

Michel Foucault and Antiquity: Between the philosophical historicism and the history of thought*

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Michel Foucault was well known as an epistemologist, historicist, and historian of thought. His analyses of ancient culture are a crucial moment for his doctrine of the becoming of the subject. The Foucaultian version of the ancient legacy in modern and contemporary Western culture shows clearly its aspects in the opposition of Pierre Hadot's doctrine. If Hadot accents the mystic mode of subjectivation, Foucault tends to the modes of dandyism and the esthetics of existence. At the same time, both of them belong to the same tradition in the history of the Western intellectual culture that traces the meaning of the human being in the perfectibility and concern of self. This article detects the roots of Foucaultian historicist position and origins of his conceptualization of the care of the self. The Foucaultian conceptualization mixes platonic concerns of the government of self, Nietzschean critics of Kantianism, and the Heideggerian approach to the philosophy of history, the sum of which in this case is radical historicism. As a result, Foucault proposes a contemporary version of the ancient practice of self and asserts the understanding of philosophy of the self. The author's theses is that the focus of Foucauldian philosophy is the care of self as the basic mode of subjectivation in the political and ethical realms of the Western culture.

Keywords: Michel Foucault, historicism, Pierre Hadot, care of self, subject, subjectivation, esthetics of existence, *parrèsia*.

Strictly speaking, the theme “Michel Foucault and Antiquity” is not so new. To be sure that this theme has high priority, it is sufficient to flip through the collected works published by Princeton University Press: *Rethinking Sexuality: Foucault and Classical Antiquity* [1], or Brendan Boyle's “Foucault Among the Classicists, Again” [2]. There is also Wolfgang Detel's fundamental work, *Foucault and Classical Antiquity* [3], after which there is little more to add. Nevertheless, regarding so ambivalent a figure as Foucault, it is always useful to undertake a series of theoretically important steps that suggest a new treatment of the original understanding of the same character and his oeuvre.

I suggest examining Michel Foucault's philosophy through the prism of his antiquity studies, and to appreciate anew the creative evolution of this French philosopher who revived the stoic tradition of self-attention. My thesis is: despite conventional wisdom about the exceptional roots of Foucault's philosophy (Foucault was a postmodernist in the line-

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age of Kant and Heidegger who then overcame them through Nietzscheanism), Foucault represents the type of stoic philosopher whose genealogy is to be found in classic and later Antiquity. However, I do not intend to deny commonly-known facts about the influence of western philosophy on Foucauldianism. This influence developed across several decades and formed the theoretical corpus of Foucault's ideas. In the register of ethics, however, he remained a figure formed by ancient thought received through traditional catholic education and the philosophical reflection of Friedrich Nietzsche.

By the early 1980's Michel Foucault's thought underwent an important evolution. From researches of *epistemes* and the *archives* he turned to the problematic of power/knowledge, which led him to truly intractable questions about practices that produce and reproduce particular dispositives of power. The answer to that question was the multivolume edition *The History of the Sexuality*.

Foucault describes the line of his reasoning in the Introduction to *Use of Pleasure*: "After first studying the games of truth (*jeux de vérité*) in their interplay with one another, as exemplified by certain empirical sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and then studying their interaction with power relations, as exemplified by punitive practices — I felt obliged to study the games of truth in the relationship of self with self and the forming of oneself as a subject, taking as my domain of reference and field of investigation what might be called 'the history of desiring man.' But it was clear that to undertake this genealogy would carry me far from my original project. I had to choose: either stick to the plan I had set, supplementing it with a brief historical survey of the theme of desire, or recognize the whole study around the slow formation, in antiquity, of a hermeneutics of the self. I opted for the latter..." [4, p. 6].

That Foucault turned to the discursive practices of Antiquity gave rise to unfavorable criticism and still raises bewilderment: Foucault was not a specialist in Antiquity, he had little knowledge of Greek, therefore it had not much use for him; Foucault's work had come to a dead-lock, and his attempt to turn to the great ancient thinkers failed as well, etc. (all of that presents so as something ignominy is in reference to Plato or Marc Aurelius). I will try to show that Foucault's turning to the origins of western thought was a justifiable act in light of the ambitious research program of "the history of thought" as a part of his radical historicism.

The historian Paul Veyne, with whom Foucault often imparted his inventions, notes that "Foucault had a gift for discovering on his own, within no more than a few short months, everything about a particular culture or discipline. Like those polyglots who astonish us when they master a new language within a few weeks (even if they then forget it in order to learn yet another)" [5, p. 25]. This made it possible for him to feel secure in the area of ancient thought, as well as in the sphere of German ordoliberalism (the course "Birth of Biopolitics" [6]), where he was not a specialist, either.

The research program of the late Foucault became the pragmatics of discourse as the analyses of that what in some way or another touches the speaking subject and the meaning of his sentence (see the lecture of 12 January 1983). Although the "archeological" project of the 1960s was positivistic (Foucault himself named it a "happy positivism", and Paul Veyne noted that he was "a sceptic thinker who believed only in the truth of facts, the countless historical facts that fill the pages of his books" [5, p. 1]) and takes into consideration only the sentences in the frameworks of someone or other *episteme* (that was *really* spoken but not that could had spoken), now him engages in "the ontologies of

truth discourses”. Foucault takes interest in the formation-transformation of the subject of a sentence as an effect of this very sentence, moreover, in the dependence of the sentence’s meaning on the status of the speaker and situation. Thus, one sees the connection between the research projects of 1960s and 1970s here.

In 1983 Foucault’s course at the College de France was dedicated to problems of power, the precise government of self, and so on. The preceding works armed the philosopher with a set of tools that allowed him to avoid two extremities: the conception of power as domination and its disclosure as the simulacrum that he noted in the introduction to *The History of Sexuality*. In the limelight of his studies the “democratic man” as “man of desire” becomes the focus of his interest.

This formulation that returns in *The Use of Pleasure*, when Foucault considered the “democratic man” if Plato’s *Republic* through the prism of his “wishes”. In the second volume of *The History of Sexuality*, written contemporaneously with later courses at College de France, he says strictly that he sees his task as the actualization of a *genealogy* of the desiring subject, which means “to analyze the practices by which individuals were led to focus their attention on themselves, to decipher, recognize, and acknowledge themselves as subjects of desire, bringing into play between themselves and themselves a certain relationship that allows them to discover, in desire, the truth of their being” [4, p. 5]. This permits the subject “the self government” that is necessary for “the government by others”. But if *The Use of Pleasure* researches the hermeneutics of desire, in his lectures Foucault turns to the hermeneutics of discourse, or rather discursive practices.

There is *parrèsia* at the center of his attention; *parrèsia* is the proposition of truth. This is a truth discourse, the different aspects of which Foucault so skillfully illustrates in the ancient texts. But the *parrèsia* interests him not as it is, but as the instrument of self government and government by others. *Parrèsia* is the result of possession by one’s own wishes and affects. And the faculty to possess oneself that achieves by the way of incessant exercises is nothing short of freedom, as Foucault writes in *The Use of Pleasure*. “The freedom that needed establishing and preserving was that of the citizens of a collectivity of course, but it was also, for each of them, a certain form of relationship of the individual with himself” [4, p. 79]. If the political constitution determines the form of the individual’s self-attitudes, then the individual’s freedom, considering as the individual’s power over oneself, is necessary for the state in general. This freedom “in its full, positive form it was the power that one brought to bear on oneself in the power that one exercised over others” [4, p. 80]. Consequently, the exercise of political power demands power by oneself. The art of freedom is the game of power.

But the *parrèsia* is not only free speech. This is recognition in a double sense, as recognition of the state of things and as the confession. Paul Ricoeur, who runs along a parallel way and divaricates with Foucault, in his later work *The Course of Recognition* designs two means of this notion: active (to recognize something or someone) and passive (to be recognized or to claim recognition). Thereat Ricoeur supposes that “the potential philosophical uses of the verb to recognize can be organized along a trajectory running through its use in the active voice of its use in the passive voice” [7, p. 19]. Foucault exactly ensued this trajectory: the truth proposition permits to parresias to obtain recognition from others and to exert an influence on them.

Foucault was not the first analyst of the theme of “guiding by the soul”. Among his predecessors are Paul Rabow, the author of *Seelenführung, Methodik der Exerziten in der Antike* (1954), which treats similar practices of epicureans and stoics; Iseltraut Marten, the

author of the dissertation “Seneca and Spiritual Direction in Antiquity”, and especially her husband Pierre Hadot, who worked hand to hand with Foucault at the College de France. A propos, in 1982 Foucault spearheaded Hadot’s election to the College de France. Foucault infrequently averts to Hadot in his own books. (In the Introduction to *The Use of Pleasure*, he notes that conversance with Hadot’s works and intimate conversations aided him when operating with ancient texts, where he was not a specialist; and in his lectures of 1982–1983 he adverts delightedly Hadot’s contribution on the models of proseliting in Western culture [8, p. 216].) Meanwhile, they had many common items. Foucault read his texts and inquired for some expressions in the letters of Seneca to Lucilius, and perhaps their collaboration would be very productive, but Foucault’s death impeded it. However, Foucault carefully read Hadot’s book on spiritual exercises that he recommended for his audience at the College de France.

I consider that parallels between the late Foucault’s oeuvre and Hadot’s searching are rather interesting. Indeed, both of them are satisfied that the meaning of philosophy and its only ambition consist of self-transformation. Hadot uses the expression “spiritual exercises”, meaning the volitive personal practice destined for the individual’s self-transformation. But in spite of intuitive commonness, Hadot rejects the Foucauldian term “self practices”: we are not practicing ourselves, he says, we are practicing exercises that lead to self-transformation.

While on the subject of the platonic lifestyle, Hadot distinguishes three aspects: the ambition to exercise political influence, the tradition to discuss and to train, and intellectualism that departs from Socrates. All of these aspects we find in Foucault’s oeuvre, as he presents the corners of “*parrêsia* orthogone” (however don’t bind them with exclusively with platonic tradition): the influence, truth expression, rationality. There might be a fourth corner: personal courage, the readiness to risk. There is evidence of a clash of opinion between the two authors: “spiritual exercises” aims only to self-transformation, whereas “self-practices” suppose some declaration of personal qualities. Foucault emphasizes this aspect when he adverts to Pericles’ speeches Thucydides recital. At the same time both Foucault and Hadot are convinced that for the care of the others one needs to transform oneself. And the self-transformation consists in the care of the others.

Hadot admits two points in his distinction with Foucault. First, he was grounded in the ancient tradition not of “self practices”, but of aspirations to rise by oneself. Second, he supposes that the ethical model that applies to contemporary circumstances leads directly to dandyism. However, Foucault himself accepted it. Hadot emphasized that the philosophical act for Antiquity is not the reproduction of doctrine or the interchange of views between teacher and disciple, but in first instance and *par excellence* the art of living that involves all of human existence. “...Philosophy... appears in the first place, as a therapeutic of the passions... Each school had its own therapeutic method, but all of them linked their therapeutics to a profound transformation of the individual’s mode of seeing and being” [9, p. 83]. The ancient philosophical schools, Hadot says, agree that the human that is in the grip of passions is not himself, and that he can arrive to his rational nature through the agency of spiritual exercises.

The philosophy of the Hellenistic age, according to Hadot, is primarily and essentially A lifestyle, i. e. both and certain moral behavior, and the mode of self-transformation. Philosophy is love of wisdom, and wisdom is not simple enough to permit to recognition, but it forces the lover of wisdom to exist in another mode. The involvement in wisdom pro-

vides tranquility of the soul, internal freedom, and the awakening of the self as the part of the universe. Philosophy for Antiquity is not a far-fetched idea, but primarily an activity.

Foucault agrees with Hadot in most of the above-mentioned moments. In his lectures of 1983, he emphasized that in Plutarch's text we detect that Plato is not the only theorist, and not so much the tutor as the *parresias* who practices exposing to the direct the speaking of truth, because his philosophy makes him such. To Hadot the central moment is the transformation of the philosopher soul, as well as the soul of he who *a fortiori* becomes the philosopher in his life. To Foucault what is essential is the other — how exercising the influence on the disciple's soul, whether it be the respectful listener or the bloody-minded tyrant. He is interested in the influence, i. e. the intervention of power. Although Hadot renders homage to the political register of the philosophical practice, he considers its main effect not the constitution of the powers of discourses, but the formation of the philosophical lifestyle.

Hadot himself resumed the similarity of his own ideas with Foucault's. They agree with one another in the idea of philosophy as lifestyle and art of life. However, Hadot disagrees with Foucault's expression of "the esthetics of life", because the contemporary sound of "esthetics" is totally unlike the ancient "beauty". Furthermore, he says, ancient philosophers sought so much *beauty* as *goodness*. Thus, Hadot prefers to speak not about "the self culture", but about the "self-exceeding", sure in Antiquity that was not the case of creation of self as the masterpiece of art. It is Hadot's opinion is that Foucault too obstinate centralizes of the "self" (*soi*). That what he called "the self practices", i. e. the movement of interiorization, is inseparable from the ascension to the highest psychical level, from the exteriorization and the universalization. "What I am afraid of is that, by focusing his interpretation too exclusively on the culture of the self, the care of the self, and conversion toward the self — more generally, by defining his ethical model as an aesthetics of existence — M. Foucault is propounding a culture of the self which is *too* aesthetic. In other words, this may be a new form of Dandyism, late twentieth-century style" [9, p.211].

Hadot's historical objections are that of philosophical practices of Stoics and Platonists are not reduced to the "self culture", but had as a main goal the sense of unity with the entire universe and from this perspective transforms the sensation of the self. Foucault ought to look attentively to the Epicureans, whose innormative ethics would fit him if was not for difficulties with integrating hedonism in Foucault's scheme of the use of pleasure. The cause of that, according to Hadot, is that Foucault not only proposed an historical analysis, but attempted to develop a model about contemporary man. So, the discord of Hadot and Foucault are the discord of ecologism and dandyism.

Hadot designates the goal of his effort: to see the Universe as a Whole and therefore mankind as a Whole, where there exists not the only one but the other. His ambition leads not only to a dissipation of the I in the cosmic, but also to the possibility to appeal to the other. Perhaps he wrongly reproaches Foucault in the excessive concern on the I, sure that the Foucauldian "self-concern" initially supposes the meeting with the other as guided, "gouverné"; the self-transformation, the government by self is the first step to the government by others. Foucault struggled with this task of appealing to other rather more successfully than Hadot, who needs a long ambiguous demarche. In his book on Plotinus he wrote: "Here we have the whole paradox of the human self: we only are that of which we are aware, and yet we are aware of having been more fully ourselves precisely in those moments when, raising ourselves to a higher level of inner simplicity, we lose our self-awareness" [10, p.32]. According to Foucault, we are not only those, whom we represent

ourselves; we rather experience becoming, taking care of this becoming. Here one could mention Lacanian missing subject, whose gaping induces us to take care of its creation. Hadot says that philosopher strives to miss his I in the ecstatic states. Since his vaunted “death of the subject”, Foucault claims, that this *I* exists as neither an entity, nor a trans-historical universal, but may be obtained as a result of the certain efforts. To put it in a nutshell, while Hadot is anxious about to break up with *I* (at any rate, as with self-sufficient and non-correlating with some Absolute), Foucault is striving to acquire *I*. These practices are not opposite to one another, on the contrary, they are two sides of one and the same gesture, so there is no serious contradiction between these two philosophers.

Another figure that must be mentioned in the connection of later Foucault's oeuvre is Paul Veyne, for whom Foucault, during his works on his last volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, recounts by night what he discovered by the day, and whereof *The Use of Pleasure* says: “He knows what the true historian's search for truth is about, but he also knows the labyrinth one enters when one sets out to trace the history of the games of truth and error. He is one of those individuals (rare nowadays) who are willing to face the hazard that the history of truth poses for all thought” [4, p. 8]. Indeed, Veyne splits with Foucault in his interest of the history of truth and his anti-phenomenological approach (both cases are historicist acts). The self-practices do not proceed from some self-sustained instance like the *cogito*; they establish the instance that always depends of the form of its recognition. There are not universals in the history of truth. But the phenomenology has one more sin (that is just the other side of what Veyne was talking), that Paul Ricoeur noticed: “What for sociologist comes first as given, is last for the phenomenologist as constituted” [7, p. 156]. Foucault's “happy positivism” lets him to see the Social as given primarily, but not as constituting in terms of the capabilities of reason, i. e. as the historical fact, as the “rarity” (the expression of Veyne), but not as the universals. He is not engaged in interpretation, he admits for the researcher the right to interpret, but he never forgets that there are texts as they are behind any interpretation. The last engages Foucault, that lets Veyne talk of his “hermeneutic positivism” [5, p. 31]. (Foucault shows clearly the essence of his “hermeneutical positivism” in his course “The Birth of Biopolitics”: “...Instead of deducing concrete phenomena from universals, or instead of starting with universals as an obligatory grid of intelligibility for certain concrete practices, I would like to start with these concrete practices and, as it were, pass these universals through the grid of these practices” [6, p. 3])

Finally, it is very interesting to appeal to the course that was given by Heidegger in 1942-1943 and published in German in 1982. I am referring the course dedicated to Parmenides. Probably Foucault was not acquainted with this text, but Heidegger develops ideas that he continually exposed in his earliest works and, for sure, was well known to Foucault. In the first instance, there is a striking similarity between the Heideggerian understanding of *aletheia* as non-understatement, and the Foucauldian reading of *parrêsia* as *dire-vrai*, the speaking of truth. In both cases the truth is not the only information about some real state of affairs, but the active process that touches the same essence implicated to the individual. It is no coincidence that Heidegger insists that ever since the Empire, the polarity of non-understatement was not the understatement but the falsity, so that the truth was understand as the non-falsity. In the same way Foucault insists the platonic idea that in the bad, degenerate democracy the polarity of parrasiastic speaking of truth is not its ignorance or suppression, but the utterance of flattering speeches that are agreeable to the tyrant or the plebs. The polarity of the “good” *parrêsia* is the ignorance of truth or the inability to pronounce it.

Heidegger accused Nietzsche of comprehending the Greek world in the Roman manner, i. e. properly in modern style, and asserts that “since the time of the *Imperium*, the Greek word ‘political’ has meant something Roman” [11, p.45]. The point is that, Heidegger says, in following the Roman, the West considers the false as the polarity of the true. The Hellenic *aletheia* since Plato turns into “correctness”, however the same Plato and even Aristotle still reserves the meaning of *disclosure* that was later entirely loosed, so in Nietzsche’s texts *veritas* becomes “the rightness”. Justice is “the fundamental form of the will to power”, and “the will to power... is in essence command” [11, p.53]. Foucault himself is not so far from this idea, therefore Heidegger’s accusation against Nietzsche indirectly involves him. But really he loosed *aletheia* as the non-suppression? Rather he did, and rather consciously.

Apparently Foucault would agree with Heidegger in that “History’, conceived essentially, that is, thought in terms of the ground of the essence of Being itself, is the transformation of the essence of Being itself, is the transformation of the essence of truth” [11, p.55]. Or rather Foucault would admit the second part of this assertion, because the idea that history may be comprehended on the basis of an entire foundation of being hardly seems to him a fortunate idea. The same as for the speculation of “exceptional events”, when history seems to stop, and these very occasions appear to be “triggers for history”. As we already talked following P. Veyne, Foucault treats the “rarities” strictly eventful, or positivistic. Just as Heidegger suggests to treat the events as the destiny or fate. That is precisely his historicism.

However, both Heidegger and Foucault reject what was named “historiographic” comprehension of history, wherein any epoch, except our own, conceives to be irrevocably gone and left just some certain universals after itself. “The obeisance before the ‘eternal values’ of past cultures is the basic form in which historiographers take leave of history without experiencing it at all and destroy all sense for tradition and dialogue” [11, p.113]. This is precisely the history that Foucault tried to murder — in strong expression of Sartre who asserts this position. He is not the historian *sensu stricto*, he is an historicist *sensu lato*.

The “non-suppression” whereof Heidegger speaks is a strictly metaphysical concept. However, its metaphysic just permits an approximation to the Greeks and to comprehend them not through the prism of the posterior Hellenism or the imperial conscience, but indirectly. Foucault attempts the “primordial” in the history of thought. For Heidegger this is the sort of hermeneutics which is Foucault’s starting point. Foucault does not believe in our capability to inspect the world and ourselves through the eyes of IV century A. C. Greeks. He offers to take into account only what the Greeks had left for us, paying no attention to the other. More that this turns out to be the intellectual’s fantasy. Foucault offers “the hermeneutic of subject”. He searches in the history of thought not for the “primordial”, but for “revolving” points. “It seems to me that the stake, the challenge for any history of thought, is precisely that of grasping when a cultural phenomenon of a determinate scale actually constitutes within the history of thought a decisive moment that is still significant for our modern mode of being subjects” [8, p.9].

The “self-concern” is nothing short of the translation of the Greek *epimeleia heautou*. The question is not only of self-transformation, as Hadot says, but a certain guiding by the self, by one’s own behavior and the lifestyle. For certain, the self-concern motivates the philosopher to abandon what leads to wealth and power, as did Socrates, for example. Or, vice versa, he dips into the political life while neglecting its risks, as did Socrates’ student

Plato when he was anxious not to turn to the pure *logos*. Thus “the need to be concerned about the self is linked to the exercise of power”. Even more, “care of the self: the point at which the notion emerges is here, between privilege and political action” [8, p. 36]. Herein is the important concept of *parrêsia*: the capacity to speak truth is given by right of nativity and is a citizen of privilege, but at the same time this is a political activity pregnant with risk but permits to lug away the others. Foucault permanently emphasizes both of these moments. Although this is the privilege, it can be neglected if the political life of the State was abandoned; in any case you don’t run the risk, but don’t care by yourself. The philosopher who does not interrupt politics becomes pure discourse. Self-concern is not the only charge on the one’s own soul; it makes individual not the same like others. And the individual who care by self is capable to affect on others, to lug away the others, to rule by the others.

Foucault persistently emphasizes Plato’s idea that philosophy shouldn’t directly interrupt politics, but should speak the truth about politics and political figures, because it needs politics as the examination of its reality and must to speak truth about politics and political figures. As a result, the philosophizing subject and the subject that engages in politics must congregate into identity. Philosophy that does not must transform into politics. And political people who do not must turn to theoretical philosophy and neglect to neglect the present day. Here Jean-Luc Nancy’s formulation is relevant: “... This horizon — that of political philosophy in the fullest sense (not as the “philosophy of politics” but the philosophy as politics) — might very well be what points to the singular situation where our history gets under way and, at the same time, blocks access to this situation. Or instead, this horizon might be that which, in the course of its history, gives an indication of its own deconstruction and exposes this situation anew in another way. “Philosophy and politics” is the exposition of this situation. But it is a disjunctive exposition, because the situation itself is disjunctive” [12, p. 23]. Foucault shows lightly that our historical situation, in spite of its unique character, has Greek roots. “Philosophy and politics” are really a disjunction. Philosophy will no longer to be philosophy if its turns into politics. The politics turns out unable, if it is reduced to philosophy or if the political person will examine his own acts by philosophy. However, the core of philosophy and politics constitutes the core of our historical situation, as we know at least since Kant’s age, when there arose this situation that asked itself a question on its own essence.

In 1984 Foucault emphasized the fact that he discussed before, but not yet began considering as the main in the process of subjectivation, that is speaking of truth demands one’s personal courage. Of course, this was discussed in 1983. It is clear that it takes great courage to stand face to face with the tyrant or the corrupting crowd and throw at them the offensive and wounding truth. In another words, speaking truth raises a question about the State constitution that makes this speaking possible or, vice versa, impossible, as well a question on the personal *êthos*, on the moral formation of subject (more precisely, on the individual’s formation in the moral subject), i. e. on that virtue that let him speaking courageous the truth in spite of the dangers that can be followed by that. The question of the political constitution that poses a philosophical space in its turn raises questions of the *parrêsia* and *êthos*. Finally, the question of *êthos* presupposed questions of the political sphere and of the possibility to speaking truth. Thus, in Foucault’s last course, the diad *parrêsia* / *politeia* turns into the triad *parrêsia* / *politeia* / *êthos*. Foucault returns to the ethical problematic — to the problematic of self-concern — and provides it through the

registers of knowledge and power. And it is true that the care of the self was inseparable from the care of others since Antiquity.

Foucault entitled his last course “The courage of truth”. Here he offers the project of the new history of philosophy that must be not a history of doctrines, but of lifestyles. If in the first part of “The Government of the Self” (the 1983 course) Foucault placed an accented on Plato’s idea of the impossibility of philosophy as a fundamental discourse, but only as a history of philosophy, now we achieved a substantial addition: philosophy must be (in any case, it may be) the history of the esthetics of existence. We can say that Foucault takes seriously Lucian’s joke (in his “Philosophies for Sale”), and that was beginning as the research oriented on the construction of the ontology of desire transformed into the ethical practice, in many ways similar both to the ancient parrhesiastic practice and, on the other side, to esthetical self-modeling of the XIX century in the spirit of Baudelaire and Wilde.

I suppose it would not be overstating the case to say that Foucault’s analysis of traditions of ancient thought — Platonism, cynicism, stoicism — has a hard anti-democratic character. Democracy is not the government of the majority (that is plainly impossible), but government on behalf of the majority. However, this majority conducts a bad lifestyle and does not care about its own salvation; on its own, corporal and spiritual health and doing its own life are glorious. Therefore, there is not nothing good in democracy, if the best citizens (who always are the minority) does not lug away the majority. But the majority always strings along with the worst, who humor its weaknesses and depravities and are not upset it by their convictions and appeals. Thus, the best men (i. e. those who care about the self and others) always happens to be adversaries of democracy. The alternatives of this last are monarchy (government of the superior or who listens to the councils of superiors) or the aristocracy (government of superiors that translates through the right of the birth). Superiors appeal to the other life whose horizon is the other world, that may be comprehended in different ways.

The execution of the best of man — Socrates — by Athenian democracy was explained thus since Antiquity. The first in the series of authors that treats democracy as power of the worst under the best was Plato, who noted fairly that in democracy the worse lugs away the crowd, because they know how to flatter them. Aristotle tried to resolve this problem in another register: is it necessarily that the worse are the most poor and the best are the most wealthy? His answer was negative: not necessarily. The naïve Nietzscheanism claims to define these worse men as men with the lack of will to power; Nietzscheanism in deleuzian treatment — as a men reactive par excellence. However, Foucault himself apparently does not accept any of this.

It appears that he was inclined to contemplate the death of Socrates in different registers. First, in the moral register, where Socrates by his life and death establishes as a virtue individual, as a man of truth, and ultimately — as a man of *parrèsia*. He turns out to be the best because he stays in truth, different from the lives of fellow citizens (who appear in for most part to be the worst) — this is a different life, emphasizes Foucault. Second, in the political register where the death of Socrates appears as evidence of the transformation of good democracy into bad. Within good democracy and even within tyranny, this great man carries out the mission sent by the gods, motivating people to care by the self, and within the bad democracy he was executed. Third, in the register of ethics: for the life of Socrates was a truly beautiful life: Socrates makes himself to be a piece of art. And here takes its rights/ tales its place a very important for Foucault topic of the esthetics of existence, that lets him draw a line from Antiquity to Modernity.

Foucault can mistakes about this or that phenomenon of the Ancient culture or to exaggerate its values. And the principal concept of the late Foucauldian work — “the care of self” — that pretending on the radical and maybe unprecedented in the western science rupture in the domain of thought ontology, at the same time has rather shaky fundament. At the same time an acquaintance with his texts can change the reader’s view, but it won’t let him to use Foucault’s “methodology” because there is not anything methodological there. There is an assemblage of research methods and procedures that perpetually changes in terms in terms of the Foucauldian analyses’ goals and tasks and the objects of the Foucauldian analyses. It means that any analyst following Foucault must elaborate his own view and methodological orienting points.

The history of thought is not the same as metaphysical speculation; it develops by its own implicit principles, and the principal is here to decide the valid methodological perspective that lets to see not the reflection of its own discourse but the reality of researching dispositives. For the principal enemy for the researcher is the seduction to see his own epoch in others. Michel Foucault hopefully avoids this seduction that he called “the lucky positivism”. This “lucky positivism” bears fruit: Foucault succeeds to elude the univariate and plain representation of the reality of the Ancient culture; more importantly, he succeeds to elude any “culturology” when he permanently moves in the ontological horizon; and finally, he sets the style of the analysis that cannot to be repeat literally and to use as a working grill, to increment mechanically the material of researching, but serves itself as the index of the creative perspective. Herein is the grandeur of Foucault and his uniqueness.

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Мишель Фуко и античность: между философским историзмом и историей мысли*

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Мишель Фуко хорошо известен как эпистемолог, историцист и историк мысли. Обращение к античной культуре является ключевым моментом в его доктрине становления субъекта. Фукольдиданская версия античного наследия в современной западной культуре отчетливо демонстрирует моменты его расхождения с концепцией Пьера Адо. Если Адо делает акцент на мистическом аспекте субъективации, то Фуко склоняется к дендизму и эстетике существования. Однако в то же время оба они принадлежат к одной и той же традиции в истории западной интеллектуальной культуры, усматривающей смысл человеческого существования в достижении совершенства и заботе о себе. Основанием позиции Фуко, в перспективе ведущей его к закономерному расхождению как с позицией Адо, так и с традиционной историографией, служит оригинальная версия историзма, критически преодолевающая историзм классической эпохи и ориентированная на ницшеанство. В статье выявляются истоки позиции Фуко и корни предложенного им типа концепта заботы о себе. В концепте Фуко смешиваются платонические идеи об управлении собой, ницшеанская критика кантианства и хайдеггерианский подход к изучению истории философии, общей суммой которых в его случае является философский историзм. В результате Фуко предлагает современную версию античной практики заботы о себе и предлагает свое понимание философии самости. Автор выдвигает тезис о том, что в центре философии Фуко помещается концепт заботы о себе как основного способа субъективации в политической и нравственной областях западной культуры.

Ключевые слова: Мишель Фуко, историзм, Пьер Адо, забота о себе, субъект, субъективация, эстетика существования, парресия.

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