomenon not just in the history of representations, notions, or theories, but in the history of subjectivity itself or, if you like, in the history of practices of subjectivity (Foucault, 2005: 11)

At this point, it is worth addressing that Foucault seemed to follow the specific thread of interpreting the ancient philosophical corpuses, which was flourishing in France at that time. As Arnold Davidson points out in detail, Foucault's interpretation of ancient philosophical texts is indebted to many French historians of ancient philosophy, one of which is Pierre Hadot, whose pioneering works in approaching ancient Greek and Roman literature, as a manual for spiritual exercise, gives Foucault the lens to view ancient philosophy (Davidson, 1990).<sup>4</sup> According to Hadot, what defines ancient philosophical corpuses does not lie as much on its metaphysical dogmas, as on its proposed forms of life that go along with the feature of its underlining ideas of wisdom. As Hadot remarked in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France on 18 February 1983, the main character of ancient philosophy could be defined with the word 'strangeness', or *atopia*, in the sense that every philosopher, or

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<sup>4</sup> For the relationship between Foucault and other French historians of ancient philosophy, see Davidson (2003) Here, it would be worth noting that Foucault also has a lot of impression to Hadot's works, leading him to support Hadot when Hadot was a candidate for the chair at Collège de France in 1983, see Hadot,(2011: 135).

those who pursued the philosophical life, were strange inasmuch as their lives, which not only took a theoretical investigation on a feature of wisdom, but also performed an exercise that transferred the wisdom from the metaphysical area to the area of their daily life, makes them weird in the eyes of many citizens in political society (Hadot, 1995: 56-59). Ancient philosophy, then, was as practical as theoretical. In other word, there was no gap between theory and practice in ancient philosophy. “Theory is never considered an end in itself; it is clearly and decidedly put in the service of practice”, Hadot said (Hadot, 1995: 60). If one wants to acquire a full sense of Platonic philosophy, for Hadot, one needs to concretize the Platonic theoretical knowledge through an activity considered as the way of behaving, other than to just collect and concentrate on the doctrines written by Plato (Hadot, 1995: 60).

Echoing Hadot’s treatment of ancient philosophy could help to shed light on an insight that Foucault tends to draw on when approaching ancient philosophical texts. It could also suffice to affirm that what Foucault would like to stress on in those texts are the forms of practice, as the way to embody its theoretical principle in the concrete level of everyday life. Yet, this does not mean that Foucault’s approach to ancient philosophical texts could go smoothly hand in hand with Hadot’s treatment of ancient treatises. In fact, Hadot criticizes Foucault’s reading of ancient philosophical texts, to the extent that he views Foucault’s mentioning of the self as anachronistic. As Hadot indicates, Foucault’s placing of concern too much on the self is nothing but the exposing of his blindness to another dimension of ancient philosophical practices, namely, the practice of harmonizing the self with the universe (Hadot, 1995: 206-208).

Putting it formally, what seems to be have fallen off in Foucault’s approach of ancient philosophical corpuses, in Hadot’s view, is nothing but the feeling of belonging to the whole, reflecting Foucault’s inability to take a full account of those corpuses, whose purpose is not to make an identical relationship to the self but to go beyond the self, so as to think and act in

line with universal reason. “Seneca does not find his joy in “Seneca,” but by transcending “Seneca”; by discovering that there is within him—within all human beings, that is, and within the cosmos itself—a reason which is part of universal reason”, Hadot illustrated (Hadot, 1995: 207). Thus, viewed from Hadot’s aspect, Foucault’s reading of ancient philosophical treatises—through the lens of care of the self—could be nothing more than a modern invention in the guise of ancient form of thought, as Hadot once said: “... by focusing his interpretation too exclusively on the culture of the self...M. Foucault is propounding a culture of the self which is too aesthetic—that is to say, a new form of dandyism, the late twentieth-century style” (Hadot, 1995: 211).

Hadot’s point of critique, however interesting and sharp, seems to depend on an incomplete understanding of Foucault’s approach to ancient philosophy. As McGushin notes, due to the lack of an attention on Foucault’s philosophical development, it is inevitable that Hadot lost sight of Foucault’s position in putting an importance on the relationship between the self and the world, within which that self is located (McGushin, 2007: 104). In other words, because he limits himself in only reading Foucault’s use of ancient texts, without paying attention to the whole project which Foucault’s work has pursued, Hadot is unable to conceive Foucault’s tactics in using the notion of the self, as a strategic point against power. “In other words, what I mean is this: if we take the question of power, of political power, situating it in the more general question of governmentality understood as a strategic field of power relations in the broadest and not merely in the political sense of the term, if we understand by governmentality a strategic field of power relations in their mobility, transformability, and reversibility, then I do not think that reflection on this notion of governmentality can avoid passing through, theoretically and practically, the element of a subject defined by the relationship of self to self,” Foucault remarked (Foucault, 2005: 252). What should be emphasized in Foucault’s approach to ancient philosophical texts, then, is not

the character of the self, as Hadot misunderstands, but a set of practices, or actions, that activate a critical experience in transcending an impasse posited by the contemporary mechanism of power, as William Connolly once put it;

Foucault, I want to say, affirms a hypothetical universal that does not conform to any possibility that Hadot recognizes. He affirms a hypothetical, ontological universal, one designed to disturb the closure and narcissism of dogmatic identities, one affirmed to be a contestable projection, and one treated as an alternative to ontologies of Law and Purpose. Foucault struggles, against the grain of language he uses and is used by, not to project a “logic” or order into the fundamental character of being. He invokes what might be called an ontology, a “reading” of the fundamental character of being that resists imputing a logic to it and affirms its alogical character. It is this fugitive, deniable, and contestable experience, always resistant to articulation, that is approached through the arts of genealogy and affirmed through techniques of the self (Connolly, 1998: 116).

Mentioning Connolly’s reading above is fruitful in providing the direction in which Foucault’s notion of care of the self should be read, inasmuch as it unfolds that what drives Foucault to approach ancient philosophical corpuses is not the self, but modalities in activating the contestable experience that are always resistant to be subsumed into the operation of power. It also shows that Foucault, by employing such a notion, tries to propose a new form of ontology which is different from any previous models. However, due to basing his analysis on the relationship between Foucault and Nietzsche, Connolly seems to neglect Foucault’s playing down of Nietzsche before turning to ancient philosophical doctrines (see further in Connolly, 1995: 1-40). In this regard, despite giving an insight into Foucault’s late philosophical direction, the detail of Connolly’s interpretation must be discarded in order to grasp the full account of Foucault’s treatment of care of the self, the full account which will be apprehended if enough attention is paid on the peculiarity of Foucault’s employment of the notion of care.



### **Ontology of Care of the Self: the Figure of the Other from Heidegger to Foucault**

Paying attention to the word ‘care’ is important for us in order to not misread Foucault’s point, given that the word usually means love or some certain form of affectionate feeling. This should not be hard to comprehend, if we look at the original word that Foucault uses in French—that is ‘*souci*’—whose meaning has nothing to do with affectionate feelings at all. As McGushin excellently remarks, the word *souci* does not signify some sort of affectionate sentiment; instead, it could be identical with the feeling of anxiety. Foucault’s notion of care of the self, then, does not operate through feelings like warmth, loving, or fondness, since it works only by triggering an anxious feeling that makes one have attention over oneself all the time (McGushin, 2007: 32). In this respect, it could be supposed that Foucault, in emphasizing the role of care, ascribes himself to the philosophical spirit of Heidegger, whose part of the feature is the interrelation between care and anxiety. As Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg put it nicely, what Foucault does by using the notion of care could be nothing other than the engagement of his position with Heidegger’s, especially the position in considering philosophy as the modes or ways of practice (Milchman and Rosenberg, 2008: 104-107).

But what is Heidegger’s notion of care? How could this notion work? And how could it provide an insight of the ontology that Foucault relies on? For Heidegger, care is inseparable from anxiety. He elucidates this in *Being and Time*, where he posits the anxiety as a factual state of mind, from which the care is oriented to disclose an ontological existence of being, or the ‘Being of being’ (*Dasien*)(Heidegger, 1962: 180-196). To care, according to Heidegger, is to be anxious about the world into which one was thrown. This world ontologically has no metaphysical ground, to which one could register; there is no normative principle in the world to which one could conform, since it is the place that one was thrown into. As such, because of the fact that the world is ungrounded, it is impossible for one to

know in advance what will happen to one's life, for everything that one thinks to know, or is familiar with, can always be disrupted, if not destroyed: the world has the possibility to dissolve what one regards as ready-to-hand (*zuhandenheit*) (Heidegger, 1962: 186-189). The only thing that one could do, then, is to be anxious or, putting it formally, to care for what lies ahead of oneself in the time to come—the care which, in Heidegger's perspective, will unfold an ontological condition allowing one to experience one's existence of being in a total manner (Heidegger, 1962: 193-195).

Certainly, this connection between care and anxiety is part of the main project that Heidegger undertakes in *Being and Time*, namely, the determination of Being of being, or the ontological existence of being. However, such a connection seems to persist likewise in his later works, where he shifts his project from the theme of Being of being to the notion of the ontological difference.<sup>5</sup> As Reymond Geuss delineates, while the early Heidegger tends to place the notion of care within a scheme giving importance to the politically engaged action (like resoluteness or *entschlossenheit*), the later Heidegger associates such notion with the idea of withdrawal or releasement (*gelassenheit*). “For the later Heidegger, human must remain open and receptive to the calls which Being may make on us, and learn to take care of Being as a shepherd does his sheep”, Geuss wrote (Geuss, 2017: 245). Here, in order to keep the direction of this chapter, it is neither possible nor necessary to dig deeply into Heidegger's treatment of care in his later works. Suffice it to assert that, throughout his philosophical project, care and its relationship with anxiety serve an important function in Heidegger's thoughts.

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<sup>5</sup> To some aspect, this shift could be described as Heidegger's shift of his attention to the character of temporality according to which it was the basis permitting him to take the Being of being into account. That is, it entails Heidegger to reorient the relationship between Being and being. While Heidegger in *Being and Time* frames this relationship in terms of unity, the difference between Being and being tends to widen in his later works, inasmuch as he no longer treats this relationship with terminology like authentic/inauthentic, but with notions like origin and forgetting, see further in Trawny (2019: 48-57)

Casting a spot light on how Heidegger probes the notion of care could help to assess an ontological vision that Foucault tends to exhibit through the notion of care of the self. As Milchman and Rosenberg argue, Foucault, in his later works, shares the same concern with Heidegger in response to the ethical crisis founded firstly in Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God, that is, the realization of the disappearance of transcendental values to which any metaphysical, as well as ethical, principles could refer (Milchman and Rosenberg, 2008: 108-111). Following this, it could be said that if Heidegger responds to this crisis by proposing the idea of being-thrown as the facticity of being in the world, then this idea of being-thrown also has a crucial place in Foucault's ontological bearing. In short, the vision of ontology that Foucault would like to promote could be nothing less than the vision of the world as groundless.

This might explain why Foucault adheres with Heidegger in putting the figure of other at the center of his treatment of care, since the other is only the substantial condition acting underneath the groundlessness of the world. As Peter Trawny explains, because of the groundlessness of the world appearing as being-thrown, it is inevitable for Heidegger to address the other to be a background, along which his notion of care could operate (Trawny, 2019: 39-41). For Heidegger, this other could be accounted for in terms of what he calls 'Being-with', or *Mitdasein*. Ontologically, this Being-with is part and parcel of 'Being-in-the-world', since the world into which Being is thrown to be situated is something shared among the others (Heidegger, 1962: 118). To be in the world, in Heidegger's eyes, is to be with the others who have already been in such a world; the other is an existential environment that one, more or less, has to encounter in one's everyday living. Even being alone would not have the meaning without the other whose existence plays a constitutive role in conditioning the ontological orientation of Being-in-the-world. The other, as Heidegger said, "can be missing only in and for a Being-with", that is, "Being-alone is a deficient mode of Being-

with; its very possibility is the proof of this” (Heidegger, 1962: 120). However, it is important to note that though the other has a central place in this ontological enterprise, such place remains unnoticed in everyday living, insofar as the other is usually absorbed into the world through the mode of indifference, making them transparent and inconsiderate to the eyes of Being (Heidegger, 1962: 120). The only way to bring the place of other into play is then to care, for the reason that to care is to let the Being leap ahead of itself which, in return, renders it to attune its own existence.

According to Heidegger, when one takes care of oneself, one not only thinks about what will happen in the future, but also projects the potentiality of what one could become, which, through considering that projection, will disclose the ontological condition of what one is (Heidegger, 1962: 124). And since an existence of the other is part of this condition, it comes to be apparent that the projection that one sees could be nothing but the mode of ‘Being-with as Being-in-the-word’. To be is to be-with, which means that it is impossible for one to know oneself without the other, since the other is part of one’s own existence. As Heidegger said:

In Being with and towards Others, there is thus a relationship of Being from Dasein to Dasein. But it might be said that this relationship is already constitutive for one’s own Dasein, which, in its own right, has an understanding of Being, and which thus relates itself toward Dasein. The relationship of Being which one has towards Others would then become a projection of one’s own Being-towards-oneself ‘into something else’. The Other would be a duplicate of the self (Heidegger, 1962: 124).

This entwinement between Being and the other has the same crucial role in Foucault’s treatment of care. Indeed, this is quite obvious from an etymological point of view, since the original word that Foucault reckons to be care is ‘*epimeleia*’, whose part of it—‘*mathesis*’—could be identical with the relationship to other, framed through the lens of teaching-learning. For Foucault, an existence of the other serves as a point of reflection that reconfirms the

place, as well as the character, of the self. Like Heidegger's philosophy that attributes to the Being a constitutive role of the other, Foucault's notion of care of the self could not be separated from the other, inasmuch as the other is a mark of distance in establishing some certain degree of relationship that, in turn, configures the form of the self. He admitted this point clearly in his interview that took place on January 20, 1984, when he stated that the care of the self implied a relationship to the other to the extent that:

in order to really care for oneself, one must listen to the teachings of the master. One needs a guide, a counsellor, a friend—someone who will tell you the truth. Thus, the problem of relationship with others is present all along the development of care for the self (Foucault, 1988b: 7).

This passage captures very well how important the other is in Foucault's notion of care of the self. According to Foucault, it would not be possible to think about the self without the relation to the other. In order to activate the care of the self, one needs to activate the care of other, by admitting the distance which one has from the other, whose presence could remind one to realize what one is not, and hence affirm what one is. "The one who cares for self, to the point of knowing exactly what are his duties as head of household, as husband or father, will find that he has relationship with his wife and children which are as they should be", he said (Foucault, 1988b: 9). Hence, it could be said that if care of the self is the form of action, or the modalities, to activate a critical experience in countering the operation of power, this action is in no way accomplished without an ontological basis that advertises the role of other who—by its presence—appears as the point providing a relationally condensing mark that one could take to identify oneself. But, what sort of relationship to the other does one needs to entail the care of one self? How could that relationship offer Foucault the way to disrupt the operation of power?

At this point, it is worthwhile to notice that while having a common interest in emphasizing the ontological relationship with the other, Foucault's picture of such

relationship seems to be different from Heidegger's. For Heidegger, the pattern of the relationship between Being and the other is somewhat contentious. He describes this point by bringing out the double characters playing beneath the relationship between Being and the other. That is, despite serving as an ontological basis, the relationship to the other also has a tendency to make the Being fall prey of itself, through the mode that Heidegger calls 'the they', or '*das man*'. As Heidegger explains, the they is the mode of Being-with when Being is taken over by the other, depriving it from an ontological attunement (Heidegger, 1962: 126-128). This means that by being subsumed into the other, Being not only loses the knowledge of itself but also loses the freedom to determine its existence. Once one's authentic mode of existence is dissolved into the kind of being part within the other, one is turned into parts of the they, who are led to live in the mode of indifference, making one incapable of attuning one's ontological status of being. "Everyone is the other, and no one is himself—The 'they' which supplies the answer to the question of the "who" of everyday Dasein, is the "nobody" to whom every Dasein has already surrendered itself in Being-among-one-other", Heidegger said (Heidegger, 1962: 129).

Viewed from this perspective, it is clear that even though Heidegger sheds light on the significance of the other, this other still has nothing to do with the ontological moment when the Being attunes itself authentically. Instead, such other is situated merely as the background of that moment. None of this, however, may seem to have anything to do with Foucault's picture on the relationship between the self and the other. In Foucault's case, the other does not appear as the background of care of the self; it relates directly to the process by which the self is cared. Here, in order to understand how Foucault differs from Heidegger, we need to be reminded that while the latter takes an interest in comprehending the ontological condition of being, the former aims at finding a proper manner to critique the power operating throughout political society. Thus, it is impossible for Foucault to disrate the other into the

background, like Heidegger does, because an existence of power, from Foucault's point of view, presupposes an existence of the relationship to the other, in the sense that it, as explicated through the framework of governmentality, is the form of asymmetrical relationship, whose existence would not be possible without the role of the other (Foucault, 1988b: 11-12). Leaving the other untouched, then, means nothing but to close off the operation of power that he would like to encounter. Thus, in accordance with Foucault's treatment of care of the self, one must not let the other slipping from sight, for if one loses sight of the other, one will not only lose sight of oneself, but also lose sight of the operation of power that one was thrown into.

Given the dissimilarity that Foucault's treatment of the other has with Heidegger's, it becomes clear how Foucault uses the notion of care of the self to modify some features of his philosophy in completing the critical mission against power. In contrast to Heidegger, who tends to be obsessed with the way of keeping Being from its being subsumed into the other, Foucault approaches care of the self as the way of constituting a symmetrical relationship, where one could govern and determine oneself through the way one associates with the other. Care of the self, thus, could be said to be the framework that allows freedom to be actualized, since it disrupts an asymmetrical relationship generated by the operation of power (Foucault, 1988b: 3-5). In this place, we can see how Foucault advances his insight of freedom by transcending Heidegger's framework. It follows that while Heidegger's treatment of freedom, as the un-comprehended disclosedness of being, provides Foucault—as I portrayed in the previous chapter—with the way to regard freedom as the un-comprehended state of relationship that power is unable to exhaust, Foucault also furthers this freedom to the point that it is not just the existential condition, but also the form of action that pushes the operation of power into a crisis situation.

Understood in this way, it is hardly surprising that Foucault's dissimilarity with Heidegger in treating the other is nothing less than his attempt to surpass Heidegger. The other, in this place, is not only the main component of care of the self, but also the methodological vehicle that Foucault could drive to shift the locus of critical performance from an internal experience to some certain form of action, which could be amplified to be the guideline for breaking down the operation of power. In other words, apart from the role in triggering the care of the self, Foucault's account of the other also draws a route for an advance of truth working behind his critical manner from something belonging to the experience of subjectivity, to the action that confirms such experience concretely. Foucault calls this action "truth-telling". As he stated in his last Collège de France lecture on 1 February 1984 that truth-telling is the form of action allowed to take place by a presence of the other, as follows:

In ancient culture, and therefore well before Christianity, telling the truth about oneself was an activity involving several people, an activity with other people, and even more precisely an activity with one other person, a practice for two. And it was this other person who is present, and necessarily present in the practice of telling the truth about oneself, which caught and held my attention (Foucault, 2011: 5).

According to Foucault, this other—along with its relation to the self—plays a key function in ascertaining the event or the dramatic scene, where the truth-telling could be realized. Without the other, otherwise stated, it would not be possible for Foucault to let the truth-telling take place, insofar as the other could produce the condition of the type of action, by which those who speak the truth could explicate themselves, as well as manifestly representing their truth. But, what is the feature of this condition? How could this condition be served to formulate the character of truth-telling? Here it is significant to suggest that although Foucault had put forward the notion of truth-telling in his lecture course in 1982,



he had not offered the full answer to these questions until the lecture course in 1983, where he decided to take on the genealogy of truth-telling in Ancient Greek horizon

What was the main characteristic of truth-telling, before being treated to be the modality of philosophical practices, actually used in Ancient Greek context? What was the difference of truth-telling before its being philosophized? And how did this truth-telling come to be regard as the crux of the philosophical way of life that Foucault seeks to advocate?

### **Concluding Remarks**

In his lecture at Collège de France on 13 January 1983, Michel Foucault, during introducing truth-telling as the theme of the lecture in that year, mentioned the scene where a philosopher displayed truth-telling in countering power. Using evidence written by Plutarch, the famous Roman biographer and writer who lived in the first century AD, the scene was about the encounter between Plato and Dionysus, the tyranny of Syracuse, a powerful city-state located on the island of Sicily, during the classical Greece period. As Plutarch depicted, Plato was the close friend and teacher of Dion, one of the most influential politicians in Syracuse, who commended his teacher and friend to the point of arranging the meeting between Plato and Dionysus, with a hope that the former would impress and convince the latter to rule the city according to the philosophical principle (Plutarch, 1961: 959).

However, things did not turn out the way that Dion wished. Not only did Dionysus disagree with Plato's lesson, he was also displeased when Plato proposed an idea that the life of the just man was happy, and the life of the unjust man was unhappy, for it might be implied to criticize him as an unjust man. Filled with anger and exasperation, Dionysus finally asked Plato for his motive in coming to Sicily, and got the answer from Plato that the

reason for him to come to Sicily was because he wanted to seek out a virtuous man. This answer was provocative, considering that the question not only asked Plato's intention in coming to Sicily, but also dared him to confirm the connotation of what he had proposed, namely, the proposition that Dionysius was unjust. In this sense, to answer Dionysius's question, Plato did not just explain his intention in coming to Sicily; he also demonstrated his courage by telling what he thought to the tyrant, who could make his life miserable. What was important was then not the content of philosophy that Plato proposed, but rather his action in confirming what he proposed, an action called truth-telling.

This comes as no surprise why this scene impressed Foucault so much. As he pointed out in his lecture, the answer that Plato gave to Dionysius was far from a simple way of responding to the question asked, because it was indeed an act of critique that the former aimed at the latter. "When Plato answers Dionysius that he has come to Sicily in search of a good man, implying that he has not found one, it is clear that this involves some kind of challenge, irony, insult, or criticism", Foucault pinpointed (Foucault, 2010: 54). Dionysius's question, in this respect, should then be viewed as nothing rather than the condition pushing Plato into a dilemma between speaking what he truly thought, which might put his own life at risk, or letting himself be treated as the object of government, by answering correspondingly to what the tyrant wanted to hear. By telling what he truly thought to Dionysius, Plato could confirm himself as a truth-teller, not because of the truth of what he thought, but because of his act of telling that made him true to himself. Truth-telling, as Foucault concluded from this scene, "is to be situated in what binds the speaker to the fact that what he says is the truth, and to the consequences which follow from the fact that he has told the truth" (Foucault, 2010: 56).

However, although Plato's action, in Plutarch's writing, was the scene showing how truth-telling could be used to disrupt power, his own description of truth-telling demonstrated

an opposite side. As Foucault underlined in his lecture on 9 February 1983, Plato tended to regard the practice of truth-telling in his magnum opus, *Republic*, as the vice of the democratic constitution, in which individual freedom occupied a highest rank of values at the cost of the unity of political order. “Parresia and the freedom to do as one likes are far from bring the condition for the emergence of the common opinion; in the parresia and eleutheria that characterize democracy constituted in this way, each has, so to speak, his own little state: he says what he likes and does as he likes for himself”, Foucault commented (Foucault, 2010: 199). This could be implied that, for Foucault, despite having a capability to perform it, as part of his philosophical practice, Plato would denounced truth-telling if it was used as the political practice in democratic regime. It comes to signify that before being placed at the heart of his philosophical practices, truth-telling had the crucial role in Athenian democracy, the role that was absolutely denied by Plato.

But, what was the form of truth-telling in the democratic Athens? To what extent did truth-telling play a crucial role in Athenian politics? Why was it denounced by Plato? How was his truth-telling different from democratic truth-telling? And how does it come to relate with Foucault’s application of truth-telling in his critical philosophy against power?

## Chapter Six

### **Re-examining Truth in Politics: Michel Foucault's Elaboration of Truth-Telling in Ancient Greek Politics**

#### **Truth and its Conflict with Politics**

In 1990, the journal of Social Research published an article, extracted from Hannah Arendt's lecture given in 1954, entitled "Philosophy and Politics". As the title suggests, the article accounts a relationship between philosophy and politics. However, in spite of displaying the extent to which philosophy could be posited in a friendly relationship with politics, the article restates the unbridgeable gap posited between them, by casting a spotlight on the case of Socrates, whose philosophic life provoked Athenian citizens to the point that they decided to execute him (Arendt, 1990: 73).

As Arendt explained further, the main conflict between philosophy and politics comes from the distinction between truth and opinion. This could be described as, while truth was set to be the aim of philosophical activity, it also made philosophy hostile to politics, to the extent that it contained a tyrannical character incompatible to the political realm, whose essence—in Arendt's aspect—was '*doxa*', or 'opinion' (Arendt, 1990: 73- 80). What killed Socrates, according to Arendt, was then nothing but his endeavor to harmonize truth with opinion. Socrates, as Arendt remarked, "wanted to help others give birth to what they themselves thought anyhow, to find the truth in their *doxa*" (Arendt, 1990: 81). In this sense, the Athenian's condemnation of Socrates means nothing for Arendt except the failure of

Socrates's project to make politics truthful, the failure of which not only confirms the incongruous relationship between politics and philosophy, but also reasserts the essence of politics as the realm of opinion handled by rhetoric, not by truth.

To be sure, Arendt's interpretation of the case of Socrates makes a lot of contributions toward understanding the role of Socrates in the Athenian political context, as well as for approaching the (non-) relationship between politics and philosophy.<sup>1</sup> However, this does not mean that we can appreciate her interpretation in respect of the historical factuality, since it is inspired by the temporal contexts of Arendt herself. As Margaret Canovan notices, what concerns Arendt in her account of Socrates relies less on the historical context of Athens in Socrates' era, than on her own political context, which has many things to do with the rise of Nazism and, especially, the standpoint of her teacher, Martin Heidegger, in regard to that rise (Canovan, 1992: 253-256). This becomes clearer when we note that Arendt considers Heidegger's political mistake in supporting Hitler as being the repetition of the error of a philosopher, who seeks to realize a society in which he could peacefully practice his philosophical activity, by turning to tyrannical regimes (Arendt, 2018: 430).<sup>2</sup> Concerning this, it could be said that Arendt's argument on the opposition between truth and politics indicates nothing more than her motive for criticizing Heidegger. This surely leads us to question the validity of her claim: Was truth really opposite to politics in the context of Athenian democracy? Did this politics concern only the presentation of opinions, and hence have nothing to do with truth?

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<sup>1</sup> For the works that interpret Socrates' philosophical project by following Arendt's insight, see Euben (1997), Villa (2001), and for the works that seem to follow Arendt in accounting for the tension between philosophy and politics, see Wolin (2004)

<sup>2</sup> For the relationship between Arendt and Heidegger, see Villa (1999).

This point has something to do with my understanding of Foucault as presented in this chapter. Contrary to Arendt, Foucault does not regard politics as the realm of opinion devoid of truth. Rather, by commenting on the feature of truth-telling in ancient Greek political practice, he pinpoints the attachment of truth and politics to the extent that the former plays a crucial role in gaining power of the latter. As I argued in the previous chapters, truth-telling is the form of practice Foucault seeks to ascertain from his reading of ancient philosophical corpus, so as to locate it to be the guideline for his critical philosophy against power. However, by his genealogical virtue, it is impossible for him to neglect that before being regarded as a philosophical practice, truth-telling was seen as the main practice for Athenian citizens, who wished to achieve an office to rule their city. This could thus be implied that unlike Arendt who portrays a separation of truth and politics, what Foucault underlines in his treatment of truth-telling is to confirm the role of truth, as the main political practice in the ancient Greek horizon. But to what extent was truth-telling the political practice in the ancient Greco world? What is the relationship between truth and politics reflected from the practice of truth-telling? And how was this truth-telling turned from a main political practice to being a philosophical one?

This chapter aims to tackle these above questions. Its structure, apart from the introduction and conclusion, consists of two parts. The first part deals with Foucault's commenting on the feature of truth-telling in the Athenian democratic regime. This part concerns how truth-telling generated the condition allowing those who practiced it to gain power in ruling the city. It means that, according to Foucault, truth is part and parcel of the way to acquire the authority in Athenian politics. Nevertheless, I also show in this part how the practice of truth-telling was replaced by the rise of rhetoric, which transformed the kernel of politics from the courageous act of telling the truth, to the techniques of controlling the audience's sentiment. These had consequences in remodeling truth-telling to be the way a

philosopher could engage in politics, as the private counselor of the king, in the case of Plato, which I explain in the second part. In this second part, truth-telling is no longer treated by Foucault as the practice of attaining power, since the political setting in Plato's case was not democratic, but monarchical. For Foucault, the aim of Plato's truth-telling is not to achieve power to rule the city, but to attain the soul of the prince, or the ruler. Thus, due to Plato's case, we can see how Foucault shifts the character of truth-telling from the action of gaining political authority, to the philosophical practice whose primary concern is not power, but the self.

### **Speaking Truth for Power: Truth-Telling as Political Practice in Democratic Athens**

Setting truth-telling to be something relating to Athenian democracy does not make Foucault's point ground-breaking. Scholars in the area of ancient philosophy, such as Arlene Saxonhouse or Josiah Ober, did not fail to recognize the affiliation between truth-telling and democracy (Saxonhouse, 2006: 94; Ober, 1989: 295-296). This point is not hard to understand, provided that the Greek word for 'truth-telling'—'*parrhesia*'—was regarded by Athenian citizens, at that time, as the freedom of speech, which was etymologically connected with the word '*isegoria*', or the equal entitlement to make a public speech, that served as the heart of democratic Athens (Raaflaub, 2013). George Grote, one of the most prominent English historians of ancient Greece, once presented that all Athenian citizens were eligible to make a public address during the assembly when hearing something they felt was wrong (cited in Saxonhouse, 2006: 90-91). Similarly, Paul Cartledge, another scholar of Grecian history, pinpoints that both *parrhesia* and *isegoria*—although they are slightly different to each other in terms of scope—occupy the same semantic space in denoting freedom of speech (Cartledge, 2016: 129).

However, for Foucault, the link connecting truth-telling with democracy does not lie in the interrelationship between parrhesia and isegoria. Despite being served as a necessary condition, isegoria was insufficient to be the grounds that made truth-telling a democratic practice in Athens. Some scholars, like Saxonhouse, might discern truth-telling from isegoria, by underpinning its quality in promoting the moral standards of citizens (Saxonhouse, 2006: 95-97). Yet, if truth-telling concerns moral quality, this quality—according to Foucault—could be nothing but a courageous activity to make a conflict with others for acquiring *dunasteia*, or power, in a political game, framed through the agonistic structure of a democratic regime. Foucault manifested this point in the lecture at Collège de France on 2 February 1983, where he viewed truth-telling not in terms of the institutional framework, as in the case of isegoria, but in terms of the dynamic movement enmeshed within the political game of democratic practice (Foucault, 2010: 155-158). Truth-telling, seen from this view, was nothing but the ethical condition of democratic politics. It concerned nothing other than the courage to take the attendant risk of jousting with others for taking power to direct the city.

It could therefore be perceived that Foucault does not characterize the political features of democratic Athens through a constitutional or legal framework. Rather, with the notion of truth-telling he identifies such a feature as a game of power, which regulates some certain agonistic relationship amongst citizens. This also points to the interrelationship between politics and ethics in Foucault's thoughts, given that his conception of politics, as the game of power, presupposes a dangerous situation that prompts the citizens with courage to play it. Democracy, according to Foucault, cannot be devoid of ethical force; it must have that force so as to make its political character possible (Foucault, 2010: 158-159). In addition, underlying the interrelationship between politics and ethics also brings out the element of inequality in democratic Athens. This is the case if we consider that while the basic principle



of Athenian democratic participation was equality, the condition for its political ascendancy depended on the moral inequality of citizens, realized through the practice of truth-telling. The more one spoke what one truly thought, the more one could display one's moral supremacy, which would enable one to achieve power in ruling the city. "In the democratic game set up by the *politeia*, which gives everyone the right to speak, someone comes on the scene to exercise his ascendancy, which is the ascendancy he exercises in speech and in action", Foucault said (Foucault, 2010: 175).

But how could the one who showed his moral supremacy gain power in the political game of democratic Athens? To what extent did the practice of truth-telling attach to the exercise of power in this city? At this point, it is crucial to note that Foucault, as far as I know, does not make it clear how to cope with these questions. However, this does not mean that we cannot postulate from his lectures the way to tackle it. As argued in his thought-provoking article, Torben Dyrberg suggests that Foucault's treatment of truth-telling could give us a glimpse of political authority, if we pay attention to the parrhesiastic pact, as the result when one speaks what one truly thinks. As Foucault explained in his lecture on 12 January 1983, when one spoke what one truly thought, one was making a pact with oneself, in such a way that one not only asserted the truthfulness of one's own thought, but also manifested that act of assertion in front of others (Foucault, 2010: 64-65). This point is very important for Dyrberg to the extent that it shows how the pact is not confined only to the self of the truth-teller, since it reveals the seriousness of truth-teller, which earns him trustworthiness as a quality he could endorse to gain credibility from other citizens. "The ethical imperative of the parrhesiastic pact", as Dyrberg underscored, "implies willingness, on the part of the citizen, to ascertain his or her seriousness in speaking on behalf of or as a critic of political authorities..." (Dyrberg, 2016: 282). In other word, if truth-telling is the political practice, whose purpose is to exhibit the moral quality of some political candidates,

the ground on which it could link to political authority might be nothing rather than the trustworthiness, as the ethical hallmark for those who are eligible to be the leader.

Here, it is worth noting that together with proposing the feature of authority, Dyrberg's account of Foucault's treatment of truth-telling also advocates the ethical orientation that sets up an autonomous realm of politics in the democratic regime. According to him, due to its function in conditioning the presentation of trustworthiness, as an effect of truth-telling, the parrhesiastic pact could bind truth-tellers with the common interest of the political community, urging their following citizens to be responsible to their community by challenging the political rulers, when those rulers do not govern properly (Dyrberg, 2016: 281-282). This means that if authority is something achieved by the practice of truth-telling, it is inseparable from the autonomous realm of politics, as a realm where citizens could stop their obedience to the current ruler and present their own public political reasoning in the interests of their community.

This point makes Dyrberg's account, in my perspective, problematic. Certainly, his account of authority as trustworthiness could fill the gap that Foucault leaves unsolved. Yet, I do not think that the engagement of this authority within the autonomy of a political realm is the case for Foucault, since he once rejected the separation of politics to be an autonomous realm irreducible to the dynamic of power. The problems of power, as Foucault commented in his lecture on 2 February 1983, "are political problem in the strict sense, and nothing seems more dangerous than that much vaunted shift from politics (*la politique*) to the political (*le politique*), which in many contemporary analysis seem to me to have the effect of masking the specific problem and set of problems of politics, of *dunasteia*, of the practice of the political game, and of the political game as a field of experience with its rule and normativity, of the political game as experience inasmuch as it is indexed to truth-telling and involves a certain relationship to oneself and to others for its players" (Foucault, 2010: 159).

Hence, if trustworthiness is the ground that makes truth-telling the practice for attaining power in Athenian politics, it should not be viewed as something engrained within the use of reason in the autonomous realm of politics. Rather, it should be seen as the concretization of the moral excellence of those who take a courageous action, by telling what they truly think. This certainly links to the agonistic character of the Athenian democratic structure insofar as it displays a relationship amongst democratic citizens, each of whom could win against the other, in acquiring a superior position in the city (Foucault, 2010: 156). Trustworthiness, then, could only take shape in the demonstration of courage materialized through the act of truth-telling in quarrelling with the other about taking charge of the city. From this point of view, Foucault's treatment of truth-telling should not be approached through a political framework of liberalism, where citizens could use their reason freely. It, on the contrary, must be posed as part and parcel of the game, whose essence is the dynamics of power, which drives any citizens, who want to take a superior position in the city, to have courage, as an ethical command, in battling against others (Foucault, 2010: 159).

Confirming the political feature of Foucault's notion of democratic truth-telling in Athens, as the dynamic of power, could in turn help to unearth the condition, under which the truth-telling is taking place. This condition is nothing but the emergence of risk, endowed through the figure of the others. As elaborated in the previous chapter, the key function that makes Foucault's notion of truth-telling possible is an existence of others. Yet, it should be stressed that these others will not perform that function unless their existence could create an atmosphere of risk. Truth-telling is, as Foucault said, "a way of telling the truth that lays open to a risk by the very fact that one tells the truth" (Foucault, 2010: 66). Risk, as well as the courage to take the risk, is then the main condition without which the performance of others, in producing the condition of truth-telling, would be impossible.

What gives democratic Athens the condition of the truth-telling, seen from Foucault's aspect, could therefore be nothing less than the dynamic of power, as its political feature. Since power in this democracy was structured through the dynamic of agonistic encounters by which no one, who would like to gain the superior position, could be exempt from the challenge of others, there was no safe place for citizens who wanted to play the political game, for they could be challenged by their fellow citizens at any time. Democracy, in this sense, could be described as a truth-regime, whose constitutive component was nothing but the risk; it could disperse risk, as it could disperse power and truth. Just like every democratic citizen who was eligible to take power, they could at the same time be placed within a risky situation, where they had an opportunity to take a courageous action by speaking their truth, so as to overcome the challenge made by others. To repeat: if the link that connected politics with truth-telling in Athenian politics was the political feature of democratic regimes, this feature is nothing other than an agonistic relationship, which renders any citizens to be seen as threats to each other.

Shedding light on the significance of the agonistic structure for designating the place of risk, through the figure of others, could also be fruitful to display Foucault's thoughts on the historical background of the deterioration of democratic truth-telling in Athens. This deterioration comes from the internal contradiction of democracy, which could be seen through the arising of what Foucault calls 'false truth-telling', or 'bad *parresia*'. According to Foucault, false truth-telling is the discourse that emerges from a flatterer, who, by enjoying the citizen's right to make public speeches for ascendancy over others, wants to secure his own safety and prosperity by pleasing his audience, instead of having the courage to explain what he truly thinks (Foucault, 2010: 302). Historically, the false truth-telling emerged at the turn of 500 to 400 BC, when Athenian citizens were intoxicated with the illusion of their supreme imperium, making them intolerant of anyone who criticized their popular ambition.

This means that while democracy could ensure the right of citizens to speak their truth, such democracy could paradoxically produce the conditions that led truth-tellers into trouble, especially when the truth spoken by them tended to disturb the opinion of the majority. For Foucault, “if telling the truth in *parresia* is a risk, if there really is danger in speaking the truth before the people or the sovereign, if the people and the sovereign are unable to moderate themselves sufficiently not to frighten those who wish to tell the truth, if they become excessively angry and are incapable of moderation towards *parrhesiasts* who appear before them, then everyone will keep quiet because everyone will be afraid” (Foucault, 2010: 302).

The false truth-telling could thus be understood as nothing but a bad imitation of truth-telling, that is, the act of speaking something untrue disguised as the truth. For those who performed the false truth-telling, as Foucault explained, what was said was by no means the truth, thus it was just the pretense of telling the truth; there was the pretense of telling the truth to the audience, but the person who spoke it knew very well that what he said was not true (Foucault, 2010: 302). Concerning this, it comes as no surprise that the political feature of democratic Athens was transformed from the game of power operated by the courageous act of speaking truth, to the game of persuasion by using a prepared speech along with the speaker’s good performance. It follows that, thanks to the rising of false truth-telling, which sealed off the conflicts with others, the main technique that each citizen could employ in political competition was no longer the act of telling the truth, but rather the act of nourishing an audience’s sentiments, so as to make them compliant with what these citizens wanted, the act which could be described as the art of speaking, or rhetoric. Truth-telling could then not be said to be the main political practice of democratic Athens. It lost its place as an act concerning public matters.

By the same token, through the spreading of rhetoric, as the new technique of political practice, the risk and the courage to take the risk were considered as an outdated political

value. As soon as rhetoric came to dominate the way citizens delivered their public speaking, politics was turned into a matter of mass-deceiving, paving the way for the lie to take place at its heart. This definitely triggered the suspicions of many philosophers and intellectuals, at that time, to view rhetoric as a dangerous technique for their democratic regime. As Ober shows in his work, due to its bad effect on Athens's political culture, rhetoric remained suspicious to many intellectuals at that time (Ober, 1989: 165-177). Saxonhouse, in a similar trait, suggests that such rhetorical techniques endangered the moral quality of Athenian citizens to the point at which they started thinking about their own interests in taking power through the skill of lying, rather than thinking about the benefits for the whole society (Saxonhouse, 2006: 91-92).

However, while these scholars tend to focus on how rhetoric can have a detrimental effect on democracy, Foucault seems to pay attention to how this effect entails a transformation of truth-telling, both in term of its scope and in term of its constitutive regime. This implies that beside neutralizing truth-telling from the democratic regime, the rise of rhetoric also paves the way to the new terrain in which truth-telling could be performed. Among people, whose writing could give Foucault an elaboration of this point, no one was more discerning than Plato.

### **Speaking Truth to Power: Plato's Truth-Telling and the Practice of Care of the Self**

Foucault started mentioning Plato's treatment of truth-telling in his lecture at Collège de France on 9 February, 1983. For him, what Plato tried to do was to reassert the place of truth in politics. This might lead us to group Foucault with Arendt, who considers Plato as a philosopher, whose mission was to reintroduce truth in the realm of politics (Arendt, 1990: 94-96). However, in contrast to Arendt, who sees nothing in Plato's political project except

the inclination to incorporate truth into the political realm without regard for the nature of politics itself, Foucault tends to view such a project as the feedback of the detachment of truth from the Athenian democratic regime. This comes to term with the famous question on the ideal city, when he underlines how Plato, with the displacement of truth from Athenian democratic politics, posed the question of the regime in which truth could be indexed properly with the life of its citizens (Foucault, 2010:195-196). In other word, if the rise of rhetoric causes the displacement of truth from the kernel of political activity, as stated in the above part, it could also give rise to the question that Plato, from Foucault's aspect, sought to resolve: the question of the regime where truth could regain its function in politics.

This is the reason why Plato's political preference was not the democratic regime, rather the regime of monarchy. Since Athenian democracy ceased to correspond with truth, it was quite clear that Plato chose monarchy to be the most appropriate regime, where truth could express its function in politics. Here, again, we could conceive the difference between Foucault and Arendt in their consideration of Plato's thought. For Arendt, Plato's preference for the monarchical regime reflects nothing more than the philosopher's desire to suppress any political activities (Arendt, 1990: 96-103). Yet, for Foucault, this preference has nothing to do with that desire, since the issue here is the shift of political structure, with which the dynamic of power could take place. This shift was explained considerably, in his lecture at Collège de France on 23 February 1983, when he indicated the political transformation at that time, by remarking how the city-state, as the dominant form of political unit in the Hellenic world, could no longer respond to the expansion of power, both in terms of space and in terms of population, giving birth to new political units called empires and monarchies (Foucault, 2010: 289-290).

In this respect, the political stage on which the truth-telling could perform, in Plato's case, was no longer the assembly, or the people's court, since the locus of power was moved

from the citizens to the monarch. It follows that, in contrast to Athenian democracy where every citizen was eligible to risk their life in rallying for the political ascendancy, the dynamic of power was not structured in the agonistic way, for it was in the prince's court where one could participate, not by challenging fellow citizens for ascendancy over others, but by giving advice to the prince, who could at any time take the life of the counsel who gave this advice. Politics, then, was no longer a game for every citizen; rather, it was a game preserved for counselors who dared to bind the truth with advice given to the prince, regardless of the risk they had to accept in giving that advice (Foucault, 2010: 219).

Nevertheless, it should be suggested that this shift of political structure is inseparable from Plato's philosophical project related to his treatment of truth-telling. As Foucault discussed in his lecture at Collège de France on 9 February 1983, what motivated Plato in treating the practice of truth-telling was nothing but the need of the philosopher to realize his philosophical character through its action. Plato's philosophy, as Foucault remarked, then lied in the harmony of '*logos*' and '*ergon*', or 'thought' and 'actions'. "If it is true that philosophy is not merely the apprenticeship of a knowledge but should also be a mode of life, a way of being, a practical relationship to oneself through which one elaborates oneself and works on oneself, if it is true that philosophy therefore should be *askesis*(*ascesis*), then when the philosopher has to tackle not only the problem of himself but also that of the city, he cannot be satisfied with being merely *logos*, with being merely the person who tells the truth, but must be the person who takes part, who puts his hand to *ergon*", he said (Foucault, 2010: 219).

At this point, it is helpful to underline that what Foucault sees in Plato's works is a concern about the existence of philosophy itself, the existence of which will be confirmed only through an overcoming of the test designated to help philosophy actualize its being. This explains why Plato, according to Foucault, moves his philosophy to the game of politics,



since this game has everything to do with action, or the actualization of logos. This does not mean that Foucault places Plato into the group of philosophers, who want to actualize philosophy through their taking charge of the city. Although Plato's philosophy, as Arendt seems to suggest, might be mistakenly considered as the service of the ruler, his real purpose of bringing the philosophical thought into the field of politics, for Foucault, does not rest on the need to designate the constitution, or any policies regarding the public. On the contrary, this purpose comes from its presumption of politics as the block against which the philosophy could realize its existence (Foucault, 2010: 228-230). Because of its being different from philosophy, politics is a proper point at which the test for philosophy to realize itself must be enacted. In short, philosophy, viewed from the perspective of Foucault's Plato, needs politics insofar as politics is the otherness of philosophy; being the otherness to philosophy could allow politics to be the point that philosophy must face for realizing its being. This is the reason why Foucault carefully repeats that Plato's practice of truth-telling is not the practice of telling the truth to politics, but the practice of telling the truth *in relation* to politics. As he summarized in his lecture at Collège de France on 23 February 1983:

The, if you like, feeble, banal, and general character of Plato's advice to his correspondents...does not demonstrate that Plato was naïve as regards politics. It shows that the relation between philosophy and politics are not to be sought in the possible ability of philosophy to tell the truth about the best way to exercise power. After all, it is for politics itself to know and define the best way of exercising power. It is not for philosophy to tell the truth about this. But philosophy has to tell the truth...not about power, but in relation to power, in contact with, in a sort of vis a vis or intersection with power. It is not for philosophy to tell power what to do, but it has to exist as truth-telling in a certain relation to political action; nothing more, nothing less (Foucault, 2010: 285-286).

Bearing down on this point, it could be understood, as obtained by Foucault, why being the prince's counselor was the crux of Plato's political philosophy. If participating in politics could permit Plato to accomplish his philosophical task, and if the politics in his time

was structured through the encounter between the counselor and the prince, it then is apparent that Plato's main political account could be nothing more than what Foucault calls 'the prince's soul', according to which it is the point at which he aims to acquire, by telling the truth, as a material condition of his advice. This should not lead to a misunderstanding that Plato, as Foucault emphasizes, had an intention of promoting the philosopher as the manipulator, who could influence the prince when making a political decision (Foucault, 2010: 293). On the contrary, what really concerned Plato was the philosophical way of life that the prince should practice, so as to let his soul be examined continually by himself, which would, in turn, enable him to govern his own self, as well as his own city. Foucault remarked as follows:

...from the fact that the person who practices philosophy is also someone who exercises power, and the person who exercises power is also someone who practices philosophy, we cannot at all infer that his knowledge of philosophy will be the law of his action and political decisions. What matters, what is required, is that the subject of political power also be the subject of philosophical activity...Why demand of someone who exercises power that he also practices philosophy if philosophy cannot tell the person who exercises power what he should do? Well. I think the answer to this question lies in this: you can see that what is at issue here is philosophy insofar as it is *philosophiein*. The text says it: Those who govern should also be those who philosophize, who practice philosophy. What, for Plato, is this practice of philosophy? Before all else, essentially and fundamentally, this practice of philosophy is a way for the individual to constitute himself as a subject on a certain mode of being. The mode of being of the philosophical subject should constitute the mode of being of the subject exercising power (Foucault, 2010: 294).

In order to be able to govern the city, the prince must be able to govern his self. And in order to be able to govern his self, he has to practice the philosophic way of life, for this way of life will prescribe him how to keep his soul identical with his own self. In short, Plato's treatment of the relationship between philosophy and politics, as conceived by

Foucault, should not be framed in terms of the coincidence between the philosophical knowledge and political actions, but in terms of the mode of being, in which those who govern the city must learn to care for their own souls. The more they practice philosophy, the more they could care for their own souls, and the more they are capable of governing their city:

If kings must be philosophers it is not so they will be able to ask their philosophical knowledge what they should do in a given set of circumstance. It means that to be able to govern properly one has to have a definite connection with the practice of philosophy; the point of intersection between “governing properly” and “practice philosophy” being occupied by one and the same subject. One and the same subject must, on the one hand, govern properly and, on the other, have a connection with philosophy (Foucault, 2010: 294-295).

Plato’s practice of truth-telling, thus, is nothing rather than the practice that urges the philosophers, as well as their interlocutors or pupils, to care for their soul; it is the practice linking to the act called ‘care of the soul’ (Foucault, 2011: 127-128). In this light, we could see through this Platonic treatment how the truth-telling was modified from the practice of achieving power to the practice of care of the self. In other word, with Plato’s intervention in the practice of truth-telling, truth could keep its place in politics, by being turned to be the practice that takes the self, in spite of power, to be its target.

This might explain why, from many Plato’s dialogues, Foucault pays most attention to “the First Alcibiades”, as it is the dialogue dealing directly with the way Plato thematizes the relationship between the soul and the self-government (Foucault, 2005: 32-39). Briefly speaking, “the First Alcibiades” displays the dialogue between Socrates and Alcibiades, where the former wants to prove his love to the latter, by introducing what he regards as the most precious thing, namely, the knowledge of how to take care of the soul, which will escalate the latter to the point of being a good governor (Plato, 2006). Hence it comes as no

surprise that this dialogue has generally been regarded, by many scholars, as the comprehensive source of Plato's account of the soul (Denyer, 2001; Belfiore, 2012: 31-67; Gordon, 2003; Moore, 2015: 101-135; Renaud and Tarrant, 2016; Ahbel-Rappe, 2018: 69-84). However, what is striking with respect to Foucault's reading of Plato here is the way he treats Plato's notion of the soul with reference to the idea of the subject position, or the soul's subject, rather than the soul as substance.

Foucault described this nicely in his lecture at Collège de France on 13 January 1982. In the lecture, he started the description by stressing on Plato's treatment of the relationship between the soul and the body in such a way that the former was the part that makes use of the latter. The soul was the subject that uses its body, as well as the actions associated with it; it is the use of the body, as something different from what is used. "So, the subject of all bodily instrumental, and linguistic action is the soul; the soul inasmuch as it uses language, tools, and the body", Foucault remarked (Foucault, 2005: 55). However, this does not mean that Foucault, by identifying the soul as the subject that uses the body, was employing the relationship between the soul and the body in an instrumental fashion; the soul was not designated to be something mastering the body, as if the body was its instrument. As Foucault further argued in the lecture, the Greek root of the word 'use'—'*khresthai*'—not only meant 'to use' or 'to utilize', but also denoted the sets of behavior one should follow according to the type of relationship one was posited within (Foucault, 2005: 56). To use, then, could be equated with to have some certain form of behavior in relation to the position one was subjected to. "So you see that when Plato (or Socrates) employs his notion of *khresthai/khresis* in order to identify what this *heauton* is (and what is subject to it) in the expression "taking care of oneself", in actual fact he does not want to designate an instrumental relationship of the soul to the rest of the world or to the body, but rather the subject's singular, transcendent position, as it were, with regard to what surrounds him, to the

object available to him, but also to other people with whom he has a relationship, to his body itself, and finally to himself”, Foucault commented (Foucault, 2005: 56-57).

Plato’s care of the soul, viewed from Foucault’s perspective, has therefore everything to do with the way of living that modifies one to behave carefully within a certain form of relationship that one has. What plays the crucial role in Plato’s notion of the soul, then, is nothing other than the care of the form of relationship within which one is posited. Without such care, it would not be possible for the soul to shine forth. As Foucault elaborates, the soul will be discerned only when one reflects on oneself by looking at the other who acts as the mirror, helping one to see what one is (Foucault, 2005: 69). The soul, thus, plays like a source of vision, permitting one to know oneself through the act of caring for the other, whose soul one has a relationship with, which could render one to reflect and grasp one’s own soul. The more one cares and looks upon the other’s soul, the more one could attain the point at which one’s soul could be cared for by one’s own self. For Foucault, the soul that Plato intends to present is the soul that will only see itself, by focusing its gaze on an element having the same nature with itself, or by turning toward and fixing its gaze on the very source of the soul’s nature (Foucault, 2005: 70).

At this point, it is important to note that while avoiding posing the Platonic manner of the soul in terms of the substance, Foucault sees nothing in it except the reduction of the political game into the metaphysical operation of the soul. This point becomes clear when Foucault underlines the divine status that Plato attributes to the soul. Since the soul is the source of a vision enabling one to have knowledge of oneself, and since this knowledge does not merely concern a particular soul but the nature of the soul itself, it could then suffice that the soul must be the part of wisdom, as the source of the knowledge of all things, which is in itself the divine element (Foucault, 2005: 69-71). The soul is the only part of a human that could put him in contact with the divine. “So, it is by turning round toward the divine that the

soul will be able to grasp itself”, Foucault suggested (Foucault, 2005:70). Considering this, it would not be wrong to say that despite stressing on the way of life that is central to the relationship one could have with others, Plato seems to diminish the importance of that life, as soon as he introduces the divine element into the picture. Plato, according to Foucault, treats the divine as the foundation of the self; there is no self without the divine. “To see oneself one must therefore look at oneself in the divine element: One must know the divine in order to see oneself”, he concluded (Foucault, 2005: 71).

Underlining how Plato shifts his treatment of the soul, from the soul as subject to the soul as the divine, is fruitful to apprehend his manner of truth-telling in a comprehensive account. If Plato’s treatment of truth-telling lies in the care of the prince’s soul, as Foucault points out, it is then inevitable that this modification will entail such practice in the metaphysical direction. In this sense, it could be concluded that the ultimate source guiding the prince to govern his city appropriately is the divine; if the prince needs to care for his soul in order to be a good governor, the crux of the soul that prescribes him how to govern properly could be nothing but the divine. Foucault portrays this nicely as follows:

The soul will be endowed with wisdom (*sophrosune*) as soon as it is in contact with the divine, which it has grasped it and been able to think and know the divine as the source of thought and knowledge. When the soul is endowed with *sophrosune* it will be able to turn back towards the world down here. It will be able to distinguish good from evil, the true from the false. At this point the soul will be able to conduct itself properly, and being able to conduct itself properly it will be able to govern the city...Having comes back down, and supported by knowledge of the self, which is knowledge of the divine, and which is the rule for conducting oneself properly, we now know that we will be able to govern and that whoever has made this movement of ascent and descent will be qualified to govern his city-state (Foucault, 2005: 71).

Bearing this in mind, it becomes apparent why Foucault does not take Plato as his model. Definitely, this does not mean that he does not give credit to Plato for the perpetuation

of the practice of truth-telling, especially the achievement of passing this practice to subsequent traditions, such as the Stoic (Foucault, 2005: 71).<sup>3</sup> Yet, by putting a lot of his labor into the divine dimension of the soul, Plato tends to elevate the truth into a metaphysical level, rather than keeping it within the basis of everyday activities. As Simona Forti notes, Plato's manner in treating the soul, as the divine, makes Foucault reluctant to follow it, because it emphasizes the need of being an object governed by the divine, in spite of the way of living as a free being (Forti, 2014: 206). In this sense, it is not an exaggeration to imply that Plato's modification of truth-telling does belong to the problem that Foucault devotes his last ten years to solving, that is, the problem of power operated through the framework of governmentality.

But if Plato's truth-telling cannot be the model for Foucault's critical philosophy, who could give Foucault a prescription to complete his project? If the philosophical practice that Plato introduces into the practice of truth-telling is not something Foucault would like to pursue, who is the philosopher, whose approach of care of the self can help Foucault to formulate truth-telling in the way of countering power? Who can give him the guideline for ascertaining the way to pose philosophy as something against power?

### **Concluding Remark**

On 22 February 1984, during his lecture at Collège de France, Foucault mentioned one of Plato's dialogues, which was very interesting in comparison to others. This dialogue was named "Laches". The reason he mentioned it was because he saw in this dialogue the direction of truth-telling, which was different from the Platonic account. As he said that while Plato's manner of truth-telling was directed by the metaphysical framework of the soul, "Laches" was the only dialogue that demonstrated truth-telling in the other way (Foucault,

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<sup>3</sup> For a historical account of the Platonic influence on the Stoic tradition, see Brouwer (2014:136-176), Dillon (2019), Boys-Stones (2020:99-122; 2018: 212-287).

2011:125-127). Thus, in opposition to “the First Alcibiades”, where Plato culminated the practice of truth-telling in the metaphysical direction, “Laches”, according to Foucault, was the document giving an account of truth-telling in a less platonic fashion. But what is the main content of “Laches”? To what extent it elucidates the alternative approach of truth-telling?

At the outset, “Laches” was the dialogue thematized on courage and the courageous life. It began with Lysimarchus and Melesias, who were suspicious of the competence of Stesilaus, a teacher of armed combat, to whom they had to send their children to study. Assuming that no one could give better advice to them than a courageous man, they invited Nicias and Laches, two distinguished generals who were famous for their courageous character, to view the performance of Stesilus, so that they could ask those two courageous men whether they should send their children to study with that teacher (Plato, 1989c: 178-180). Yet, in spite of answering in the same direction, Nicias and Laches had a dispute about the worthiness of studying the armed combat. That said, while the former had some positive attitudes to the cognitive value of the armed combat, the latter tended to criticize the studies, to the extent that he saw nothing relating it to real battle (Plato, 1989c: 181d8-184c).

In order to settle the argument, Lysimarchus asked Socrates, who was present there but had kept silent until then, to offer some thoughts regarding that matter. However, rather than settling the dispute, Socrates announced his preference to shift the issue to the fundamental level: the nature of courage, which allowed him to investigate the courage of both Nicias and Laches (Plato, 1989c: 186a3-187b5). This might be the reason why Foucault regards “Laches” to be the only Platonic dialogue, which not only takes on the theme of courage, but also links this theme with the practice of truth-telling, insofar as he pays attention to the role of Socrates in using truth-telling for inspecting the courage of Nicias and Laches. This point becomes clear as soon as Foucault mentions the specific characteristic,



which authorized Socrates to examine Nicias and Laches: the harmony between *logos* and ‘*bios*’, or the harmony between Socrates’ speech and his way of life.

As Foucault presented in his interpretation of “Laches” in the lecture at Collège de France on 7 March 1984, when Socrates asked Nicias and Laches about their courage, he did not ask about their antecedents or teachers, from whom they had learnt how to act in a courageous way. On the contrary, he used his courage to perform the role of a touchstone (*basanos*) in testing, or rubbing against, the way they lived their lives in accordance to the reason they expressed on an everyday basis (Foucault, 2011: 144-145). In this respect, in addition to displaying the way Socrates examined the courage of Nicias and Laches, by inspecting how they lived their lives, “Laches” could also be used to assert the courage of Socrates, who did not separate his life from his speech through the practice of telling what he truly thought, without fear of its consequence. “Socratic *parrhesia* as freedom to say what he likes is marked, authenticated by the sound of Socrates’ life”, Foucault suggested (Foucault, 2011: 148).

What makes Socrates’ life courageous, for Foucault, is nothing but the practice of truth-telling, according to which it entails him to let what he thinks be spoken freely without fear. Courage, in this sense, has nothing to do with a military campaign, since its field of performance is not situated on the battlefield. Instead, it takes the *bios* or the way of life to be the terrain of its manifestation. Laches did not accept the role of Socrates, as his examiner, on the grounds of military experience; he accepted the role of Socrates on the grounds that Socrates’ life was the life of a freeman, who could use the practice of truth-telling to achieve the harmony between his being and his speech (Foucault, 2011: 148). In this manner, truth-telling does not serve as the point triggering one to start a contemplation of the soul, as described in “the First Alcibiades”, since the care to which it relates operates less on the metaphysical level than on the level of the concrete way of life. What really concerns the

truth-telling here is the way of life that links how one acts at home with what one really thinks. Only through the act of truth-telling can life be identical with its own truth.

Truth-telling, thus, is something needing to be testified all the time, for the reason that this truth does not express through the metaphysical domain, but through the moment when one faces the danger of telling others what they are and need, in order to obtain courage (Foucault, 2011: 161). “Telling the truth in the realm of the care of men is to question their mode of life, to put this mode of life to the test and define what there is in it that may be ratified and recognized as good and what on the other hand must be rejected and condemned”, Foucault announced (Foucault, 2011: 149). This means that while Socrates was testing the courage of Nicias and Laches, he was being tested by facing the danger of telling them that they were not as courageous as they think they were. In this case, there was no gap between those who tested and those who were tested. By testing the others, Socrates was performing his practice of truth-telling, which denotes, at the same time, that he was manifesting his courage as well as presenting to others the concrete model of a courageous action that they should follow. This is the reason why, as Foucault does not fail to stress, at the end of “Laches”, after finding out that no one was capable of giving a proper definition of courage, every interlocutors seemed to reach an agreement that what they could do to acquire such courage was to follow the way of life guided by Socrates, that is, the way of taking care of oneself, by listening to one’s truth taking shape in the form of logos, or of the true discourse (Foucault, 2011: 149-153). Socrates, Foucault concluded, “will have to take care of himself by listening to the language of mastery (*maitrise*) that comes from the logos itself” (Foucault, 2011: 152).

Here, it could be said that, in contrast to other Platonic dialogues, which are organized around the theme of ontology of the soul, “Laches” seeks to advocate a style that concretizes truth through the mode that one takes in order to conduct one’s own life. In other word, what

distinguishes “Laches” from Plato’s other works, according to Foucault, is nothing other than its topic which does not concern the soul, as the site of metaphysical reality, but concerns the mode of existence, which, by continually exercising it, could manifest to others how to live in truth, or how to make truth in life (Foucault, 2011: 161-163).

Based on this, it becomes apparent how Foucault draws the account of philosophical truth-telling in an anti-platonic manner. By dwelling on the harmony of truth and life portrayed in “Laches”, as the anti-platonic platonic dialogue, we could pinpoint the Socratic character of truth-telling irreducible to the platonic account of the soul. This character is indispensable to Socrates’ philosophical way of life. It might also mean that if Plato’s manner of truth-telling could not give the direction, in which Foucault aims to pursue in his manner of truth-telling, Socrates’ philosophical way of life, as the life of truth-teller, might be his choice. That is to say, if the practice of truth-telling that Foucault seeks to apply in his philosophical project against power is framed through the precept of care of the self, it could not be perceived in the works of Plato that considers self as the soul. On the contrary, this truth-telling must be understood through the philosophical life of Socrates, which is not exhausted in Plato’s metaphysical account. But what is Socrates’ philosophic life, from which Foucault’s manner of truth-telling can pursue? What is the ground of this life? If the type of truth-telling that Foucault would like to promote is the act of concretizing freedom, to what extent does Socrates’ life provide a sense of freedom and has acted as the grounds for Foucault’s philosophy of critique? How can it be used as the crux of his mission against power?

## Chapter Seven

### **Michel Foucault's Politics of the Philosopher: Socrates' Truth-Telling, the Concretization of Freedom, and Its True Heir**

#### **Foucault's First Meeting with Socrates**

On 27 May 1978, during the discussion after finishing the lecture on the critique and its relationship to the reorientation of his use of genealogy, Foucault was questioned by an anonymous audience as to whether there was a similarity between the manner of his critical philosophy and Socrates' philosophical method, which regained popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe. This question was striking, given that Foucault's manner of critical philosophy depended mainly on its interrelationship with the operation of power, whose history—viewed through the framework of governmentality—could be traced back to its emergence in the sixteenth century. Thus, Foucault responded to that question by admitting that Socrates' philosophy could be read as another part of his critical philosophy, for he thought that such popularity was the result of the flourishing of the counterpart of power, or governmentality (Foucault, 1997b: 73-74). His manner of critical philosophy could then be viewed as an attempt to recover some certain form of philosophy embodied within the form of Socrates' life. To critique, or to counter the operation of power, means to reincarnate Socrates' philosophy in a modern horizon. Hence, Foucault further commented:

It seems to me that fundamentally when one investigates Socrates like that...it is not at all a matter of resorting to anachronism and of projecting the 18th century on the 5th ... But this question of the Aufklärung which is, I think, quite fundamental for Western philosophy since Kant, I wonder if it is not a question which somehow scans all possible history down to the radical origins of philosophy. In this light, the trial of Socrates can, I think, be investigated in a valid manner, without any anachronism, but

starting with a problem which is and which was, in any case, perceived by Kant as the problem of the *Aufklärung* (Foucault, 1997b: 74).

Definitely, there is no evidence to show that Foucault at that time had an intention to portray his manner of critical philosophy through the philosophical style of Socrates. However, this passage seems to give us a hint of what would happen after the year of that lecture, namely, Foucault's endorsement of temporal reflection, understood as part of the problem of enlightenment, to be the condition enabling him to rethink the origins of philosophy in a radical way. Bearing this in mind, it could be said that Foucault's attention to Socrates, in his last two years, is nothing except the realization of the vision he had in 1978. This vision, it follows, is fulfilled when he turns his attention to the practice of truth-telling enmeshed within the philosophical life of Socrates. As explained in chapter six, truth-telling had originally been the political practice, whose extent was to display the moral supremacy of the Athenian democratic leaders, until the rise of rhetoric, which paved the way for Plato's modification that shifted its direction from the practice of attaining power, to the practice determined by the framework of care of the self. However, as I argued, Foucault does not regard this modification as the starting point of truth-telling that he seeks to advocate. Instead, he seems to follow the line of truth-telling, which was expressed in the philosophical life of Socrates. This means that if truth-telling is the form of action Foucault would like to endorse in his philosophical project against power, this act is nothing less than the philosophical practice of Socrates, whose task was to actualize freedom, as the ground to disrupt the operation of power.

But what is the main feature of truth-telling practiced by Socrates? How does Socrates derive it? How could this practice of truth-telling help Socrates to encountering power? How could Socrates' way of life offer Foucault the way to concretize freedom, as something countering power? In this chapter, I answer these questions by portraying how

Foucault approaches Socrates to be the philosopher who could make his life philosophically, by activating the act of truth-telling. The main character of Socrates, as Foucault underscores, is then the courageous man, who could actualize his freedom in his concrete everyday living. This had consequence in not only shedding light on the entwinement of truth, freedom, and the philosophical life, but also generates a new understanding of politics, which is nothing but the encountering of power. Henceforth, this chapter, besides introduction and conclusion, is structured in three parts. The first part deals with Foucault's analysis of Socrates' manner of truth-telling. By emphasizing Foucault's comments on the performance of Socrates, in "The Apology of Socrates", I draw out the main feature, as well as the condition, under which Socrates developed his manner of truth-telling. I argue in this part that by coping with how Socrates derived his account of truth-telling Foucault could expand the space of politics from something caught within an arrangement of public institutions, to the way each citizen concretely spends their everyday life. This comes to reflect that politics, for Foucault, is not just about the realm of public decision-making, but about the operation, or the encounter, of power that works to make citizens subjectivate themselves to be the object of government.

The second part is about the effect of Socrates' truth-telling in Athens. Of importance in this part is nothing other than the new sense of freedom, which is not limited by the institutional framework, but rather enshrined within the moment when truth-telling is performed. In this respect, it could be argued that if Foucault sees in Socrates' practice of truth-telling a philosophical practice that generates a new understanding of politics, this practice will be nothing less than the actualization of freedom, which demonstrates to his fellow citizens how to disrupt the operation of power, by making life at home with its truth. Following this argument, the third, and last part, part deals with the radicalization of this

political understanding manifested by Diogenes, who uses his body as the theatre of truth. This could imply that if Foucault aims to install Socrates' truth-telling into his critical philosophy, he could accomplish it only through the connection he makes with the cynic philosophical style of Diogenes. For Foucault, Diogenes is the true descendant, who not only preserves Socrates' philosophical spirit, but also radicalizes it to the point that it could help Foucault complete his mission in countering power.

### **Truth-Telling in "Apology": Socrates's Philosophical Life and the New Practice of Politics**

In Foucault's view, the specificity of Socrates' manner of truth-telling is impossible to separate from the rise of rhetoric that occupied the kernel of Athenian politics in his lifetime. As I described in chapter six, rhetoric's popularity among Athenian citizens displaced truth-telling as the main political practice in democratic Athens, which led to the techniques of lying coming to dominate the space of politics. Thus, it is inevitable for Foucault to view Socrates as a guardian of truth in facing against the rhetorical mode of speech.

Foucault elucidates this point by underscoring the act of Socrates in telling the truth, during his trial before the Athenian court, where he was charged with impiety and corrupting the youth. The details of this event were recorded in the document named "The Apology of Socrates", which could be divided into three parts: Socrates' defense of his innocence against the charge, Socrates' speech on what he should receive as the punishment for his being judged to be guilty, and Socrates' opinion on the death penalty he was given by the Athens's

court (Plato, 1989a).<sup>4</sup> The part drawing Foucault's attention here is only the first part, which deals with the reason that urged Socrates to exercise his philosophical practice that led to his being charged. Some scholars have regarded the charge in connection with the hostility of the democratic regime toward the life of the philosopher. I.F. Stone, for example, sees in this charge an expression of Athenian citizens' suspicion towards Socrates, whom they viewed as the puppeteer of the anti-democratic sect, while Gregory Vlastos interprets it as the result of the aggressiveness of Socrates' philosophy, when being performed in the public domain of democracy (Stone, 1988; Vlastos, 1991: 297).<sup>5</sup>

However, while those scholars tend to link the charge with the conflict between philosophy and democracy, what concerns Foucault is another conflict, namely, the conflict between truth-telling and rhetoric. In other words, what is demonstrated through the trial of Socrates, for Foucault, is nothing more than the philosopher's mission of protecting truth-telling from the domination of rhetoric. Foucault began to assert this point, in his lecture at Collège de France on 2 March 1983, by highlighting Socrates' identification of his speech as something relating entirely to truth, different from the rhetorical technique that his accusers in the trial usually employed (Foucault, 2010: 311-314). What Socrates proposed at the outset of his defense, then, was foreign when compared to the general pattern of speech used at the assembly or the court. This could imply that rhetoric, as the form of speech used generally in the assembly and the court, was seen by Socrates as a technique of lying, or a use of language for the purpose of blinding the audiences from the truth. It could thus be said that, seen from Foucault's position, Socrates was the one who told the truth, to the extent that he was not a rhetorician; rhetoric or the technique of lying was of no use for him. Socrates was the truth-

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<sup>4</sup> It is generally known that there are only two versions of the document that have survived to our time: Plato's version, and Xenophon's one. And it seems to me that Foucault uses only the former version without mentioning the latter.

<sup>5</sup> This line of interpretation seems to be followed, among others, by Villa (2001), Lane (2014: 139-150)



teller, whose speech contained nothing but truth. “Socrates presents himself as the man of truth-telling without any *tekhne*”, Foucault indicated (Foucault, 2010: 312).

In addition, apart from a demonstration of the extent to which Socrates was the truth-teller, Foucault’s juxtaposition of the rhetoric and Socrates’ defense speech before the Athens’s court also led to the fundamental hallmark of Socrates’ philosophy. Foucault called this hallmark the ‘*logos etumos*’, or the ‘naked language’.<sup>6</sup> By this, he meant language in the purest state, devoid of tricks to persuade the listener, which entailed it to be at one with the truth. Etymos language, as Foucault commented, “is the language closest to truth and the language in which the truth is expressed” (Foucault, 2010: 314). With this hallmark, it comes to be clear that truth-telling was not only Socrates’ form of speech, but also the heart of his philosophical manner. Socrates’ truth-telling, as Foucault interprets, was nothing but the explication of naked language, which begot his philosophy at the level of concrete life. To be the philosopher was to be the one who tells the truth. “The mode of being of philosophical language is to be *etumos*, that is to say, so bare and simple, so in keeping with the very movement of thought that, just as it is without embellishment, in its truth, it will be appropriate to what it refers to”, Foucault said (Foucault, 2010: 314-315).

The confrontation that Socrates sought to bring into play through his speech in the trial, according to Foucault, is then not just the confrontation between truth-telling and rhetoric. Since this truth-telling could help to embody his philosophy into the concrete form of life, Socrates did not merely challenge the rhetoric, as something opposed to his form of speech. Instead, he challenged it in the name of philosophy:

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<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that Foucault brings out this hallmark by referring to “Phaedrus”, a dialogue of Plato, which thematizes the issues of the distinction between philosophical language and rhetoric, as well as how the former could surpass the latter, see Foucault (2010: 325-336).

Whereas the mode of being of rhetorical language is to be constructed according to rules and techniques (according to *tekhne*) and addressed to the other's soul, philosophical language will be without these devices, without these *tekhnai*. It will be *etimos* and as such it will tell the truth of reality and at the same time express the soul of the person who utters it. What his soul thinks. (Foucault, 2010: 315).

This passage expresses very well how Foucault places truth-telling at the heart of Socrates' philosophy. Not only does the passage pose the philosopher's aversion to rhetoric, but it also reveals the main character of Socrates' philosophy, which could be nothing other than the link between truth and soul at the concrete level of everyday living. As Edward McGushin comments, Foucault, by undertaking how Socrates tells the truth, accounts Socrates' philosophy, not in terms of doctrine, but in terms of the way of life (McGushin, 2007: 58). This surely could be pinpointed to Pierre Hadot, by whom Foucault is influenced in reading ancient philosophical texts, as Alexander Nehamas notes that the way Foucault approaches Socrates' philosophy, as the way of life, is foreshadowed by Hadot's interpretation (Nehamas, 1998: 164). However, if Foucault is partly influenced by Hadot, this influence plays only at the methodological level, not at the level of content. This becomes apparent if we pay attention to Hadot's description of Socrates' life. For Hadot, Socrates' life was identical to a sage's life, inasmuch as it linked human life, which is so fragile and precarious, with the experience of the transcendent norm belonged to the realm of eternity (Hadot, 1995: 157). Yet, in Foucault's eyes, Socrates' life could not be labeled as a sage's life, since both ways of life have different ways of dealing with truth. That is, while the sage deals with truth in a reserved manner, to the extent that it lets the truth be revealed in the form

of the answer to someone's questions, Socrates spent his life investigating, and examining, the truth of others through the practice of verification (Foucault, 2011: 17).<sup>7</sup>

This point is described further when Foucault gives a detailed account of how Socrates responded to the oracle's pronouncement when being told that he was the wisest in Greece. Generally, the oracle's pronouncement has been known among readers of "The Apology of Socrates", as one of the most important parts. It began when Socrates mentioned to Chaerephon, who had asked the god of Delphi if there was a man wiser than Socrates, before being answered that no one was wiser than him (Plato, 1989a: 21a). This answer puzzled Socrates so much because he saw himself as the one who knew nothing. However, since it was impossible for the god to lie, he thus used this puzzle to be an inspiration for starting his philosophical practice, by having dialogues with Athenian citizens, hoping that this practice could help him in resolving it (Plato, 1989a: 21b). This might be the reason why some scholars see no conflict between the philosophical way of life and the pious life of obeying the god in Socrates' practice, since that practice, from their viewpoints, aimed to prove the truth residing in the god's pronouncement (Voegelin, 1957: 7-10; Strauss, 1993: 135-138). But Foucault seemed to set himself against those viewpoints by showing, in his lecture at Collège de France on 15 February 1984, that if Socrates' philosophical practice had harmonized with the life of obeying the god, this practice would have led him to conform with the traditional and usual attitude toward the oracle's word at that time, that is, finding out a hidden message beneath that word, and waiting for it to be realized (Foucault, 2011: 82-83). However, as Foucault argued, Socrates did not try to uncover the hidden meaning of the oracle's pronouncement. Instead, he wanted to question the truth of the oracle, by subjecting it as an object of investigation:

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<sup>7</sup> It is useful to bear in mind that this difference also resides in the distinct approaches in making a comparison of the life of a sage and the life of a philosopher. It might be argued that while Hadot considers the sage's life as the model for the philosophical life, Foucault emphasizes the unbridgeable gap between them.

Now the Socratic attitude is completely different. Rather than an interpretation, it involves an investigation in order to check the truth of the oracle. It involves disputing it. And this investigation takes the form of discussion, possible refutation, or proof in which the emphasis is not on the domain of reality in which the oracle's word will in fact be effectuated, but on the domain of truth in which one will be able to accept or reject the word as true *logos*. The usual attitude is interpretation and expectation in the domain of reality. Socrates's attitude toward prophecy is investigation and test in the game of truth (Foucault, 2011: 83).

In this sense, Socrates' life should not be understood as the sage's life. Socrates' philosophical life, according to Foucault, did not begin with the desire to promulgate the truth that he had acquired, but began with the desire to test the truth of the oracle. By subjecting the oracle's truth as an object of investigation, the Socrates of Foucault—as McGushin captures nicely—shifts the field of this truth from the revelation of the reality to come, to the field of reason (*logos*), assertion, and the game of verification (McGushin, 2007: 62). This might explain why Foucault's Socrates starts his philosophical practice by having conversations with other citizens in Athens. Since he was pronounced to be the wisest man by the god, the only way Socrates could test this truth was to have dialogues with others and see whether he was the wisest or not. Socrates' holding conversations with others, as the crux of his philosophical practice, was then nothing but an examining (*exetasis*) of others, according to which these others were the only field on which his mission of testing the truth of gods could be operated. Socrates examined the truth of the god, through an examination of others. He, as Foucault said, “will go all over the town subjecting everyone to this *exetasis* which enables him to know what each person knows and does not know, what each person knows about things and about himself, and testing this knowledge and ignorance by comparing [each person's soul], by rubbing it against the touchstone of his own, Socrates's soul” (Foucault, 2011: 84).

At this point, it must have been important for Foucault to note that by making an examination of others, Socrates did not just test the knowledge which others claimed to possess; he also challenged and set himself against those others, which brought him their hostility. This means that while Socrates started his philosophical practice by making an examination of others, that practice caused him to be regarded by those others as their antagonist, especially when he showed them that they did not know what they had claimed to know. If Socrates' philosophical life was a life arising out of the mission to test the truth of god, and if that life prompted him to make an examination of others, then such life would earn him nothing other than hostility from others, whom he had conversations with (Foucault, 2011: 84). The more Socrates (of Foucault) practiced his philosophical life, the more he created dangerous situations that he might be trapped within.

Echoing this point is essential for Foucault's treatment of Socrates' philosophical life, not merely because it indicates the bad result that Socrates had to receive from practicing his philosophical life, but because it shows how precisely Socrates' philosophical life modified the practice of truth-telling. As already explained in the last chapter, the condition that made truth-telling possible in democratic Athens was the emergence of risk endowed through the figure of others. However, while that risk appeared as part of the political game, in which citizens had to play for an ascendancy, Socrates released such risk from the political area, like the assembly or the court, to the site of everyday living. Through his philosophical practice, which earned him a lot of enemies, Socrates was successful in creating the risk by himself, outside of the agonistic structure of democratic institutions (Foucault, 2011: 85). The basic thing that separated his account of risk from the traditional account lay in its rewards: while the latter aimed at gaining a superior position for ruling the city, the former only paid attention to the truth as the core of the self, according to which this truth was the basis upon which the self could make an identical relationship to itself. Taking the risk by telling what

one really thinks, in the Socratic way, does not bring anything except the self, which is cared for by verifying its own truth; there is no such reward as glory or the highest political position in Socrates' manner of truth-telling. In short, if Socrates' philosophy was the philosophy triggered by the desire to examine the truth of god, this desire did nothing but to entail him advancing truth-telling from the political manner to the manner of philosophy, allowing him to care for his own self by examining his truth through others (Foucault, 2011: 85-86).

This describes why Foucault puts a great deal of emphasis on the reason for Socrates, in "The Apology of Socrates", to keep himself away from any political participation. As Foucault underlines, what stops Socrates pursuing a political life, like his fellow Athenian citizens do, comes from his conscience, coming out in the form of a 'daemonic voice', which keeps telling him to avoid as much as possible the affairs of politics, for the reason that such affairs do not have value, when compared to the affair of philosophy. Political life, according to Socrates (viewed by Foucault), was not worth living. Socrates abandoned the political life for philosophy; he abandoned it, not because he feared death, but because he had another thing that was worth dying for more:

Socrates has not renounced politics out of fear of death and in order to avoid it. And yet we may say: yes, he did abstain from politics because of these dangers, not out of fear of death, but because if he had got involved in politics he would be dead, and being dead he would have been unable—as he says in the text—to be useful to himself and to the Athenians...What the daemonic voice recommended through this negative sign, by calling out to stop him, was that he guard against dying. And this is not because dying is an evil to be avoided, but because death would have prevented Socrates from doing something positive. He would have been unable to establish with others and himself a particular kind of invaluable, useful, and beneficial relationship (Foucault, 2011: 80-81).

Furthermore, by modifying the act of truth-telling in the philosophical direction, Socrates also advocated the new shape of courageous action. Like the emergence of risk

described above, courage was another feature that was important for truth-telling to take place. It was an ethical force that bound truth with political authority, in such a way that it designated truth as the quality that those who wanted to rule the city needed to act out. Yet, despite an essential ingredient of truth-telling, Socrates exercised this courage, as enmeshed in his manner of truth-telling, in a style that had no business with the political position. Foucault illustrates this point by comparing the courageous act of Socrates with Solon, the founder of Athens, who came to the assembly with a breastplate and shield as part of his speech to criticize Pisistratus, the leader at that time, for abusing power (Foucault, 2011: 76-77). By comparing him with Solon, it is clear how novel Socrates' courage was, for he did not perform the courageous action in virtue of the city's interest, but in virtue of his own self and others. While Solon chose to manifest his truth-telling before the assembly, or the people, Socrates performed it in every domain except that assembly. His courage was far from the political (and traditional) courage; it was the philosophical courage. Instead of guarding the city, Socrates, as Foucault ascertains, was the soldier, whose task was nothing but to guard the soul; the courage of his truth-telling was the courage of caring for the self, not the city:

(Think of Solon), who previously was asked to give the city's laws, and who, when he sees these laws corrupted and Pisistratus exercising his tyranny, dons soldier's clothing for the occasion, clasps his shield, puts on his armor, and then, and only then, presents himself at the Assembly in order to make the truth burst out. Contrast him with Socrates who, throughout his life always thought of himself as a sort of soldier among the citizens, having to struggle at every moment to defend himself and them (Foucault, 2011: 85-86).

This might be the reason why some scholars, such as Nehamas or Thomas Flynn, tend to regard the way Foucault treats Socrates' truth-telling as the shift of concern from the political action, to the aesthetic mode of self-constitution (Nehamas, 1998:157-188; Flynn, 1988). For them, this shift could be described as an exit from the problem for which

Foucault's philosophical mission has sought to tackle, an exit which is nothing but the mode of existence that establishes the new form of experience in constituting a life identical to its own truth. However, if what concerns Foucault in proposing Socrates' truth-telling is the mode of self-constitution, this mode is by no means apolitical. True, Foucault's treatment of Socrates' philosophical truth-telling rests on how Socrates removes the truth-telling, and its courageous reference, from the field of politics. However, it needs to be underscored that the politics Foucault mentions in his depiction of Socrates' truth-telling is slightly different from the politics along which his philosophical project has played.

Despite having the same denotation, Foucault's own conception of politics has nothing to do with a political institution, such as the way of attaining a position to rule the political society; his politics is about the power, or, putting it in a precise way, the governmentality, which formulates an asymmetrical relationship that subjectivates one to be the object governed by the other. As Nancy Luxon suggests, Foucault's turning to ancient philosophical precepts proceeds directly from the motive to ground the new political practice in reforming the relationship that enables one to live freely without being governed by others (Luxon, 2008: 392-396). Seen from this perspective, what concerns Foucault in his treatment of Socrates' manner of truth-telling could be nothing less than the model of political action that one can use as an antidote to governmentality, the model that one could use to re-subjectivate oneself as a self-government.

It follows that Socrates' philosophy, as Foucault tries to demonstrate, is not the philosophy of non-politics. Far from it, by practicing his philosophy, Socrates is fleshing out a new form of politics, which does not belong to the institutional framework, but belongs to the dynamic of power concretized through the asymmetrical relationship that is inclined to happen in everyday life. Philosophy for Socrates is the philosophy of politics, not in terms of the constitutional arrangement, but in terms of the subjectivity. "Philosophy's question", for



Socrates (of Foucault), “is not the question of politics; it is the question of the subject in politics” (Foucault, 2011: 319). It is the question of the subject in politics because it offers the form of action that one could take in order to activate the new process of subjectivity that formulates a touchstone of resistance to governmentality (McGushin, 2007: 71). Socrates’ philosophy, thus, is the philosophy that brings out a new understanding of politics, which modifies one of the main political values in democratic Athens. This value, as I would like to argue, is nothing other than freedom.

### **Actualizing Freedom: Socrates’ Truth-Telling and its Political Effect**

Commenting on Foucault’s attitude towards Socrates’ philosophy of politics could also bring us to a new insight of freedom, as the political effect of such philosophy in Athens. Before Socrates, freedom was framed as the merit entangled within the institutional design, insofar as it involved only the political body of self-determination, rather than the individual’s rights which any government had to protect. As Moses Finley, one of the prodigious scholars in the area of ancient political history, suggests, freedom in democratic Athens had nothing to do with the possession of an inalienable right, to the extent that it only concerned the participation in the process of public decision making (Finley, 1985: 75). Likewise, Josiah Ober ascertains the character of freedom, by underlining the fusion between freedom and equality, which played like a crux of democratic decisions, as the main institutional component of Athens at that time (Ober, 2017: 109-111).

Yet, as soon as Socrates performs his manner of truth-telling, freedom is dispersed from the institutional enterprise to the concrete experience of everyday life. It could be said that, after Socrates’ intervention in the practice of truth-telling, freedom is no longer the way citizens participate in the process concerning public policy. Rather, it is the way to free the

self of each citizen from any hierarchical structure inherent in everyday living. At this point, Arlene Saxonhouse might be the only scholar who is correct in viewing Socrates' truth-telling as the practice of radicalizing freedom. According to Saxonhouse, Socrates advocates truth-telling to challenge the god of Athens, as well as to profane any sacred things to the point at which they could be examined freely and equally by every citizens (Saxonhouse, 2006: 106-112). She, additionally, presents this truth-telling to be something opposing to the shame (*aidos*), since the shame has played as the device to cement any hierarchical components in political society. As Saxonhouse wrote: "Only if Athens had been able to dispense fully with *aidos*...only if Athens could have allowed the condemned to live within the city, could it be the fully free and parrhesiastic city it imagined itself to be" (Saxonhouse, 2006: 109). Socrates' Truth-telling is then the practice of 'anaidos'; it is the practice of shamelessness.

However, while focusing on the link between truth-telling and shamelessness, Saxonhouse tends to ignore the ethical voice that prompts Socrates to let his shame be unconcealed through the delivering of truth-telling, an ethical voice which could be nothing except courage. This helps to exhibit how critical Foucault's reading of Socrates' truth-telling is, especially in relation to the insight of freedom. Here, what Foucault's reading could contribute is an exact moment, when the experience of freedom is activated through the act of truth-telling. This relates directly to the role of courage, according to which it is an ethical force that elicits Socrates to act, bringing him an experience of freedom when speaking truth. Foucault clarifies this by showing an effect of courage in enabling anyone, who demonstrates it, to break the asymmetrical relation within which his self has been organized, and thus return him the freedom to determine his own life (Foucault, 2011:11-12). This breaking is important, given that what is broken here, for Foucault, is the form of relationship that, as part of governmentality, irritates the mode subjectivating one to be the object governed by

others (Foucault, 1988b:19-20). When one tells the truth that might cause one's life, one is explicating one's courage to liberate oneself from being the object of government, thereby making one's life concretely free.

To break the asymmetrical relation, then, means to realize the sense of freedom in being capable to design the relationship with which one could govern oneself, or determine one's own life. It also means that freedom does neither belong to the normative principle that one needs to submit, nor the opening moment when one is engaged in the un-concealing state of being. On the contrary, freedom is something that needs to be actualized concretely; it belongs to the category of action, since the only way in which one can change, or end, the relationship that posits one to be the object of government, is through action. Only with the category of action could the relationship between courage and freedom, as well as its concrete experience, be properly grasped. Once one manifests one's courage by telling one's truth, one is embodying the capability to govern one's self, which, in turn, permits one to live freely on a daily basis.

Hence, what Socrates' philosophy could contribute to Athens, according to Foucault, was nothing but the insight of freedom attached to the new shape of courage, concretized through the new form of subjectivity that his philosophical practice has constantly displayed. Socrates' philosophical precept that Foucault is concerned with, therefore, is not so much the precept of 'know-thyself', as 'care of the self', that is, "to ground yourself in liberty through the mastery of the self" (Foucault, 1988b:20). With the practices of Socrates' philosophy, Athenian citizens could then see how they could make themselves free by governing themselves through an actualization of their own truth. This point is not so hard to confirm, since Socrates does not treat thinking in a contemplative manner; he treats it as something emerging through conversations, which take the actualization of truth, or truth-telling, to be its precondition. When Socrates practices his philosophy, he thus not only tells what he truly

thinks, but also urges his partners, who listen to the truth of what he thinks, to rethink upon their self, along with the truth affixed with that self. The more Socrates practices his philosophy, the more Athenian citizens could take care of their selves; and the more they take care of their selves, the more they could live their lives freely, that is, the more they could govern their own selves without being governed by others (Foucault, 2011:90).

Hence, it can be concluded that through his comment on how Socrates modifies truth-telling in a philosophical direction, Foucault could formulate the character of truth-telling that he could employ to complete his philosophical mission against power, or—to be precise—against governmentality. This character could be used to counter power, because it not only allows Foucault to derive the modality, which activates an experience that brings the truth to be identical with the self, but also offers him a new insight of freedom operating concretely at the level of life. Moreover, this characteristic also points out the new role of political philosophy or the philosophy of politics, as a philosophy against power, since its practice does not concern thinking in a contemplative manner, but treats it in an engaging style, which will render those who practice it to be the free being. This philosophy, as Foucault touches on—but left unthematized—in his interpretation of Socrates' philosophy, has no part in supporting the operation of power. On the contrary, it introduces the life of self-government, as the new form of political subjectivity. The more philosophers, in this tradition, practice their philosophy, the more they could promote this new form of subjectivity to their fellow citizens.

At this point, it is crucially significant to emphasize that with his genealogical style, Foucault does not fail to recognize the transformation of Socrates' approach to truth-telling. Certainly, this transformation could be seen in the case of Plato, who is successful in sustaining the entanglement of truth-telling with philosophical practices, despite discarding his teacher's spirit. However, apart from Plato who betrays Socrates' implication in making

freedom an essence of philosophical truth-telling, Foucault seems to discover another tradition that follows Socrates' truth-telling without distorting its spirit. This point is confirmed clearly in his lecture at Collège de France on 29 February 1984, where Foucault began to give an account of the cynic tradition of philosophy, as the tradition that took the way of life—rather than the metaphysic of soul—to be its detour (Foucault, 2011: 165-166). If the practice of truth-telling that Foucault aims to revive is Socrates' truth-telling, whose extent is the way of life that reckons freedom with truth, then the heir, who continues Socrates' spirit, will be nobody except the philosopher in the cynic tradition (Flynn, 1988: 111).

### **Diogenes's True Life: A Cynic's Other Life as the Life Transforming the World**

Foucault highlighted the philosophical continuity from Socrates to cynic in the lecture at Collège de France on 7 March 1984, where he commended the starting-point of the philosophical life of Diogenes of Sinope, who was praised as the founder of the cynic philosophy. Using the story recorded by Diogenes Laertius, the beginning of the cynic philosophy can be traced back to the moment when Diogenes came to meet the oracle to ask about the purpose that his life sought to fulfill, after having been banished from his hometown (Foucault, 2011: 226). In this way, it could say that both Socrates and Diogenes of Sinope shared the same source of their philosophical life: the pronouncement of the oracle. Through this pronouncement, both Socrates and Diogenes were disposed to fulfill a mission designated for their philosophical lives. "So both Socrates and Diogenes find themselves charged with a mission", Foucault said (Foucault, 2011: 226).

However, though they tended to share the same philosophical character in focusing on the mode of life, Diogenes did not perform his mode of life in the same philosophical manner

as Socrates. It could be said that while Socrates began his philosophical practice through the oracle's puzzlement, leading him to seek the way he could test it, Diogenes started his philosophical life by following the oracle's words, which advised him to 'change the value of the currency' (*parakharattein to nomisma*). "In the texts he writes in the fourth century against the cynic and in favour of true Cynicism, Julian, who speaks about Diogenes with great respect, never fails to speak of Socrates and Diogenes at the same time: one heard the god's word at Delphi, knew himself to be the wisest man, and sought to know himself; the other received another, very different mission from the god at Delphi, which was to change the value of the currency", Foucault expressed (Foucault, 2011: 226-227).

At first glance, the oracle's words that advised Diogenes to change the value of currency, or money, might look sarcastic, given that Diogenes, according to the report of Diogenes Laertius, was exiled from his hometown for being guilty of dishonestly falsifying the value of the coins he had been given by his father (Laertius, 2018: Book 6, 20-21). Yet, as Foucault described, changing the value of currency also had a positive meaning with respect to the appropriation of life in the way that it could activate the identical relationship between the self and its truth (Foucault, 2011: 242). Changing the value of currency, in this sense, could mean 'the revaluation of currency', which placed care of the self into its kernel. By the words 'the revaluation of currency', Foucault meant the modification of life, which "replaces the counterfeit currency of one's own and others' opinions of oneself, with the true currency of self-knowledge" (Foucault, 2011: 242). The more one knows oneself, the more one could expel one's fake currency, and the more one could access one's truth. "One can handle one's own existence, take care of oneself as something real, and have the true currency of one's true existence in one's hands, on condition that one knows oneself," Foucault remarked (Foucault, 2011: 242). The precept of 'changing the value of currency' is therefore nothing

except the precept of modifying one's existence, which keeps the self in touch with its own truth.

Definitely, putting a great deal of emphasis on care of the self could be used to reassert the symmetry between Socrates' philosophical practice of truth-telling and the philosophical life of Diogenes. Having said that, it is significant to show how Diogenes, viewed by Foucault, not only follows Socrates' practice of truth-telling, but also approaches it in the most radical direction. As Foucault remarked in his lecture at Collège de France on 29 February 1984, while Socrates based his philosophical practice on the form of action that concretized the harmony between his speech and his life, as the way to keep his life attached to his truth, Diogenes, along with his cynic followers, paid attention to the mode of behavior that allowed truth to be manifested through his way of life (Foucault, 2011: 169-170). Alternatively stated, while Socrates was concerned about the act that made life truthful, the latter seemed to prioritize the mode of life, as the condition under which the truth could shine forth. Diogenes, then, treated care of the self less on the level of the act of truth-telling, than on the level of his way of life; his truth-telling did not concentrate so much on the act of speaking, as on the mode of existence that Foucault called 'the true life' (Foucault, 2011:166). "In short, Cynicism makes life, existence, *bios*, what could be called an alethurgy, a manifestation of truth", Foucault commented (Foucault, 2011: 172).

From this premise, it comes as no surprise that, besides a significance of care of the self, Diogenes, according to Foucault, also advocates the way of life designated to confront a traditional form of value, to the extent that that form of value removes from the life its condition through which the truth could be expressed. This point is understandable, provided that the Greek root of the word 'currency'— '*nomisma*' —could etymologically be linked to the word '*nomos*', which means the rule, custom, or law (Foucault, 2011: 227). The precept 'changing the value of currency', which Diogenes received from the oracle, could also be

referred to as the activation of the form of behavior that entails the transformation of the traditional way of living. If care of the self is located to be a kernel of Diogenes's precept of 'changing the value of currency', this care of the self will take proper demonstrable shape only in the way of life that breaks away from the traditional form of value (Foucault, 2011: 242).

In this regard, it is apparent why Foucault sees in Diogenes's philosophical practice the embodiment of the other life (*vie autre*). Diogenes's philosophical life, as conceived by Foucault, is a life in the form of the otherness that could liberate its performer from the traditional—and untrue—way of life. Once one chooses to live according to Diogenes's cynic way of life, one will be brought to relate oneself with one's truth, which at the same time posits one to live in another way from the life with which one used to be familiar. Foucault presented this point nicely, as follows:

What I would like to emphasize now is you can see that the alteration of the currency, the changes of its value, which is constantly associated with Cynicism, no doubt means something like: the forms and habit which usually stamp existence and give it its feature must be replaced by the effigy of the principles traditionally accepted by philosophy. But by the very fact of applying these principles to life itself, rather than merely maintaining them in the element of *logos*, by the fact that they give a form to life, just as the coin's effigy gives a form to the metal on which it is stamped, one thereby reveals other lives, the lives of others, to be no more than counterfeit, coin with no value.... In this respect, Cynicism was not just the insolent, rough, and rudimentary reminder of the question of the philosophic life. It raises a very grave problem, or rather, it seems to me that it gave the theme of philosophical life its cutting edge by raising the following question: for life truly to be the life of truth, must it not be an *other* life, a life which is radically and paradoxically other? It is radically other because it breaks totally and on every point with the traditional form of existence, with the philosophical existence that philosophers were accustomed to accepting, with their habits and conventions (Foucault, 2011: 244-245).



Taking up Diogenes's philosophical life as the other life, Foucault's main concern, among other elements, is the shameless life, as the radical form of the true life. As Foucault describes, the theme of true life was usually treated, by many philosophers before Diogenes, as the life conducted by the principle of non-concealment, making what one spoke identical with the way one spent one's life (Foucault, 2011: 251-253). Yet, it is important to note that those treatments seemed to be accounted for on the basis of the ontology of the soul, leaving the material condition of life—such as the physical gestures, or the corporeal body—untouched. Situated in this context, shameless life, as the true life displayed by Diogenes, could be viewed to be the otherness of those treatments, in such a way that it places the truth at the most material level, namely, the level of the bodily gesture of those who show it. Diogenes's unconcealed life, as Foucault explained, "is the shaping, the staging of life in its material and everyday reality under the real gaze of others, of everyone else, or at any rate of the greatest possible number of others" (Foucault, 2011: 253). This makes Diogenes's philosophical life, as the shameless life, to be the other life not only for the philosophical tradition before him, but also for the custom practice of every day's living. Foucault elaborated this excellently, as this:

As unconcealed life would neither hide anything bad nor do anything bad since it would not conceal anything. Now, the Cynic says, can there be anything bad in what nature wills and in what she has placed on us? And conversely, if there is something bad in us or if we do something bad, is this not because men have added to nature with their habits, opinions and conventions? So that if non-concealment must guarantee and stand security for an entirely good life, of a life which is good because entirely visible, then this non-concealment must not take up and accept the usual, traditional limits of propriety, those limits on which men are agreed and which they imagine to be indispensable. Rather, it must bring to light what is natural in the human being, and therefore what is good. That is to say, non-concealment, far from being the resumption and acceptance of those traditional rules of propriety which mean that one would blush to commit evil before others, must be the blaze of the human being's naturalness in full view of all (Foucault, 2011: 254).

In another sense, by materializing truth through his bodily gestures, Diogenes could present his treatment of true life in a manner that disturbs both the previous philosophical tradition, and, especially, the conventional form of value. The latter point is very crucial to make sense of the famous—but scandalous—life style of Diogenes, which receives the complete expression through the way it problematizes the division between private and public life. As Foucault portrays via the report of Diogenes Laertius, Diogenes usually performed some activities traditionally regarded as ‘private’ in the public domain, such as eating, sleeping, being naked, masturbating, or having sex (Foucault, 2011: 254-255). There was no home for him, insofar as the home, for the Greeks at that time, signified the secret place, in which one could practice some behaviors privately. In this sense, Diogenes’s shameless life was a transparent life, or a life that made everything visible; he did not have any privacy, or things to be kept secret. Even when he died, he also died in a public place, like a sleeping beggar who dies in a city’s gymnasium (Foucault, 2011: 253-254). This makes Diogenes, in Foucault’s eyes, a philosophical hero, who employed and amplified an unconcealed life to the point at which it could overturn the conventional form of living. It also shows that by exercising this life, philosophy is unleashed from its previous limit, and then enabled it to perform a critical task without being constrained by any traditions. As Foucault said:

Under the slogan of the unconcealed life, traditional philosophy basically assumed or renewed the requirement of propriety; it accepts its customs. Applying the principle of non-concealment literally, Cynicism explodes the code of propriety with which this principle remained, implicitly or explicitly, associated...The philosophical life thus dramatized by the Cynics deploys the general theme of non-concealment but frees it from all the conventional principles (Foucault, 2011: 255).

Taking this into consideration, it might be fruitful to refer to the attitude that makes the cynic philosophy disturbing to the philosophical tradition, among which it was placed, as well as the social context within which it was brought into existence. This attitude is nothing

but the attitude toward the sovereign's life, along with the relationship between that life and the role of philosophy. This is not hard to see, given that some philosophies, like the Platonic or the Stoic, try to necessitate the relationship between philosophy and the monarchy, by making the former the condition for the good shape of the latter. Yet, Diogenes denies this trend on the grounds that he views himself as the true king, hence there is no need for him to talk about such kinds of relationships. "The Cynic himself is a king; he is even the only king" Foucault commented (Foucault, 2011: 275). This means that, in opposition to a philosopher like Plato, who seems to pin down his philosophy as a private activity, exercised within the pedagogical relationship between a philosopher and the prince, Diogenes formulates his philosophical practice as a public exhibition; he, by exhibiting his philosophical life, could show himself to be the king by nature, making the crowned king look like a fake king, who is no match for him.

As Foucault demonstrates, the crowned king is the person who could be the king only by relying on many things external from himself, such as an army, the court, ornaments, and the knowledge he needs to use in exercising the office. Without those things, the monarchical status of the crowned king would be impossible; he must inevitably beat his enemy, to avoid being thrown into the misfortune that causes his throne to be lost (Foucault, 2011: 276-278). By contrast, Diogenes does not need to rely on those things, since—as the man who makes war with all forms of social value—he needs nothing to confirm his sovereignty other than his action of overturning every custom or any requirements of propriety. To live a sovereign life, for Diogenes, meant to live a completed life or a life that did not need anything to rely on. Diogenes's philosophical and shameless life, for Foucault, was then the royal life, inasmuch as it released him from everything, giving him the capability to master himself without appealing to something outside himself (Foucault, 2011: 278). Accordingly, what Diogenes needed to do in order to affirm his status, as the king, was not to declare war on his

territorial enemies—since his real enemies were the customs or the social conventions—but to make the battle against the conventional way of living. “The Cynic battle is an explicit, intentional, and constant aggression directed at humanity in general, at humanity in its real life, and whose horizon or objective is to change its moral attitude (the *ethos*) but, at the same time and thereby, its customs, conventions, and ways of living”, Foucault expounded (Foucault, 2011: 280).

Drawing on this perception, it is inevitable to take into account of the role of courage in Diogenes’s cynic philosophical life. If Diogenes’s royal life is the life of battling against any social conventions, how could this life be performed without the courage to perform it in the first place? Is it possible for Diogenes to turn himself against any social norms if he is not courageous? Here, it is not hard to cope with the way Diogenes, viewed from Foucault’s perspective, modifies Socrates’ philosophical courage. True, it could be said that without Socrates’ pioneering in proposing the form of philosophical courage, it would not have been possible for Diogenes’s philosophical manner to have taken place. Yet, it must be emphasized that in spite of testing others and showing them their ignorance, Diogenes’s courage was the courage to criticize all forms of traditional values; he risked his life to scandalize those values, so as to set the ground on which the truth could be revealed (Foucault, 2011: 233-234). “Cynic courage of truth consists in getting people to condemn, reject, despise, and insult the very manifestation of what they accept, or claim to accept at the level of principles”, Foucault clarified (Foucault, 2011: 234). Thus, if Diogenes was the true king, who had to exercise his sovereign only by turning his shameless life against all forms of tradition, what authorized him to be that king was nothing but the courage. Diogenes’s philosophical life—as the real sovereign life—was the courageous life, that is, the life that realized its courage through its bodily gestures (Foucault, 2011: 234).

Emphasizing the cynic character of Diogenes's philosophical courage here could also reveal the radical hallmark of his account of care of the self. Like Socrates, who used the precept of care of the self in attributing to the courage the philosophical feature, Diogenes also used his cynic way of courage in reference to the care of the self. But while the former exercised his care of the self by the act of truth-telling, leading him to examine others, which exposed himself to the dangerous outcome of his act, the latter accounted this care of the self by letting his own life be taken shape by the otherness with which the people had not been familiar. The level on which Diogenes's care of the self mainly played, then, was not the individual level, as it was in the case of Socrates. Instead, the aim of his cynic care of the self was no less than the whole of humanity, according to which he was part of humankind, whose common reality should not be blurred by the diversity of norms, or traditional values (Foucault, 2011: 312-313). "When taking an interest in others, the Cynic must attend to what in them is a matter of humankind in general", Foucault stated (Foucault, 2011: 312).

For Diogenes, there was then no distinction between care of the self and care of the other, for the simple reason that both the other and he belonged to humankind. By turning his life to be the other life, whose emergence could challenge the traditional forms of values, Diogenes could accomplish his care of the self through his presentation of the general character of humanity, which pointed the way by which everyone could be allowed to think about a life autonomous from the constraint of social norms. With reference to humankind, Diogenes could care for himself through his caring for others, or— to put it in another way— care for the other by caring for his own self. "The Cynic is someone", as Foucault summarized, "who, caring for others in order to know what these others care about, at the same time and thereby cares for himself" (Foucault, 2011: 312).

Through an inspection of this radical account of care of the self, the political effect of Diogenes's philosophical life could be discerned. Like Socrates, whose practice of care of the

self could expand the political action from the institutional framework to the domain of everyday life, Diogenes's philosophical life could be endorsed to assert the place of political activities outside the institutional terrain. Yet, unlike Socrates, Diogenes does not limit his politics to the transformation of the political subjectivity, for his care of the self does not play at the individual level but plays at the level of an entire humanity. Politics, for Diogenes, does not appear merely as the constitution of the subjectivity which could reform the relationship that unleashes him from the domination of others; rather, it appears as the transformation of the world, the transformation of which not only liberates humankind from any social conventions, but also offers the world within which they could live their life truly (Foucault, 2011: 302-303).

Viewing Diogenes's politics as a transformation of the world is very crucial, not just because it maintains an interrelationship between politics and philosophy in the Socratic spirit, but because it could give Foucault a device for radicalizing his critical philosophy against power. As both McGushin and Flynn suggest, Foucault finds in Diogenes something homologous to his philosophical modality of critique (McGushin, 2007: 163; Flynn, 1988). Some scholars, such as Vanessa Lemm, push this point as far as to claim that Foucault's reading of Diogenes's cynical style of philosophical life could be used as evidence of his intention to unlock the operation of the political community, usually tied with the logic of closure that separates those who are, from those who are not, within its boundary, so as to make way both for the political place of the philosopher, and for the inauguration of the new type of community (Lemm, 2014: 217-223). Yet, what these scholars leave unmentioned is the insight of freedom working beneath the ground of the political operation of the cynic's philosophical life. Indeed, this point is not hard to discern, provided that the transformation of the world, as an effect of Diogenes's politics, is nothing but the result of the manifestation of the cynics' freedom in not getting caught in the traditional way of life. As Foucault says,

Diogenes's cynic mode of philosophical life gives nothing less than the revelation of what life will be in its independence, or in its fundamental freedom, namely, a life untied of anything except its true being (Foucault, 2011: 171).

Diogenes's insight of freedom, as perceived by Foucault, should thus be understood as an emancipated life, or a life in the process of becoming other, which is impossible to be fixed with some identification of value. In this sense, Diogenes's insight of the world-transformation could not be anything other than the project of concretizing freedom, by revolutionizing not just the way one lives, but also the world into which one was thrown (Foucault, 2011: 183). Politics, viewed through this frame, is not confined within the way one could re-constitute oneself, by manifesting one's own truth, to be the truth-teller who could disrupt power enacting on him. Rather, it could be advanced as the operation that transforms society to be the place in which everyone could live their life freely, the place within which those who govern their own selves could live their lives without being governed by the other.

Regarding this, it becomes apparent how Socrates' politics of philosopher could be sustained by Diogenes. Despite their difference in terms of degree, Diogenes's philosophical life, or the life of otherness, still follows Socrates' political mission in advocating the insight of freedom associated with the new type of courageous action that everyone can take in their concrete everyday life. This explains why Diogenes has a crucial place in Foucault's late thought. For Foucault, Diogenes plays a key role, inasmuch as he not only keeps Socrates' spirit intact from Plato's distortion, but also radicalizes this spirit as well as passes it towards the modern world; Diogenes acts as a preserver and amplifier of Socrates' philosophic-political mission. As Foucault once explained in his lecture at Collège De France on 29 February 1984, the cynic's philosophical life, which presented life as the practices of revolution, played the main function in giving inspiration to the revolutionary movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe, through the writing of Dostoyevsky, the

political project of Russian nihilism, American Anarchism, and the practice of the French communist party during the 1960s (Foucault, 2011: 185-186).

In this sense, through a comment on the cynic's practice of Diogenes, Foucault establishes the trans-historical path along which he could carry and incarnate Socrates' philosophic-political mission to the modern world. If Foucault's philosophical manner against power derives its model from Socrates' practice of truth-telling, this manner would be impossible without the role of Diogenes, who, by preserving and forwarding Socrates' philosophic-political mission, helped him to assert the contribution of philosophy in encountering power. If Socrates' political philosophy is the model guiding the manner of Foucault's critical philosophy, this model will be made possible in our modern horizon only through the role of the cynic life practiced by Diogenes—the role that keeps the spirit of Socrates, which not only furnishes the political task of the philosopher in countering power, but also confirms a contribution that we, in our contemporary horizon, could learn from this heritage of ancient philosophy.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In one of the famous biographies that recorded his way of life, Diogenes of Sinope was pictured, by Diogenes Laertius, to be a philosopher who chose to live in an opposite way to Plato. One of the scenes that captured this point was the scene when he, during washing lettuces, was interrupted by Plato, who said to him that if he had paid court to Dionysius, he would not be washing lettuces. Not feeling inferior to Plato, Diogenes answered with an equal calmness that if Plato had learnt how to wash lettuces, there would have been no need for him to court Dionysius (Laertius, 2018: Book 6, s.58).



In terms of the content, this scene was not highlighted in the biography, since it was just one among many scenes that illustrated Diogenes's life and behavior. However, this scene seemed to catch Foucault's attention very well, as it made clear the uniqueness of Diogenes's life. As Foucault argued in his lecture at Collège de France on 23 February 1983, in contrast to Plato who located the site of truth-telling in the prince's soul, Diogenes was the one who modified truth-telling in a more Socratic way, by treating it as a true life whose operation was to demonstrate itself in a public arena (Foucault, 2010: 291-292). Viewed from this aspect, Diogenes's choice in washing lettuces indicated nothing less than his persistence of Socrates' spirit in keeping freedom with his true life, making him not the slave of Dionysius (Foucault, 2010: 292). This might be the reason why Foucault, in his last year, had an interest in Diogenes's cynic philosophical life, since it not only keeps the sense of freedom with Socrates' spirit of truth-telling, but also radicalizes that sense of freedom to the way of transforming the world. Indeed, during his last lecture on 28 March 1984, Foucault gave us a hint that he might take time in next year to investigate this theme further (Foucault, 2011: 316). Unfortunately, his untimely death stops us from knowing whether this plan was concretized. It, further, also deprives us of the realization of his critical project, since we will never know how he would have fully portrayed the historical influence of cynic philosophical life in a modern horizon.

However, though there are still some rooms in Foucault project that remain open, I would like to argue that the notes and lectures he left behind for us are more than enough to help anticipate the end of his philosophical project against power. This end is nothing less than the exhibition of the politics entwined with the philosophical practice that concretizes freedom as the way of life. Initiated by Socrates, and followed by Diogenes, the kernel of this politics is truth, and the way it is actualized in everyday life. This means that if the aim of Foucault's critical philosophy is to propose the way of countering power, this aim will be

achieved only through the incarnation of politics entangled with the philosophical way of life, performed by Socrates or Diogenes, whose actualization of truth could display how one could govern oneself, or determine one's life, in everyday activities. In this respect, what Foucault really left unanswered is the practical operation of truth-telling, as the act that concretizes freedom, in our modern political horizon. In other words, what is left unclear to us regarding Foucault's critical project is the way he articulates truth-telling as a weapon to fight against power in his contemporaneity. But, this problem, it seems to me, is less important for Foucault than for us. In this light, it might be our task to deal with this puzzle ourselves, the task which will tell us nothing except the availability of Foucault's critical philosophy in our contemporary use.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion and Implication of Foucault's Truth-Telling and its Insight of Freedom

All my books...are, if you like, little tool boxes. If people want to open them, use a particular sentence, idea, or analysis like a screwdriver or wrench in order to short-circuit, disqualify or break up the systems of power, including eventually the very ones from which my books have issued...well, all the better!

Michel Foucault, 1996: 149

In 1975, during a short interview about the project that he was working on at that time, Foucault was asked by an interviewer about the aim that posited the direction of his project. To answer the question, Foucault manifested that he designated his works to counter the operation of power. Yet, in spite of presenting it as a universal framework to which everyone, who wanted to challenge the power, must conform strictly, Foucault tended to consider his work as a model that all people were free to use and adjust according to the specific situation in which they were involved. For Foucault, every idea he proposed in his work was not created to be intact from any modifications. On the contrary, it was designated as a vehicle anyone could drive, in their own way, to confront power. "The more there are new, possible, unforeseen uses for it, the happier I'll be", Foucault said (Foucault, 1996: 149).

Using the spirit described above, my dissertation aims to derive one idea playing in Foucault late works, which, due to his untimely death, is underdeveloped: the new insight of freedom, and its realization through the act of truth-telling. This means that though Foucault does not offer a full account of his insight of freedom, it will not be hard to ascertain this account if enough attention is paid to the notion of truth-telling, as the culmination of his philosophical project against power. The main argument that I would like to present in this dissertation, hence, is that the insight of freedom, which we can draw out from Foucault's notion of truth-telling, is self-government, or the capability of self-determination, which each individual could achieve by actualizing what he truly thinks through the practice of truth-telling, as a device employed to disrupt the operation of power. Freedom, then, should be understood as the grounds for Foucault's critical philosophy against power, and truth-telling is nothing but a device proposed to actualize it. Here, in order to fully comprehend this argument, I unpack it into seven sub-arguments, as follows:

1. Foucault's critical project against power was started in the 1970s, when he began to treat power as a problem, against which his project would be derived to counter. This problematization had a unique character in treating power in terms of production, rather than destruction. What Foucault paid attention to, in his problematization of power, was then not the destructive force or the physical violence, but was the production of subjectivity, through the operation and distribution of knowledge in an ontological sense (*savoir*). Power, for Foucault, was not equated to the force of suppression, since it was the form of relationship that shaped, or entailed, one to behave in line with its determination. However, despite the uniqueness of his analysis, Foucault shifted the focus of his analysis of power in 1978, when he moved his concern from how power

exercised itself through the production of subjectivity, to how each individual rendered themselves to be the subjectivity that followed the command of power in the first place.

This led Foucault to propose the notion of governmentality that framed the operation of power as the form of rationality, which modified one to submit oneself as the object of government. What concerned governmentality, thus, involved the mode of subjectivation, or the way that entailed one to enter into an asymmetrical relationship, in which one subjectivates oneself as the object ready to be governed by the others. Schematically speaking, this notion of governmentality should be viewed as Foucault's culminated framework of investigating power, since it not only deepens his analysis of power, in dealing with the aspect of subjectivity in its being constituted as the object of government, but also expands his scope from the individual level of everyday life, to the macro level of the political institution or the state's administration. Governmentality, in this regard, provided Foucault a completed picture of the operation of power, to the extent that it treated government in terms of the process by which political society was constituted through the way each individual constituted themselves as the object governed by the authorities of their society. Hence, it could be said that if the problem that Foucault's critical project aimed to counter was power, the main target of his philosophical project, in his last ten years, could be nothing but governmentality. To critique power, according to Foucault, is to critique governmentality.

2. Contrary to many scholars, who neglect the role of truth in their account of Foucault's notion of governmentality, I account the framework of governmentality by putting a great deal of emphasis on the operation of truth. This presupposes that beneath the rationality, as the main unit of an analysis of governmentality, is the ethical role of truth that

establishes a relationship, in which one can relate to, and identify with, oneself as the object of government. By looking at this ethical operation of truth, then, I argue that the main stake in Foucault's problematization of power, as governmentality, is the problem of self-alienation. Definitely, this does not mean that I view Foucault's account of governmentality as the way in which one loses one's authentic self. Rather, by relying on Rahel Jeaggi's conception of alienation as the relation of relationlessness, I propose that the self-alienation, presented in Foucault's late treatment of power, is the sense of losing the capability of self-determination. The main stake of my analysis is therefore the form of practice that entails an experience of self-destruction. That is to say, when one subjectivates oneself to be an object of government, one is discarding one's capability of determining one's life, by verbalizing what one truly thinks while regarding it as something that one would like to disengage from. Foucault's self-alienation, then, should not be considered in terms of the estrangement of an original self; it should be considered as the act that ironically defeats the capability to act.

Here, what is worth shedding light on is the form of self-alienation working within the stage of bio-politics, as the highest stage of governmentality, whose main mechanism is the market. Foucault calls this form of subjectivity "homo economicus". By inspecting this homo economicus, we can see how Foucault grasps the problem of self-alienation as the production of truth, grounded by the regulation of the market. This entanglement between self-alienation, truth and the market may best be explained by looking at the triumph of the market in generating an outlook of freedom that takes the interests of each individual as its heart. Drawing from the works of Adam Smith, who develops his doctrine from the tradition of British empiricism, Foucault describes this outlook of freedom as the prerogative of each individual to earn his own interest, consisting of either reducing his pain or increasing his pleasure. This means that once one

subjectivates oneself to be homo economicus, one accepts this outlook of freedom with the truth of one's desire, serving as the reference, to behave under the regulation of the market. It also means that by subjectivating oneself as homo economicus, one is modified to be a part of the governmental mechanism, which acts on behalf of the market in monitoring one's own self. The more one acts as homo economicus, the more one alienates oneself by doubling one's self, so as to let one part of that self be the market's inspector for monitoring its other part.

3. By considering Foucault's problematization of power as the exercise of self-alienation, it is apparent that my approach to Foucault's thoughts follow the post structural tradition of the critique of ideology, which seeks to exhibit the dynamic of the relationship between structure and its agency, as well as the structural gap through which its agency could find the way to elude. As David Howarth argues, Foucault's account of power could supplement an understanding of the structural domination, which, at the same time, is inseparable from its contingency (Howarth, 2013: 188-193). Understanding the operation of power, along with its weakness, is then part and parcel of Foucault's project of critical philosophy. It helps to describe why Foucault denies the normative grammar in his critical approach. This does not mean that he does not have a normative principle that entails him to perform such a critical task. Though Foucault is not advertising his normative aspiration when exercising the genealogical investigation, the fact that he does not express the normative stance does not automatically allow us to deny any normative grounds in his critical operation. For how could it be possible to make a critique without holding its object as something bad? Is it really possible to perform an alienation critique by not treating such alienation as the problem in the first place? In other words, I think

that Foucault still holds some normative criteria when using his critical approach, yet such criteria are something he is unable to demonstrate.

Foucault's point, then, is not an existence of the normative principle, as it is the mode of presenting it.<sup>1</sup> This could hence be suggested that the main component of Foucault's approach of critique is, in spite of the normative expression, the exposition of truth serving beneath the operation of power. This point is not hard to assert if we consider that the approach that Foucault uses in his critical activity is genealogy. This approach aims to unfold the historicity of its object of critique, which paves the way to exposing the contingency in an existence of that object. Since power, in Foucault's case, could not be separated from its operation as truth, the proper way to counter it is nothing less than to demonstrate how this truth is just a historical product, which can be altered from time to time. In this sense, by exposing the historicity of that truth-claim, each individual who uses this genealogical investigation is capable of de-subjectivating himself from the operation of power. The more he can show the historicity of that truth, the more he sees the possibility of undermining the mode that used to subjectivate him as an object of government. Critique of power, then, is the critique towards truth; without this critical attitude towards truth, it would be impossible for Foucault to perform his critical manner against power.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thus, I locate my interpretation against Paul Patton and Amy Allen, who seek to discern Foucault's normative presentation by reading his thoughts as something relating either to the liberal framework of John Rawls (Patton, 2010), or to the Kantian project of critique (2008: 40-44). This also indicates the similar position that I share with Beatrice Han and Johanna Oksala, in suggesting that Foucault could not fetch out the normative standpoint, though he might have it, insofar as the result of this showing will in turn undermine his target, in underscoring a lived experience serving to be the grounds for his mission of critique against power (Han, 2016: 96-100; Oksala, 2005: 170).

<sup>2</sup> Here, my interpretation is indebted to Thomas Lemke, whose reading indicates that Foucault's real concern is the practicality of the operation of power that takes the norm to be its integral part under the regulation of truth (Lemke, 2019: 341-362).



4. Considering the argument I present above, it is understandable why many scholars regard Foucault's critical manner as something influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, especially the way he sees truth as a production of the will to power. However, if Foucault was once influenced by Nietzsche, this influence seemed to be downplayed from 1978, when he reoriented his use of genealogy, from the anti-philosophical method of exposing the operation of power behind any truth-claims, to the practice of eventalization (*evenementialisation*). As I describe above, genealogy is the method Foucault employs to highlight the historicity of the operation of power, working as truth, in conditioning the mode that subjectivates one to be its object. However, through the practice of eventalization, the level of genealogical operation is deepened from the methodological domain to the domain of ontology, in the sense that it not only works to unearth the historical contingency of any absolute claims of truth, but also brings out the temporal reflection, which allows one to attest such claims. Eventalization, conceptually speaking, could help genealogy to explicate its critical function in double layers. On the one hand, it exposes events from which power began to appear as truth. On the other hand, it creates the event of temporal reflection, in which truth, produced by the operation of power, could be attested and presented as something untrue.<sup>3</sup>

This latter layer, which emphasizes the place of temporal reflection in the genealogical operation, is very important, as it could anticipate how Foucault introduces

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<sup>3</sup> This is the point that separates my reading from Lemke's. Although Lemke's reading could provide me with a real concern about Foucault's manner of critical philosophy, his fear of mislabeling Foucault as an ideologist, who wants to replace the erroneous forms of truth with the new and correct one, turns him to pay attention to Foucault's analysis of the truth's effect in political society, rather than Foucault's own premise of truth (Lemke, 2019: 342-346). But how could we measure those effects, if we could not ensure the truthfulness of our measurement? How can we confirm the validity of our undertaking of truth's effect, if we are unable to confirm our analysis as something true?

his new understanding of truth, which no longer relies on the production of power, but rather rests on a reflection of the condition of temporality, that is, the condition allowing one to reflect on the ontology of oneself. Viewed from this light, I think it is inevitable to clarify the premise of truth, on which Foucault bases his critical enterprise in countering truth created by power, the premise which was firstly coined by Martin Heidegger. According to Heidegger, an attainment of truth is inseparable from the reflection of temporality, or in Heidegger's words, the experience of present, to the extent that this reflection entails one moving into the moment when one's existential condition is disclosed ontologically. Truth, in this case, could be nothing except the *aletheia*, or the moment when the thing enclosed is opened and presented as it ontologically is. This indicates that when one realizes the temporality of one's being, one could, at the same time, grasp the truth through which an understanding of one's ontological condition has taken place. In other words, if one could reflect to oneself the temporal condition that grounds one's being, one could automatically see through that reflection the truth of one's own ontological experience as well.

Bearing on Heidegger's understanding of truth, it becomes apparent how Foucault introduces his new premise of truth while reorienting his use of genealogy. This means that if a temporal reflection is an event created to allow one to see the truth produced by power as something untrue, the condition under which one could be posited in that reflection is nothing other than the truth acting as the moment that opens one to comprehend the untruth of the truth produced by that power. Once I see the operation of power residing in any forms of truth-claim, it comes to mean that I have been let into the moment when that truth-claim is disclosed to be something untrue.

5. Relying on the premise of truth, as the opening moment, the ground of Foucault's critical philosophy is freedom. Like Heidegger, who regards freedom as an essence of truth, Foucault's critical philosophy, which is rested on Heidegger's premise of truth, could be seen as the philosophy of freedom as well. Certainly, this freedom is neither a matter of choice nor an absence of constraint imposed by others. It is, rather, what Heidegger calls 'the letting being be', that is, the moment when the thing enclosed is disclosed into the authentic state, in which it is liberated from what it is usually supposed to be in everyday experience. Freedom, then, is nothing but the contingency residing within the ontology of being. It is something that power tries to foreclose but is unable to discard. This means that behind the operation of power, there is always the possibility of resistance, in which each individual can de-subjectivate, or disengage, themselves from an asymmetrical relationship, where they subjectivate themselves as the object of government.

This surely asserts why Foucault's critical manner could not be expressed through the normative fashion, since his manner presupposes the possibility of power being disrupted, rather than the principle to which one must submit oneself in order to perform a critical task. However, though Foucault could endorse Heidegger's insight of freedom to ground his critical philosophy, his aim of countering the operation of power leads him to advance this insight from the possibility where power can be disrupted, to the act that actualizes this possibility. Freedom, for Foucault, thus, needs to be confirmed objectively through the act that verbalizes truth, which will display concretely the incapability of power in foreclosing the moment of its being critiqued. Foucault calls this act 'truth-telling'. Truth-telling, then, is the act of freedom, or the actualization of freedom, through which one's freedom could be asserted by disrupting the truth produced by the operation of power.

6. In order to fully grasp a feature of truth-telling, Foucault turns to read the ancient philosophical canons, whose feature is not only the theoretical edification of cosmology, but also the forms of practice, as the way to embody its theoretical principle into the concrete level of everyday life. This leads Foucault to pay attention to the precept of care of the self, as the scheme in which he draws out the account of truth-telling from those canons. Here, it is crucial to note that Foucault does not rely on the self as something pre-given, since he views it as the result, rather than the cause, activated when some certain forms of practice, or action, are performed. Foucault's care of the self, then, must not be referred to the state of inwardness that needs to be shielded from any modifications. On the contrary, it should be perceived as the practice entailing an experience that could be changed continuously. Following this, in spite of stressing on the internal condition of the individual, as an autonomous self, Foucault concerns the role of the other, whose otherness establishes a distance giving a mark as a location where the self is constituted by the practice of care. To care of the self, hence, means to activate the practices which take others into account, insofar as the others cannot be decoupled from the reflective moment when the process of self-constitution is triggered.

This has many things to do with Foucault's treatment of truth-telling. Inasmuch as it is the actualization of freedom, truth-telling is the form of action that one needs to take in order to explicate oneself as a free being, who could govern, or determine, one's life without being subjectivated to be an object governed by others. Freedom actualized by the practice of truth-telling is nothing but self-government, or the way one could resist the commands of others, in determining one's own life. On this score, it might be understood that Foucault is proposing his insight of freedom as an anarchical enterprise, in which one can manifest one's freedom individually, with no thought for the positive

extent of the relationship one has with others. Yet, in my understanding, this is not the case for Foucault. As I argue above, truth-telling is the form of action framed by the precept of care of the self, whose feature is inseparable from the care of the others. Freedom, as the self-government concretized by truth-telling, should not be posed in the version of an anarchist, since it illustrates to others how they could determine their life by asserting their capability of disengaging themselves from an asymmetrical relationship, in which they are posited to be the object governed by others. Thus, apart from, the actualization of freedom, the implication we can discern from Foucault's treatment of truth-telling is the vision of a symmetrical relationship, where one could spend one's life with the others in an equal setting. Once one actualizes one's freedom, by telling what one truly thinks, one also asserts the equality one could share in the relationship one has with the other.

7. The model that Foucault takes to be the guideline for his treatment of truth-telling is not the form embedded in the political practice of democratic Athens. Though truth-telling was born in Athenian democracy, it is not fit for Foucault's aim because it was designated to achieve power, rather than to actualize freedom, as the ground of disrupting power. Instead, the model that Foucault seeks to follow is the philosophical life of Socrates. According to Foucault, truth-telling is the crux of Socrates' philosophical life, since this way of life is the engaged life of making dialogue with others, which allowed him to examine his truth in conjunction with the truth of those others. Truth-telling, in other words, is inseparable from Socrates's philosophical life, according to which it is the practice that he performs to challenge and examine others. Foucault's philosophy of Socrates, hence, is the philosophy taking courage to be its backbone, since it, by using truth-telling to confront others, could push him into a dangerous situation where he is

regarded to be the enemy of those with whom he makes dialogue. To live a philosophical life, in the Socratic way, is to live courageously, because this life could make one break away from any relationships one has, and push one into an unpredictable situation, in which one could not estimate the result of one's actions.

Seen from Foucault's aspect, Socrates's practice of truth-telling could introduce a new understanding of politics, as well as the role of the philosopher in relation to it. This understanding of politics has little to do with the institutional framework. Rather, it appears in the concrete level of everyday life. If there is some certain 'political project' in Socrates' philosophy, this project, for Foucault, is nothing but the exhibition of the new political subjectivity, which, by performing the practice of truth-telling, could liberate each individual from the relationship that used to entail them subjectivating themselves as the object of government. This becomes clear if we see that the main effect emerging from Socrates' practice of truth-telling, according to Foucault, is the dispersion of freedom from the institutional framework to the concrete domain of everyday life. Before Socrates' intervention, freedom in Athens was accounted through the institutional framework, as the citizen's right to participate in the process of designating the direction of the city. However, as soon as Socrates practiced his truth-telling, the sense of freedom was widened from the formal institutional arrangement, to the moment of experience when one could determine one's own way of life. Truth-telling, according to which it was the political action displayed by Socrates, was the act of freedom, not in the sense that it allowed those who practiced it to have the right to govern the city, but in the sense that it provided them with the capability to govern their own self. Once one manifests one's courage by telling one's truth, one is embodying the capability to govern one's self, which in turn permits one to live freely on a daily basis.

Dwelling on this point, it could explain why Foucault does not regard Plato to be Socrates's heir, since Plato's metaphysical approach separates truth from freedom, before elevating it into a metaphysical domain, where it is rendered to be a part of the soul conducted by the order of the divine. Thus, Socrates's true heir, according to Foucault, was Diogenes of Sinope, whose Cynic life not only keeps Socrates's spirit in promoting the way of actualizing freedom, but also modified it in a more radical way. Unlike Plato, Diogenes, as conceived by Foucault, was the one who radicalized Socrates's truth-telling, because he did not just actualize truth through the verbal act, but also used his bodily gestures as a stage for displaying it. This means that Diogenes's philosophical life was not merely the life of truth-telling, but the life of embodying truth that breaks the traditional form of life, which usually blinds human from the light of truth. In this way, it means that many disturbing scenes of Diogenes's bodily gestures in public places, such as eating, sleeping, or masturbating, could be nothing less than the staging of truth, manifested through his way of life; the staging which will be affirmed as soon as the conventional form of life is disrupted.

For Diogenes, any conventions were nothing but the distraction from truth, intrinsic to the material dimension of all human bodies. This helps to clarify why Foucault views in Diogenes' philosophical life the other life, as well as the true life. Since Diogenes would have liked to show the general character of humanity, he could claim his life as something true, whilst performing it as the other life, inasmuch as it sought to show how untrue the conventional life was. Diogenes's life was then the life for the revolution; it was the life that, by basing it on the truth of humanity, made battle to all form of conventions, to the extent that those conventions made humans blind to the truth. Diogenes's cynic life was, thus, the radicalization of Socrates's philosophical life, for it not only promoted the experience of self-government, but also proposed the way to

deepen that experience to the project of revolutionizing the world. In other word, if Socrates, as Foucault obtains, was concerned about the form of action allowing the actor to determine and govern his own life, Diogenes was the one who could intensify this concern to the point at which the world-transformation could really be started.

Following the seven sub-arguments that I have just described, it can be summarized that the insight of freedom that we could draw out from Foucault's treatment of truth-telling is the self-determination, or in Foucault's words, the self-government. This summary might categorize Foucault in the group of philosophers, who place 'freewill' at the crux of their concept of freedom. However, though it could be understood in terms of self-determination, Foucault's insight of freedom does not rely on an existence of the freewill, as it relies on the moment when the operation of power is disrupted. What concerns Foucault, when proposing his insight of freedom, is then the form of practice or action that actualizes the moment of disrupting power. Thus, rather than paying attention to the structure of freewill, I account Foucault's insight of freedom by looking at its interrelationship with power, as something it is designed to encounter.

In my opinion, this encounter between power and freedom can be separated, at least, into three layers. The first layer is the layer of truth, where the truth produced by power is disrupted by the truth as the opening moment. This encounter pinpoints two premises that serve the performance of truth situated in the different ontological configurations. On the one hand, truth is the production of power, whose task is to ground the ontological condition under which each individual renders themselves into an asymmetrical relationship, where they subjectivate themselves as the object governed by the other. The highest stage of this case is bio-politics, where truth is placed to be the



ontology underlying the regulation that entails individuals to be the agent, who monitor their own selves according to the order of the market. On the other hand, truth can be the ground of disrupting power, insofar as it is *aletheia*, or the opening moment when things in the everydayness are disclosed as they ontologically are, enabling each individual to see truth produced by power as nothing but power, which has nothing to do with truth. Thus, if power operates itself through truth, in grounding the way in which each individual subjectivates themselves to be an object of government, it could be disrupted only by the truth understood as the opening moment that makes possible how they could de-subjectivate themselves from being an object governed by the others.

This point leads me to the layer of subjectivity, as the second layer of the encounter between freedom and power. The encounter between power and freedom, presented in this second layer, could thus be described as the encounter between *homo economicus* and the philosopher, who lives in a Socratic way of life, as the life of a truth-teller. This means that while Foucault explicates the highest operation of power through the performance of *homo economicus*, he does not forget to advocate its opposition by portraying Socrates' philosophical practice of truth-telling. In other words, if *homo economicus* is the form of subjectivity that obeys the truth, generated by the market, in monitoring its own self, as a part of the governmental mechanism, this form of subjectivity could be countered by Socrates's practice of truth-telling, insofar as this practice constitutes a new experience of subjectivity, whose performance in examining its own truth could allow each individual, who practices it, to govern their own selves.

Drawing insight from the second layer, the third layer of the encounter between power and freedom should be nothing except the encounter within the outlook of freedom itself. This encounter begins with freedom that plays a crucial role in the operation of power, exercised through the market. This freedom is identified through the

principle of non-intervention, which promotes the right of each individual to pursue their own interests. Here, with the fact that it counts only on the performance of the individual, this freedom could be turned to be the operation of power, by imposing on each individual the task of pursuing their interests, which will, in turn, determine their lives in behaving in line with the command of the market. This freedom, thus, entails an experience of self-alienation, to the extent that it lets the market determine each individual's life, in spite of permitting them to determine their own selves. Bearing this in mind, the grounds on which Foucault's critical philosophy is relied for disrupting the operation of power is another identification of freedom, which is nothing but self-determination. If power becomes freedom as non-intervention, the ground on which Foucault stands for countering power is freedom as self-determination. This implies that while freedom in the former case is the condition of self-alienation, freedom in the latter case is the condition under which that process of alienation is undone. To disrupt power is to cancel freedom as non-intervention, that is, to de-alienate those who are alienated, by making them capable of determining their own lives. If Foucault's critical philosophy against power is grounded on his insight of freedom, the aim of this philosophy is nothing other than a demonstration of how to live freely, or put differently, a demonstration of how one could govern or determine one's life concretely.

Viewing Foucault's insight of freedom as self-determination could be the touchstone of my analysis of our contemporary discourse of post-truth politics, viewed through the framework of the interrelationship between truth and freedom. As I presented in the first chapter, what inspired me to investigate Foucault's insight of freedom, and its relationship to the practice of truth-telling, was the puzzle of the interrelationship between truth and freedom in the world of post-truth. To some degree, this puzzle comes

from Wendy Brown's suggestion, which regards the breakdown of democratic order, in our contemporary politics, as a result of the crisis of truth that loses its objective bearing, by the proliferation of a new form of freedom, which unleashes resentment towards democratic order, as well as pleasure in destructing the civilized principles of a liberal society (Brown, 2018: 27-29). Yet, while Brown expresses the interrelationship between truth and freedom in a pessimistic aspect, I would like to propose, by drawing on Foucault insight of freedom, that the freedom that plays a leading role in our world of post-truth politics is an experience of self-determination, whose concretization is made possible by the new form of truth.

Seen from this aspect, post-truth should not be perceived as a nihilistic condition where there is no truth, since it should be viewed as the impossibility of holding truth on objective grounds. This means that alongside the crisis of the objective form of truth, there arises a new understanding of truth, which does not rely on the objective manner. This new understanding of truth, in my view, is the opening moment, when what was regarded as truth is opened to be something untrue. It implies that, if the objective ground of truth is made impossible in a post-truth condition, this is because of the proliferation of the opening moment when that ground is revealed to be untrue. The less truth can claim its objective status, the more it takes up the form of the opening moment. Concerning this, the freedom associated in a post-truth condition should not be considered as only a destructive force towards any political principles. Instead, it should be seen dialectically as a positive condition, under which each individual, who subjectivated themselves as the object governed by an objective order of truth, can de-subjectivate and actualize their capability of self-determination. Not only does freedom in this post-truth condition take a destructive role, but it could also be used to project a possibility of a new political order, where each individual could determine their own life.

Understood in this way, we can see how Foucault's insight of freedom provides a new framework to analyze the interrelationship between truth and freedom, serving as the heart of post-truth politics. Furthermore, this insight can help us to think about the role of truth in many political movements in this post-truth era. To be sure, this point is far from a definitive claim, since there are many parts of it that needs to be fulfilled. However, if there is something worth mentioning here, in a preliminary manner, it is the performance of Diogenes of Sinope, whose true life, as read by Foucault, could expose the untruth of what is generally regarded as truth. As I showed above, Diogenes's life, according to Foucault, was the life that used its body to manifest truth, which not only promoted an experience of self-government, or self-determination, but also triggered the point at which the world-transformation could be started. The main logic lying beneath this move is the expression of untruth through the manifestation of truth. That is to say, when Diogenes actualized his truth through the bodily gesture of his true life, he could at the same time objectively expose the untruth of what many people regarded as truth. The more he manifested his truth, the more the objectivity of that untruth was acknowledged.

At this point, I would like to emphasize that although Diogenes wanted to transform the world by displaying how true his way of life was, what convinced the other people to accept his display did not come from the positive content of his truth. By contrast, what was really at work here was the negative performance operating in Diogenes's life, in the way that it revealed to those other people the untruth of what they had regarded as truth. Diogenes's project of transforming the world did not commence by imposing the content of his own truth to the others. Rather, it was operated through the proliferation of the negative position towards what was generally regarded as truth; the world coming from Diogenes's project did not stem from the positive ontology, since what allowed it to take place was the negative one. "In fact, we should not think that the

Cynic address a handful of individual in order to convince them that they should lead a different life than the one they are leading...He shows all men that they are leading a life other than the one they should be leading...And thereby it is a whole other world which has to emerge, or at any rate be on the horizon...”, Foucault remarked (Foucault, 2011: 314-315).

By looking at the negative performance inherent in Diogenes’s life, as the life of exposing the untruth, we can postulate how Foucault’s insight of freedom could be linked to the collective movements in post-truth politics. This link cannot be explained through an objective content of truth, since it starts from the negative stance towards the untruth of what was regarded as truth. It might therefore be the case that when many people challenge the objective ground of truth, what drives them is not only because they want to destroy that objective truth, but also because they see nothing in those objective grounds, rather than the untruth against which they would like to position themselves. Ironically speaking, the collective demonstrations in the world of post-truth might be demonstrations of truth, not because they could attach the positive content of truth to their goals, but because they are fighting against the untruth, associated with what they are trying to destruct.

But how could this negativity lead to the positive platform of the collective movement? If Diogenes’s philosophical life was the life that made the others skeptical about what they have regarded as truth, how could this skeptical experience be oriented to form a collective mode of politics? With respect to these questions, we should not forget that Foucault treats Diogenes’s life of exposing the untruth through the framework of care of the self, whose aim was not only to actualize freedom in the way each individual spent their life, but also to shed light on the vision of equality that inspired the collective platform in which they could build their symmetrical relationship with each

other. This latter point will be affirmed if we consider that Diogenes's care of the self, according to Foucault, operates by referring to the idea of humankind, whose common reality permitted him to attest any conventions, or traditional values. It means that while Diogenes used his true life to exhibit the untruth of what was formerly regarded as truth, he also promoted the vision of equality, in which the commonness of everyone, as part of humanity, was concretized through the political blueprint that structured their relationship with each other in a symmetrical manner. If freedom materialized through Foucault's cynic life of Diogenes is the capability of self-determination, this freedom must go hand in hand with equality, as it presupposes the symmetrical relationship, in which no one is the object governed by the other. The more each individual see the untruth of what they used to regard as truth, the more they could realize their freedom in determining their own lives, and the more they hold equality as the value they seek to realize in their political setting.<sup>4</sup>

On this premise, by bringing out the vision of equality, it is not an exaggeration to indicate the outlook of the democratic structure in Foucault's insight of freedom, considering that only in democracy will his aim of realizing equality be guaranteed. But, what is the content of this democracy? To what extent does Foucault's vision of equality generate the

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<sup>4</sup>This could also reflect, in a retrospective way, another political implication of Socrates' philosophical life, framed by Foucault's treatment of truth-telling. Since Diogenes advanced his way of life from the life of Socrates, it could say that the vision of equality enshrined in Diogenes' way of life was inspired by Socrates' practice of truth-telling. This is the case if we compare Socrates' truth-telling with the political practice of truth-telling in democratic Athens. Not only did truth-telling in the latter case have the legal constraints in permitting everyone to speak what they truly thought (see Simonton, 2017; Kasimis, 2018: 26-48), it was also the practice of inequality, to the extent that it was the way in which any political candidates must pursue to display their moral supremacy over others. Meanwhile, truth-telling in the former case was the practice that guides any interlocutors, regardless of their status, to disengage themselves from the hierarchical arrangement structures within their everyday life. Hence, in addition to actualize freedom in one's everyday life, Socrates's truth-telling was also the practice of equality, insofar as it enables those who practice it to actualize their freedom, that is, to disengage themselves from an asymmetrical relationship within which they were captured.

democratic formulation? These are the questions I am not able to provide an answer to in this dissertation, since Foucault's unexpected death leaves nothing that we could use to develop from this point. The only way to solve these questions is to supplement Foucault's idea with the theoretical arguments of other democratic thinkers.<sup>5</sup> Hence, it is proper for me to finish my dissertation here. This does not mean that these unsolved questions will be left unanswered. Yet, since every ending entail a possibility of a new beginning, ending my dissertation with these questions could then mean nothing but the projection of my next research, the projection, whose potential, I hope, could be actualized in the near future.

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<sup>5</sup>At this point, as far as I survey, Torben Dyrberg is the only theorist, who tries to account the democratic feature in Foucault's treatment of truth-telling by supplementing it with John Rawls's liberal framework of public reason (Dyrberg, 2014, 2016). However, it seems to me that his reading of Foucault's truth-telling neglects the framework of care of the self, as the scheme within which Foucault derives the form of truth-telling he is eager to advocate. There is no clearer evidence on this point than Dyrberg's persistence of relying on Foucault's reading of Athenian democracy for his interpretation. This not only shows Dyrberg's underestimation of Foucault's account of philosophical truth-telling in the lives of Socrates and Diogenes of Sinope, but also displays the irrelevance of his reading that regards the practice for power, such as telling the truth in the Athenian assembly, to be the model of democracy intrinsic in Foucault's insight of freedom, as the moment when power is disrupted.

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