Foucault Studies

INTRODUCTION SPECIAL ISSUE

Foucault and Roman Antiquity: Foucault's Rome Introduction

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ABSTRACT: This introductory chapter situates the Classical within Foucault's philosophical work and summarizes the complex reaction of Classical scholars to Foucault's work. To do so, it considers the issue of freedom of the self in society as explored by Foucault. This issue is, we suggest, the axis around which the Classical works operate: we argue that Foucault's Classical turn was an encounter with the problematics and possibilities of freedom for and in the self. The possibility of discovering in the antique (and especially the Roman) not just a philosophy of freedom but a praxis of freedom that might be reformulated within the modern gives political and philosophical importance to Foucault's Rome. Consequently, and as a first step in assessing the viability of Foucault's project, it becomes crucial to understand whether these ethical practices could provide a measure of freedom in Imperial Rome itself, and secondarily, whether those ethics are desirable modes for modern life.

Keywords: Habermas, rationality, freedom, sexuality, reception, Greek love, Classics, self

For the back cover of an edition of Hurley's 1986 translation of *Le Souci de Soi*, the publishers made the surprising choice to print a long extract from a review in the *London Review of Books* by Roy Porter:

> At the peak of his powers, Foucault abandoned his protracted war against everyday intelligibility and familiar intellectual forms, and revealed himself the superb practitioner of conventional intellectual history. [1]

Porter's ambivalence shows an unease among historians about Foucault the Philosopher, just as philosophers were uncertain about Foucault the Historian.[2] But his reading suggests a resolution

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[1] Roy Porter, "Sex in the Head," *London Review of Books* 10.13 (July 1988), 13-14; Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality, 3*, translated by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1986).

and that Foucault's final book was making peace with "conventional" historical scholarship. In a similar vein, Michael Ignatieff's review of both *L'Usage des Plaisirs* and *Le Souci de Soi* in the *Times Literary Supplement* concludes with:

> It is a genealogy of the present which breaks with his previous work and with the tradition which, since Weber, has sought to define the modern in terms of the particular distinctiveness of post-Reformation asceticism. It is a testament to a dying man's courage that his last work should have thrown over the traces not merely of the work of others, but of twenty-five years of his own.[3]

These early reviews reflect an Anglophone perception that the last two volumes of the *History of Sexuality* were significantly different from Foucault's earlier work; a perception that is also reflected in later academic receptions (see below).[4] By contrast, in this introduction we argue that Foucault's Classical volumes, though sometimes puzzling and often eccentric, should be understood as a continuation and elaboration of his philosophical project: in his engagement with Greece and Rome, Foucault found a new way of talking about his favorite themes of the formation of the self, sexuality, freedom, and power.[5] In so doing, he opened an avenue of communication between the Classical past and the present, offering Rome (and Greece) as a critical point of reflection on the modern; simultaneously, Foucault's modern interests shine a distinctive and often transformatory light on our understanding of the antique. From the world of Anglophone scholarship, this was a radical step, conjoining ancient and modern concerns in ways uncomfortable for the academy. For French intellectuals, the comparative and associative method was, both for Classicists and philosophers, much more familiar and central to a tradition of intellectual activity.[6]

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[2] See François Wahl, "Inside or outside philosophy? L'Archéologie du savoir, L'Usage des plaisirs, Le Souci de soi," in Timothy J. Armstong (ed.) *Michel Foucault Philosopher* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 65-79.

[3] Michael Ignatieff, "Anxiety and Asceticism," *Times Literary Supplement* 4252 (September 28, 1984), 1071.

[4] James Boswell, "Good Sex at Home in Ancient Rome," *New York Times* (18th January 1987), BR31, also puzzles over the connection to the earlier works coming to no conclusion as to what the volume is actually about. Classicist reviewers appear to have been less bothered by the intellectual trajectory of Foucault's oeuvre.

[5] In a 1984 interview and in response to a question about the relationship of the Classical volumes to his other work, Foucault said, "In this respect, these books are completely similar to those that I wrote on madness or punishment… What I tried to do was a history of the relationships that thought maintains with the truth, the history of thought insofar as it is thought about the truth." See Michel Foucault, "The Concern for truth," in Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, and translated by John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1989), 455-64.

[6] See especially remarks in the introduction to Paul Allen Miller, *Postmodern Spiritual Practices: The Construction of the Subject and the Reception of Plato in Lacan, Derrida, and Foucault* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007). For the French intellectual engagement with the Classical, see also Miriam Leonard, *Athens in Paris: Ancient Greece and the Political in Post-War French Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

This collection mirrors Foucault's Classical engagement: it operates not as a march down a one-way street from past to present, but as an intellectual *passeggio* from present to past and past to present. Foucault establishes Rome as a point of critical perspective. But this perspective also enables historians of Rome to "speak back" to Foucault and to use the history of Rome to reassess, reflect upon, criticize, and advance the dialogue. Not only does this process of speaking back reflect on our understanding of antiquity, but also on the broader Foucauldian project of an understanding of the modern. Three decades after the publication of the Classical volumes, after a generation of post-Foucauldian scholarship, it seems apposite for cultural historians to revisit Foucault's Rome.[7]

In the introduction, we will attempt to situate the Classical within Foucault's philosophical work and summarize the complex reaction of Classical scholars to Foucault's work. This will be far from a comprehensive survey, aiming merely to point to some areas of confusion and miscommunication and attempting to explain why these have arisen. This is to set the scene for these fresh engagements with Foucault's work from scholars whose primary foci of research have not centred on Foucault, but who have been, by disparate paths, brought into contact with his work. The essays themselves critique and modify Foucault's perception (or assumption) of the nature of the difference between the modern and the antique. Each approach finds in Foucault a challenge that modifies understandings of the antique and the role of the antique in the modern. In so doing, we will examine issues of reception (further discussed by Willis and Hammer), the self (as debated by Porter and Alston), and the embedding of political practices of power and sovereignty in Roman society (Hammer and Bhatt) with consequences for practices of truth in politics (Bhatt and Willis) and the speaking of truth (Alston and Bhatt).

These discussions overlap in notable ways that are summarized towards the end of the introduction. The introduction itself picks a single thread through these issues: the issue of freedom of the self in society as explored by Foucault. All our contributors are engaged in the issue of the extent to which the self and its political stance(s) are produced in and constricted by the social. This issue is, we suggest, the axis around which the Classical works operate.[8] Taking together the two volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, the various interviews, and the lectures, it seems that Foucault's Classical turn was an encounter with the problematics and possibilities of freedom for and

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[7] David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, Froma I Zeitlin, "Introduction" in David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, Froma I Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 3-20, ironically apologize for working with a non-Classicist philosopher (5). Thirty-six years later, that apology is still often demanded, but will not be forthcoming here.

[8] Foucault was notably reticent in referencing his interlocutors and it is often difficult to understand against whom he is addressing his critiques. Much of his work is in close engagement with contemporaries in the French philosophical establishment, especially Deleuze and Derrida, and this strand is explored in Paul Allen Miller, *Postmodern Spiritual Practices*, 178-226.

in the self. The possibility of discovering in the antique (and especially the Roman) not just a philosophy of freedom, but a praxis of freedom that might be reformulated within the modern gives political and philosophical importance to Foucault's Rome. Consequently, and as a first step in assessing the viability of Foucault's project, it becomes crucial to understand whether these ethical practices could provide a measure of freedom in Imperial Rome itself and secondarily, whether those ethics are desirable modes for modern life.[9]

Before *L'Usage des Plaisirs* and *Le Souci de Soi*, Foucault's archaeologies and genealogies had studiously avoided the Classical.[10] Indeed, his "histories of the present" disparaged the never-ending search for origins that would have drawn him back to Greece and Rome.[11] In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault writes:

> We must be ready to receive every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption; in the punctuality in which it appears, and in that temporal dispersion that enables it to be repeated, known, forgotten, transformed, utterly erased, and hidden far from all view, in the dust of books. Discourse must not be referred to the distant presence of the origin, but treated as and when it occurs.[12]

The history of the present demands that the various formative discourses be traced back to explore their irruption, but there is no need to trace the ultimate origins of ideas. Foucault's archaeologies and genealogies found those irruptions from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. He famously and powerfully concludes *Discipline and Punish* with reference to the host of disciplinary technologies and institutions that emerged relatively contemporaneously to form modernity.[13] In such a context, any Classical traces within the discourses are misleading and of no importance, since although there might be morphological similarities between Classical and modern ideas, it is the grouping of ideas into epistemological families that give them their particular in-

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[9] On the second of these questions, Foucault was studiously ambiguous. In Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, Helmut Becker, Alfredo Gomez-Müller and J. D. Gauthier, "The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom: an interview with Michel Foucault on January 20, 1984," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 12 (1987), 112-31, Foucault says that the ethics of the care of the self could be usefully relearnt, but anew rather than from the old, and in another 1984 interview, Michel Foucault, "The Return of Morality," in Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, and translated by John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1989), 465-73, the Greeks are dismissed as being in "profound error."

[10] See Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, translated by Betsy Wing (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 15-40, on Foucault's intensive Classical education.

[11] As laid out in Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 30-1.

[12] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), 27.

[13] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 308.

fluence.[14] These epistemological families generate an overall epistemological system that reinforces particular discourses through their similarities in form, rendering them paradigmatic.

This perception is profoundly contrary to a conventional narrative in which the Western origins of modernity are located in the rediscovered inheritance from Greece and Rome. Such a narrative offers a "flat" version of reception in which the "represencing" of a Classical idea leads to that idea having a continuous place in the modern intellectual repertoire. As Willis points out below, such an approach fails to account for the fashionability (and unfashionability) of particular Classical texts: even major authors such as Ovid, Lucan, Tacitus, and Plato have had periods of relative neglect. Nor does the traditional narrative explain why particular Classical ideas might be in circulation within a scholarly community for centuries before they acquire powerful contemporary resonances. Consequently, the Foucault of *Discipline and Punish* could be described as anti-Classical since his history of the present reduced the Classical to a subordinate status.[15]

Foucault's break with convention, even leftist philosophical convention, becomes obvious in comparison with Horkheimer and Adorno's 1947 *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.[16] Horkheimer and Adorno were working in a similar territory to Foucault, though he was later to claim not to know their work (see below). They traced the dynamics of the Western self of the Enlightenment in the cultural origins of the West in Homeric epics. Instead of Foucault's point of departure in the formation of this family of late seventeenth-century discourses, Horkheimer and Adorno found the origins of modernity in a dialectic between the human/cultural and the monstrous/natural that could be traced through the literature of the West. Their resulting intellectual history is, in one way, deeply conventional since it locates the origins of the West, and thus modernity, in Classical Greece. The repression of the monstrous and the return of the repressed cycle through the psychic norms of the West in a fashion which is, broadly speaking, ahistorical.[17]

In a similar fashion, Foucault's perspective also placed him in a complex opposition to the Classicism of psychoanalysis, whether represented by Freud or Lacan. Foucault published a long forward to Deleuze and Guattari's 1972 *Anti-Oedipus* in which he endorses the authors' general position that the modern self was formed in relation to modernity and not in a transhistorical familial-societal dynamic that can be paralleled in Classical Greek myth. Rather than having its origins in

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[14] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, translated and edited by Seán Hand (London, New York, Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2006), 19-20.

[15] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* 30-31 for the description of the "history of the present."

[16] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated by John Cumming (London: Allen Lane, 1972). See also n. 6, above.

[17] See Seyla Benhabib, "The Critique of instrumental Reason" in Slavoj Žižek, *Mapping Ideology* (London: Verso, 1994), 66-92, for a summary of the dialectics of the self in Horkheimer and Adorno.

a timeless repression of nature in *Kultur* (as also in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*), the Oedipal is seen as an internalization of the disciplines of a specifically modern age.[18]

Deleuze and Guattari's rejection of Freud is subtly different, but is also anti-Classical. Freud's use of the Oedipal is seen as an attempt to force a particular version of Goethean Classics into the frameworks of psychoanalysis. Such a manoeuvre gave psychoanalysis its transhistorical claim to truth and limited the possibility of resistance: if this was how things had been for three millennia, the chance of breaking from the paternalistic and Oedipal family was limited.[19] The only option was to learn to live with it. Classicism enabled Freudian psychoanalysis to lay claim to being a natural or medical science rather than a social science.[20] The consequential rejection of social criticism, politics, and historical context allowed the triad of mother-father-child to emerge as the primary source of repression, without reference to the social production of family.[21] The paradox that emerged in Deleuze and Guattari's view lies in a Freudian conception of the self that is thoroughly modern to the extent of being a reflection of the modern *habitus* and resistance thereto, but which draws into itself Classicizing forms that naturalize the particular formulation of the self and gives that form of the self an illusionary ahistorical and transcendent claim. The role of the Classical in the Freudian self is to provide a culturally respectable, prestigious and transhistorical prototype for what Deleuze and Guattari represented as the modern self. In spite of its idiosyncrasies, the Freudian annexation of the Classical is a familiar tactic and indeed paradigmatic for the reception of the Classical in modernity. It aligns Freud to a prevalent aesthetic Classicism which emerged in response to and in dependence upon the emergence of bourgeois society, and in which particular conjunctions of social and intellectual power were associated with "timeless" values. Deleuze and Guattari read Freud's Classicized psyche as a version of German Romantic Classicism and historicized that psyche as an aspect of the modern.

Although their rhetorical pose was very different, the parallels with Foucault's genealogical analyses are clear: the discourse has power at the moment of its irruption and although the content of that discourse draws heavily on the Classical, that does not make the modern discourse Classical any more than the ancient discourse was modern. Freud (and others) had allowed themselves to be seduced into reading isomorphic elements within ancient and modern discourses as signifying a single social formation (the family). The implication of the critique is that the self of modernity

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[18] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H.R. Lane (London: Athlone Press, 1984), xii-xiii.

[19] See Richard Armstrong, *A Compulsion for Antiquity: Freud and the Ancient World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), for Freud's writing of the psychic present into the remote past. If Freud could imagine a post-Oedipal age, it is not clear what that utopia would look like.

[20] See the discussion in Richard H. Armstrong, *A Compulsion for Antiquity: Freud and the Classical* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[21] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 55-56; 97.

was formed in response to the disciplines of that era. It can hardly, therefore, find its dialectical origins in Homeric epics: tracing elements of the modern/Enlightenment self to a Classical origin would be to mistake the isomorphic elements of the Classical and the modern as discursive links, which is an error akin to viewing the French revolution as the return of Rome's Republic, or seeing the isomorphic elements of ancient and modern literary productions and political practices as evidence for the identity of Classical and modern literary and political cultures.

In contrast to the grandiosity of Freud, Horkheimer and Adorno, and the great historical philosophies of the nineteenth century, Foucault's genealogies establish historical divergences in which epistemological links break down or arise. They uncover a multiplicity of loosely linked systems and power dynamics that undermine any grand philosophical histories.[22] When Foucault started to publish his project on sexuality with *La Volonté de Savoir* (1976), it was precisely and polemically in the context of specifically modern discourses of sexuality, and it is this polemic quality that made the book so influential in the gay rights campaigns (see below). The book traces the development from seventeenth-century traditions of the Christian confessional to the irruption of the *scienta sexialis* in the bourgeois capitalist world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[23] There was no need to reference the Classical. Foucault's modern self, like that of Deleuze and Guattari, was developed within the context of a world transforming under the influence of capitalism and in relation to the emerging social discourses of the bourgeoisie, though Foucault is careful not to follow Engels in seeing changes in sexuality as dependent on the requirements of production.[24] *La Volonté de Savoir* sets the scene for the deployment of Foucault's critical weaponry on the edifice of psychoanalysis.[25] It was a confrontation which grew so naturally from Foucault's previous work and political engagements and from the influence of psychoanalysis on contemporary French intellectual culture that it must have been long expected.[26] To turn to the Classical would seem at best a distraction and at worst a retreat from the critical method and engagements of Foucault and his collaborators. Then, after seven years, came *L'Usage des Plaisirs*, closely followed by *Le Souci de Soi*.

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[22] See the discussion in Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, 19.

[23] Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de Savoir* (Paris, Gallimard: 1976). See Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, translated by Robert Hurley (London: Allen Lane, 1979), 70 for the close relationship of the subject and sexuality; 116-31 for periodization.

[24] Friedrich Engels, *The origin of the family, private property and the state in the light of the researches of Lewis H. Morgan* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1940).

[25] See Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 129-31.

[26] See the discussion of Foucault's engagement with Lacan in Paul Allen Miller, "Enjoyment beyond the Pleasure Principle: Antigone, Julian of Norwich, and the Use of Pleasures," *Comparatist* 39 (2015), 47-63 (https://doi.org/10.1353/com.2015.0024). Although Miller argues that Foucault's critique was not such as to suggest that psychoanalysis would not work, he points to hostility between Kristeva and Foucault (as read into Julia Kristeva, *Histoires d'amour* (Paris: Denoël, 1983) and Julia Kristeva, *Les Samouraïs* (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

These books, together with a number of interviews and essays, notably "What is Enlightenment?," are often nominally separated from the earlier work as the late/final Foucault.[27] The nature of the intellectual change from the Foucault of *Discipline and Punish* to the Foucault of *Le Souci de Soi* is, however, less than clear. Foucault's early death robbed us of the final Christian volume of *The History of Sexuality*, but it seems unlikely that it would have contained a revelatory summation that related the project to the wider currents of his thought. In any case, as Cameron suggested in a review from 1986, we can with some confidence guess at the trajectory of the Christian volume from hints in the final pages of *Le Souci de Soi* and from Peter Brown's *The Body and Society*.[28] One might read this interest in the Classical as consequential on his archaeologies of sexuality. We might see Foucault as being drawn through the Church Fathers to their Classical precursors in exploration of a modern discourse closely integrated with its ancient antecedent (even though this is denied in the conclusion to *Le Souci de Soi*). But, in fact, if we read *Du Gouvernement des Vivants*, the lecture course of 1979-1980, which we might expect to represent the continuation of the project of *La Volonté de Savoir*, the interest in early Christian texts is not in sexuality, but in the disciplines and practices of truth.[29] With the publication of the other lecture series from the Collège de France, especially the lectures on *parresia* from 1982-1983 and 1983-1984, it has become obvious that the engagement with the Classical was not limited to the concern with sexuality, and that the legacy of Greece and Rome had become central to Foucault's philosophical project.[30]

The turn to the Classical after *La Volonté de Savoir* is one element of a reshaping of Foucault's work. His increasing international renown inevitably led to a consideration of Foucault's position

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[27] Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (London, Penguin Books: 1984), 32-35. See James W. Bernauer and David M. Rasmussen, *The Final Foucault* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1987) and Jeremy Moss (ed.) *The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE publications, 1998).

[28] Averil Cameron, "Redrawing the Map: Early Christian Territory after Foucault," *Journal of Roman Studies* 76 (1986), 266-71 (https://doi.org/10.2307/300375); Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Faber: London, 1989). Brown worked closely with Foucault. See now Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin; the Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 2013), which could also be re-imagined as the final volume of the sequence. A section of the final volume is published as Michel Foucault, "The Battle for Chastity," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics; Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow, and translated by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 185-97.

[29] Michel Foucault, *Du gouvernement des vivants: Cours au Collège de France (1979-1980)* (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2012), 91-313.

[30] Michel Foucault, *The Government of the Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982 – 1983*, edited by Frédéric Gros, and translated by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: Lectures at the Collège de France 1983-1984*, translated by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

within contemporary European philosophy. A key element of that discussion was the so-called Habermas/Foucault controversy.[31] Foucault claimed, perhaps somewhat disingenuously, to have known little of the Frankfurt School before 1977.[32] Yet, it is evident that there were close parallels between Foucault and Habermas.[33] Foucault was increasingly engaged in a critical dialogue at a distance with Habermas.[34] Habermas read Foucault as an anti-modernist young conservative who had turned against the Enlightenment project in large part because the conception of the self in Foucault was seen as being constrained in discourses and with neither agency nor freedom.[35] The French post-modernists were dismissed on his understanding of their views on the incapacities of reason, the cultural determination of communication, and the limits of resistance and freedom.[36] In the face of such constraints, their only course was elitist irony, nihilism and withdrawal.[37] Although Habermas acknowledged his confusion at the disparity between Foucault the genealogist and the passionate political radical he met in 1983, he still felt able to use the charge to damn Foucault by association with Nietzsche and Heidegger.[38]

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[31] From the long bibliographies on this problem, see the collections Samantha Ashenden and David Owen (eds) *Foucault Contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory* (London, Thousand Oaks, California, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999) and Michael Kelly (ed.) *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* (Cambridge, Mass., London: MIT Press, 1994).

[32] In 1978, Foucault claimed to have been put off the Frankfurt School by reading Horkheimer and only later to have realized that he was working on a parallel track. See Michel Foucault, "Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse: Who Is a 'Negator of History'?", in Michel Foucault, *Remarks On Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, translated by R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 115–20.

[33] In Michel Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism: An Interview with Michel Foucault," *Telos* 55 (1983), 195-211, Foucault claims that he would have avoided several mistakes if he had known of their work. For the "dance" between their respective ideas, see Daniel W. Conway, "Pas de deux: Habermas and Foucault in Genealogical Communication," in Samantha Ashenden and David Owen (eds) *Foucault Contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between genealogy and Critical Theory*, 60-89 (https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446221822.n4*).

[34] See Michel Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," in Michael Kelly (ed.) *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas* Debate, 109-37 (reprinted from Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984* (Lawrence D. Kritzman ed.) (New York: Routledge, 1988) and Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, Helmut Becker, Alfredo Gomez-Müller and J. D. Gauthier, *The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom: an interview with Michel Foucault*, in which he accuses Habermas of utopianism.

[35] Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, translated by Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 266-93; 320-24.

[36] See Nancy Fraser, "Michel Foucault: A "Young Conservative"?," *Ethics* 96.1 (1985), 165-84 (https://doi.org/10.1086/292729). It is difficult to find texts which would directly support Habermas, but as a reading of the implications of Foucault's analyses, it is persuasive.

[37] See the commentary by Bo Isenberg, "Habermas on Foucault: Critical Remarks," *Acta Sociologica* 34.4 (1991), 299-308 (https://doi.org/10.1177/000169939103400404).

[38] Jürgen Habermas, "Taking aim at the heart of the present: On Foucault's lecture on Kant's What is Enlightenment?" in Michael Kelly (ed.) *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, 149-54; Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, esp. 131-60, on Heidegger, and 266-334.

Habermas was not alone in this critique: Charles Taylor also argued that Foucault thought of power as a negative force and failed to engage with the positive possibilities of power. *Discipline and Punish* and *La Volonté de Savoir* were seen as absurdly one sided and in need of a victim.[39] Foucauldian power was so all-encompassing as to be incapacitating. By contrast, Taylor claimed that power could be good and be used to develop "civic virtue" (see also Bhatt, this volume). He thereby alluded to the philosophical tradition of Machiavelli. This was a response to Foucault from the Republican tradition. But it seemed to turn Foucault's critique on its head. For if power could be used to develop virtue, the technologies and systems of power delineated by Foucault could be seen as morally good, working towards freedom and "the good life."[40] The consequence of the deliberate lack of ethical foundation in Foucault's earlier work meant that ethics could be used to reverse his political claims.[41]

"What is Enlightenment?" is a reply to some of these charges.[42] Foucault notably rejected the suggestion that he was an enemy of Enlightenment, proclaiming Kant as his precursor. He asserted that a measure of freedom becomes possible in the self-fashioning of the person that is characteristic of the individual in modernity.[43] Foucault's politics continued to offer an anti-essentialism that allowed a critical perspective on the modern.[44] He claimed that a partial alienation from the discourses of the modern is characteristic of the modern. Through this alienation, the question of "what is now?", as asked by Kant, which carried within it the question of "what am I in the now?", was not only allowed, but became fundamental. To even ask that question suggested that both "now" and "I" are constructed and historical. This genealogy of the self in philosophy sug-

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[39] This reading is in spite of the attempts at clarification in Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 92-102.

[40] Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," *Political Theory* 12 (1984), 152-83 (https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591784012002002).

[41] See the discussion of Thomas McCarthy, "The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School," *Political Theory* 18 (1990), 437-69 (https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591790018003005).

[42] Michel Foucault, *What is Enlightenment?*, 32-35.

[43] On the reception of "What is Enlightenment?" see, for example, Thomas McCarthy, *The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School*, 437-69 and Jeremy Moss, "Introduction: The Later Foucault," in Jeremy Moss (ed.) *The Later Foucault*, 1-17.

[44] Christopher Falzon, "Making History," in Christopher Falzon, Timothy O'Leary, Jana Sawicki, *A Companion to Foucault* (Malden, MA, Oxford, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 282-98, suggests that the later works offer a different version of history; Richard J. Bernstein, "Foucault: Critique as Philosophical Ethos," in Michael Kelly (ed.) *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, 211-41, on "What is Enlightenment?" as a reassertion of Foucault's critique; Paul Patton, "Foucault's Subject of Power," in Jeremy Moss (ed.) *The Later Foucault*, 64-77, for the limited freedoms inherent in subject formation.

gests that in reflexivity and alienation there was both the possibility of resistance to normative discourses and some element of freedom.[45]

For Foucault, this freedom lay in practice rather than being ontological. In 1984, he claimed that:

> There is a danger that (notions of liberty) will refer back to the idea that there does exist a nature or a human foundation which, as a result of a certain number of historical, social or economic processes, found itself concealed, alienated or imprisoned in and by some repressive mechanism.[46]

He thereby rejected any idea that an innately free society could have, or could have had, reality. Instead, he saw power as integral to all social interaction. Although power has obviously repressive elements (and these come particularly to the fore in the sovereignty-driven modes of the premodern), the seductive quality of power lies in its enabling functions (which come to the fore in modernity). But power also produces resistance, and if power is omnipresent in social relations, so the potential for resistance must also be everywhere.[47] Within resistance, there must be a form of freedom. It follows that without resistance/freedom, there is no need of power and (intriguingly) without power there is no freedom. Power and freedom are thus characteristic of all social interaction.[48] In 1982 Foucault wrote:

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[45] See the discussion in Johanna Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12-13.

[46] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, Helmut Becker, Alfredo Gomez-Müller and J. D. Gauthier, *The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom: an interview with Michel Foucault*.

[47] See James Laidlaw, "The undefined work of freedom: Foucault's genealogy and the Anthropology of ethics" in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Foucault Now: Current Perspectives in Foucault Studies* (Malden. MA, Cambridge: Polity, 2014), 23-37. For the "utopianism" of the Panopticon, see Michel Foucault, "L'oeil du pouvoir," in Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits 154 – 1988: III: 1976-1979* (eds Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 190-207.

[48] See, for example, Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1982), 777-795; Michel, Foucault, "Two lectures," Michael Kelly (ed.) *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, 17-46 (reprinted from *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Colin Gordon (ed.) (New York: Pantheon, 1980). At least some of the lines of this argument were present in 1977 when Foucault discussed the panopticon, see Michel Foucault, *L'oeil du pouvoir*, 190-207, and an unpacking of the notion of power is a major theme of the 1975-1976 lectures, Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* (Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976), edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, translated by David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003). See also the discussion in Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Foucault beyond Foucault: Power and its intensifications since 1984* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008). See the remarks of Jeremy Moss, "Introduction: The Later Foucault," in Jeremy Moss (ed.) *The Later Foucault*, 1-17, and Thomas L. Dumm, *Michel Foucault and the Politics of Freedom* (*Modernity and Political* Thought) (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield, 2002), which concentrates on *Discipline and Power.*

> The relationship between power and freedom's refusal to submit cannot… be separated. The crucial problem of power is not that of voluntary servitude (how could we seek to be slaves?). At the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom. Rather than speaking of an essential freedom, it would be better to speak of an "agonism" – of a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle, less of a face-to-face confrontation which paralyzes both sides than a permanent provocation.[49]

Asked whether there were conditions in which resistance was impossible, Foucault asserted that even in the concentration camps, except under the extremity of torture and execution, there was some small measure of resistance.[50] Freedom thus becomes possible even among the most radically unfree.

The opening up of his analyses to the concept of freedom was a consequence of a shift in Foucault's object of study. Whereas the early work focused on closed institutions, of which the Panopticon became the paradigm, the later work shifted to non-institutionalized aspects of modernity: sexuality and the self.[51] With the publication of the lectures, it has become obvious that Foucault was engaging with the relationship between the individual and his broad conception of the political regimen (the bio-political regime) through which power was structured to enable life. The 1982-83 lecture series focused on *parresia*, which he translated as *libertas*.[52] That freedom is clearly different from the liberal freedom of Isiah Berlin, for whom freedom is located within an "empty space" in which the power of the state does not run.[53] For Foucault, there is no space empty of power, for power is everywhere. If power is pervasive within a bio-political regime, a space without power becomes a desert in which life is not possible. Foucault is, therefore, sceptical of Habermas' claims for communicative action as practical reason since communicative actions must be soaked in power through the realistic assumption that all communication must exist within space and all space is within a particular bio-political regime (a *polis*).[54]

Since freedom cannot be found within institutional frameworks, the only space remaining is that which can be cultivated in the self. Consequently, Foucault sought freedom in the ethics of subjec-

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[49] Michel Foucault, *The Subject and Power*, 790.

[50] Michel Foucault, "Espace, savoir et pouvoir," in Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits 1954 – 1988: IV: 1980-1988* (eds Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 270-85.

[51] See John Forrester, "Foucault's face: The Personal is the Theoretical," in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Foucault Now*, 112-28, who contrasts Foucault's investigative focus on institutions with Popper's on the market.

[52] Michel Foucault, *The Government of the Self and Others,* 46.

[53] Isiah Berlin, *Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. 30. See the discussion in Thomas L. Dumm, *Michel Foucault and the Politics of Freedom*, 47-48.

[54] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, Helmut Becker, Alfredo Gomez-Müller and J. D. Gauthier, *The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom: an interview with Michel Foucault.*

tivity, the ability of the individual to resist, and the capacity of the individual to reflect. Nevertheless, under the influence of the discourses of modernity, such as psychoanalysis and sexuality, this freedom is limited, and perhaps radically so. The situating of freedom in the self depends on the freeing of the self from the discursive construction of the self. Should that be achieved, it would generate a freedom which is non-societal and hence potentially limited to the ego.[55] It is this narrow space of freedom which Foucault explores through Greek philosophy.

The possibility of extracting the self from the established discourses of sexuality is fundamental to Foucault's writing about same-sex practices. Halperin captures the impact of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* in the US:

> When I conducted an admittedly unsystematic survey in 1990 of various people I happened to know who had been active in ACT UP/New York during its explosive early phase in the late 1980s, and when I put [the question of what was their inspirational book], I received, without the slightest hesitation or a single exception, the following answer: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I.*[56]

La Volonté de Savoir is resistant to the use of sexual practices to classify individuals, a stance which exposes the heteronormative nature of psychoanalysis.[57] Consequently, the reception of Foucault's work has been associated with LBGT rights, which has brought his own biography into play. Miller, for instance, controversially emphasizes his fondness for sado-masochism, about which he was not secretive.[58] There is a question as to whether such biographical "insights" have any place in a discussion of a philosopher. Moreover, the changing political landscape of the late 70s and early 80s create difficulties in understanding his stance on gay issues: there was nothing secret about his 23-year relationship with Daniel Defert.[59] To "come out" risked marginalization as a "gay philosopher" and succumbing to a labelling that he consistently opposed.[60] Indeed, coming out as a gay philosopher would give credence to the very constructions of homosexuality

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[55] See the critique of Barry Smart, "Foucault, Levinas and the Subject of Responsibility," in Jeremy Moss (ed.) *The Later Foucault*, 78-92 and James Laidlaw, "The undefined work of freedom: Foucault's genealogy and the Anthropology of ethics," in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Foucault Now*, 23-37.

[56] David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 16.

[57] Didier Eribon, "Towards and ethic of Subjectivation: French Resistances to Psychoanalysis in the 1970s," in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Foucault Now*, 71-87.

[58] Michel Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity" in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow, and translated by Robert Hurley and others (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 163-75; James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (London: Harper Collins, 1993).

[59] See the biographical treatment in Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault.*

[60] James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, 25.

that he exposed in *La Volonté de Savoir* with its simplifications of sexual practices and identities to a categorization based solely on the genitalia of the love object.[61]

Yet, there is a link between Foucault's writing of homosexuality and the project of freedom: for much (all?) of Foucault's life, his subject position as a homosexual marginalized him from heteronormative society. Sedgwick's analysis of a number of English literary texts of the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries points to a relationship of same sex desire to a distinctive epistemology (of the closet).[62] The absence of norms, perhaps particularly in the gay scene in the US, required gay people to invent new peripheral identities, which Halperin sees as enabling queer theory *avant la lettre*.[63] It seems possible that somewhere in that self-invention and perhaps in the gay scene of the West Coast, Foucault found an experience of freedom and an innovative life practice that inflected his works.

L'Usage des Plaisirs and *Le Souci de Soi* are difficult in part because it is not obvious what is at stake. Neither work is a conventional history of sexuality, and in terms of method they represent a radical departure from the conventions of much Classical scholarship.[64] Foucault's work on sexuality provoked and continues to provoke strong reactions among Classical scholars. In part, this controversy relates to a fundamental disagreement that stretched beyond the Classical community and, indeed, beyond academia between "constructivist" and "essentialist" views of homosexuality.[65] In part, it related to the limited and eccentric body of texts that Foucault drew upon and

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[61] See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore: Harvester; Wheatsheaf, 1991), especially, 158-59, and 2-3 on the performative aspects of coming out. One assumes that Foucault would have enthusiastically endorsed Sedgwick's first analytical axiom "people are different from each other" (22).

[62] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*.

[63] David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, 65-85. See also Lynne Huffer, *Mad for Foucault: Rethinking the Foundations of Queer Theory* (New York, Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2010) in which a link is made between madness and queer theory (cf Didier Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self* (Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 2004). See also, Paul Allen Miller, *Postmodern Spiritual Practices*, 231-35, on "Queering Alcibiades".

[64] Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (London: Duckworth, 1978), appeared between the first and second volumes of *The History of Sexuality* and was a way of writing about homosexuality with which Classicists were more comfortable. It provided a scholarly framework for what Hellenists especially had been talking about for decades, without talking about it, as captured in E.M. Forster, *Maurice* (London: Arnold, 1971). For the Classical reaction see David M. Halperin, "Epilogue: Not fade Away," in Kirk Ormand and Ruby Blondell (eds), *Ancient Sex: Nine Essays*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015), 308-28.

[65] See the clear account in David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and other Essays on Greek Love* (New York, London: Routledge, 1990), 41-53. The issue continues to fuel discussion in large part since it raises issues as to whether same sex desire and/or any associated life-styles are social constructs that can be wished away. The rather more parochial issue of how to write about ancient sexuality continues to exercise scholars, see Kirk Ormand and Ruby Blondell, "One Hundred and Twenty-Five years of Homosexuality," in Kirk Ormand and Ruby Blondell (eds), *Ancient Sex: Nine Essays*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015), 1-22.

what he did not take into account. *L'Usage des Plaisirs* concentrates overwhelmingly on philosophical texts to the detriment of poetry and drama, though these last genres were likely more important for the discourses around sex. James Davidson polemically states that Foucault "failed with the Greeks" in part because of the restricted notions of Greek love that he employed.[66] The central political dynamic of *oikos* and *polis* in the formation of the citizen is downplayed.[67] Amy Richlin is astounded at the notably limited treatment of female sexuality (no Sappho among many other things). In Foucault's Greece and Rome, women have no voice, no agency, no capacity for resistance, and no response to being the object of desire and sexual practices.[68] As Richlin notes, mainstream Roman discourses about sex are often extreme, violent and misogynistic (repeatedly replaying tropes of rape) and show continuities over time.[69] Craig Williams points out that Roman attitudes towards homosexual acts and actors are remarkably consistent and unrelated to a process of Hellenization.[70] Winkler has argued that "Mediterranean" sexualities are consistent and manifest in the Classical period, rejecting the shifts in discourse outlined in the two volumes.[71] Indeed, for anyone with even a passing knowledge of Latin literature, the decision to write a history of the discourses of Roman sexuality from Musonius Rufus, Epictetus, Seneca, and Plutarch rather than from the poetry of the elegists, Martial, Juvenal, the exemplary histories of Livy and Tacitus, the epistles of Cicero and Pliny, and the sometimes violent sexual invective of rhetoric is, to put it in a mild form, puzzling. Yet, Foucault's reading of Rome through the Greek-influenced writers was not in ignorance of the complex and multiple discourses of sexuality operating in Rome.[72]

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[66] James Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love: A Radical Reappraisal of Homosexuality in Ancient Greece* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 2007), 53.

[67] See Lin Foxhall, "Pandora Unbound: A feminist critique of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*," in David H.J. Lamour, Paul Allen Miller, Charles Platter (eds), *Rethinking Sexuality: Foucault and Classical Antiquity* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1998), 122-37.

[68] Amy Richlin, "Foucault's *History of Sexuality*: A useful theory for women?" in David H.J. Lamour, Paul Allen Miller, Charles Platter (eds), *Rethinking Sexuality: Foucault and Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 138-70; Amy *Richlin*, "Zeus and Metis: *Foucault*, Feminism, Classics," *Helios* 18 (1991), 160-80. See also Ellen Greene, "Sappho, Foucault, and Women's Erotics," *Arethusa* 29 (1996), 1-14.

[69] See Amy Richlin, *The Gardens of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humour* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[70] Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[71] J.J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire; The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (London, New York: Routledge, 1990).

[72] Michel Foucault, *The Concern for truth*, 455-64: "It would be ridiculous to think that what Seneca, Epictetus or Musonius Rufus can say about sexual behaviour represented in one way or another the general practice of the Greeks and Romans" (456).

One response has been to dismiss the "reality" of Foucault's antiquity, seeing it instead as a philosophical exercise or a gay utopia, uncontaminated by Freudian thought.[73] The perception would seem to lurk in Davidson's treatment of Foucault's Greece.[74] The trope of Athens as an aesthetic ideal in which Greek love finds its true place is especially familiar, written deep into nineteenth-century writings on same sex attraction.[75] Yet, Foucault himself denied any idealization of the Greeks:

> Q: These Greeks, did you find them admirable?
> MF: No.
> Q: What did you think of them?
> MF: Not very much…[76]

Yet, the focus on philosophical texts makes sense in the context of a project that would have culminated in early Christian texts. Foucault was working backwards from the Christian conception of the self to its discursive origin. Indeed, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, John Chrysostom, Augustine, John Cassian and others all drew heavily on Classical Greek philosophies. Christian *askesis* opened the path to truth: it was the key to *parresia*. We can read *L'Usage des Plaisirs* and *Le Souci de Soi* as a genealogy of an *askesis* of the self; a thread of interiority and control of desire that stretched from Classical Athens to Christian Rome.

However, this focus on a golden thread is problematic for precisely the reasons offered by his Classicist critics. Much Roman discourse around sex does not draw on the philosophical tradition. A world of priapic raping gods and heroes is not one of interiority and self-discipline. The more reflective sexual politics of the elegists might have offered Foucault more fertile ground, though there is little explicit discussion of an *askesis* of the self.[77] Indeed, much of the literature on which Foucault draws is self-consciously marginal and written to challenge prevailing cultural norms.

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[73] Jacques-Alain Miller, "Michel Foucault and Psychoanalysis," in Timothy J. Armstrong (ed.) *Michel Foucault Philosopher* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 58-64. See also Caroline Vout, *Power and Eroticism in Imperial Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7, who simply states that the return to Classical Greece was in search of utopia. See also Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999), 251-52. Michel Foucault, *The Government of the Self and Others*, 43, referred to the first two centuries CE as "a veritable golden age of the culture of the self."

[74] James Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love*, 152-66. Davidson uses the perception to attack Foucault.

[75] Daniel Orrells, *Classical Culture and Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also the series of analyses in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, esp. 136-38 on *The Picture of Dorian Grey*.

[76] Michel Foucault, *The Return of Morality*, 465-73.

[77] See the summary discussions in Efrossini Spentzou, *The Roman Poetry of Love: Elegy and Politics in a time of Revolution* (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013) and the psychoanalytic analysis in Paul Allen Miller, *Subjecting Verses: Latin Love Elegy and the Emergence of the Real* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

The marginality of the Foucauldian thread opens the question as to whether *askesis* could be a life practice: certainly, it was socially and intellectually exclusive.[78] It is also overwhelmingly textual, in which the textual is at one step removed from the life world, and in the particular case of Foucault's textual focus on the philosophical, a second step distant.[79] We may doubt whether *technai* of the self could be practiced by those rendered objects by the violent sexualities of Rome. Even for those operating within the philosophical discourses, their spaces of self-formation were dependent on conventional hierarchies of power and gender. Freedom could have been a game or pose rather than a practice, and one which was meticulously structured within political, social, and philosophical networks of power (see the discussions of Hammer and Alston, this volume). The key political issue is whether the spaces of freedom cultivated so carefully through philosophical *askesis* were real. One may argue that the irruption of the discourse in Roman society means that the *askesis* is real enough, but if the philosophical and political aim of the Foucauldian project is a practice of freedom, then it is necessary to demonstrate that the philosophy functions as an ethic of freedom in the life world.

In the 1982-83 lectures on *parresia*, Foucault asserted that there are two grand questions of ancient political theory. The second question is whether the function of *parresia* is best performed by a limited number of possible speakers within the spaces of the Prince's court (as opposed to an unlimited number of speakers within the *ekklesia*). The first question is the indexing of truth to the political community.[80] Both of these questions are uncomfortable. Question two suggests that only those who have been able to achieve freedom through philosophical discipline should advise the Prince. Question one problematizes the relationship between *polis* and truth and the locating of truth in the life world of the *polis*. This last issue would seem to parallel Habermas' theory of communicative action.[81] Habermas sees the rational communicative act as embedded in the lifeworld of the participants. This last criterion limits truth to a social practice; it also presumes a transparent relationship between *parresia*, *polis* and truth which might appear utopian. The obvious problem is that a subject position within the *polis* would ground rationality merely within the truth games of the *polis*.

Habermas suggests that:

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[78] Michel Foucault, *The Return of Morality*, 465-73: "Ancient morality was addressed to only a small number of individuals; it did not demand that everyone obey the same scheme of behaviour. It concerned only a very small minority among the people and even among those who were free."

[79] See Jacques Derrida, "We Other Greeks," translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas in Miriam Leonard (ed.) *Derrida and Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 17-39.

[80] Michel Foucault, *The Government of the Self and Others*, 195-96.

[81] See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon, 1985).

> An unprecedented modernity, open to the future, anxious for novelty, can only fashion its criteria out of itself. The only source of normativity that presents itself is the principle of subjectivity from which the very time-consciousness of modernity arose. The philosophy of reflection, which issues from the basic fact of self-consciousness, conceptualizes this principle.[82]

Without a transcendent truth, the *ego* can only ground rationality in self-reflection. Yet, to avoid a slippage into solipsism, the ego must engage its rationality in the *polis*. Habermas' democratic and liberal subjectivity can only exist in the life world of the modern *polis*. But this would seem to leave little space for a critical subjectivity of the sort that Foucault grounds in *askesis*. Although theoretically such philosophical *askesis* could be widespread, in Rome and in modernity those practices were/are marginal. Grounding truth in the reflective practices of self-formation risks a discourse of the care of the self that is asocial in validation, producing the most marginal spaces of freedom which can only be enjoyed by a tiny fraction of the *polis*. In fact, it would seem to be this very marginality that enables a critical distancing from the *polis* sufficient enough to allow self-discipline and reflection. Queer theory would provide such a subject position, but Foucault finds it in the thread of Classical philosophy. This version of the Classical past operates as an alternate and parallel *polis*. The Foucauldian interest in the Classical is thus not anthropological: it has a practical application in indexing the truth or the subject position externally to the *polis*. It must remain an open question as to whether this *praxis* is workable.

Deleuze talks of the conception of the self in the Classical volumes as being enfolded. This was a folding of the exterior into the interior by which the interior comes to recognize the exterior in itself.[83] To borrow from the metaphorical discussions of Deleuze, Foucault's archival work produces units of meaning (statements) which are isomorphs or even repetitions of other statements, but in their siting within the networks (epistemological families) of other statements they have particular significance.[84] The various statements of Greek philosophy would thus morph in their different cultural receptions. The Roman reception of this particular set of ideas, the first of many, is one of the ways in which the Greek ideas could be received and transmuted. But since they are a philosophy of the self, they offer the possibility of an exteriority to the (Roman) *polis* that can be folded into the interior in generating a new form of self. Enfolded into the subject, they offer a critical distance in which the self can be construed. Classicists' historical readings of *Le Souci de Soi* miss the point. It is precisely the eccentricity of these discourses in an Imperial society that may offer a practice of freedom.

Yet, the Greek and Roman is never quite an outside. The Classical is always present within the modern technologies of the self, most notably through Freud. The reception of the Classical is an

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[82] Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 41.

[83] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, 84.

[84] Ibid., 10-11; 19-20; 24.

enfolding of the antique into the modern and a play of interior-exterior, both in familiarity (such as in nineteenth-century receptions) and in the strangeness of Greek, Roman, and early Christian cultures. Foucault's engagement with Greece and Rome enabled him to find a place exterior to the modern life-world in which the games of truth around sexuality could be played differently. But the prior enfolding of Greece and Rome within modern culture reduces its alterity. We may locate Foucault in a long tradition of those who found solace for their alienation in Classics and Greek love, but in spite of the enfolding of the Classical into the modern, the alterity of the Classical remains. The "represencing" of the antique in the modern allows the modern to do more than "fashion its criteria out of itself" since the alterior is already folded into the interior (of the modern). We can thus choose to recognize its exteriority and allow it to work upon us.

In its enfolded form, the truths of the Classical can be found both external and internal to the modern *polis*. In this alteriority, there is an answer to Habermas: the critical distance that allows reflection on the *habitus* can come from an engagement with what is both interior and alterior. It is not, however, a general engagement (one in which we just read the Classics and are rendered alterior), but one in which the self is carefully extracted from the *habitus* and alienated from its political conceptions and structures of power. Through such exteriority, the self can be rendered an object of discipline (see Porter's analysis and doubts, this volume) and the *habitus* subjected to analysis and critique.

Rome's part in the argument is critical. We demur from the view that Foucault "erased" Rome;[85] for Rome provides us with a primary instance of the reception of philosophical ideas. The Romans were also readers of the Classical and in the Imperial age were employers of that tradition to generate ideas of self and freedom in a new social order. The Roman reception emerges as a parallel case of the repeated modern receptions through which our political and moral thought has engaged with the Greeks. As Derrida describes himself and his contemporaries as "We Other Greeks," typically playing with identification and otherness, we might parallel his title as "Romans Other Greeks." The issue becomes whether the Greeks worked for the Romans, enabling them to attain a conceptual space of freedom, and whether, three decades after the publication of *Le Souci de Soi*, they might work for us.[86]

In this collection, we explore this dynamic of difference and similarity, enfolding and separation. Willis examines how Foucault structures his own historiography within a modern intellectual tradition that he conceives as oppositional to Roman history-writing and conceptualizations of

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[85] See David Frederick, "Introduction: Invisible Rome," in David Frederick (ed.), *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power, and the Body* (Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 1-30, who claims (p. 9) that "Foucault provides the obvious example of the erasure of Rome by Greece".

[86] Jacques Derrida, *We Other Greeks*, 17-39.

the past. Foucault links this modern historiographic mode to a hegemonic metaphor of society (and politics) as a zone of conflict. He contrasts the mode and metaphor with a Roman model which, as Willis suggests, is likely derived from Foucault's reading of the *Aeneid* in which history operates as foundation myth, and Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, in which history is unified memory. Yet, identifying such a mode as "Roman" depends on a non-reading of other Latin works, notably Tacitus, *Annales* (see Alston, this volume) and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, on which Willis concentrates. We may add that it depends on a contentious reading of Virgil and Livy which reduces the conflict inherent to those texts. Lucan's *Pharsalia* is an epic poem of the Neronian period which re-envisages the terrible civil wars at the end of the Republic. These wars are, in Lucan, foundational of the Imperial regime. In Lucan's preface, the wars are seen as enabling the rule of Nero. Reading from Lucan, Roman Imperial historiography would seem to embed warfare within social processes in a very modern way.

Willis moves beyond this erosion of Foucault's chronological systems. She reads Lucan's concern with the remodelling of historical narratives in the present as suggesting that power will determine truth (cf Bhatt, this volume) through "the violent appropriation of interpretation." Foucault's partial reading creates a Rome as a ghostly negative of modernity in which the violent appropriations of truth do not occur and in so doing indulges in a utopian image of Rome as an ideal and unified community. Yet, as Willis shows, that image is a double negative, since it relies on a non-reading of texts which would or could disrupt the Foucauldian dichotomy. Since Lucan was a popular text in the Enlightenment, Foucault's non-reading suggests that what is received is governed by "resemblances and repetitions" between the texts and modern discourses, or in this case a reinforcement of pre-existing distinctions between the modern and the Roman. The implication of the observation is that what is read from the Classical is what is of use in supporting modern discourses: The Classical becomes not the "voice from outside," but confirmatory of the "voice from the inside."

Hammer takes a different path but also undermines Foucauldian chronologies. He applies a Foucauldian analysis to the political structures of Rome's Republic. The problem Hammer considers is how political power is conceived in a *polis* which has yet to invent a sovereign. In so doing, he traces the way in which a diffused sovereignty was conceived within Roman discourses and how core Roman political conceptions, such as *libertas*, emerged in conjunction with those discourses. He finds that the Romans adopted a logic of power that diffused sovereignty. This diffused sovereignty resembles the modern, which undermines Foucault's distinctions between a world of modernity in which power is suffused and a pre-modernity dominated by sovereignty.

One consequence of the absence of the sovereign is the development of metaphorical mechanisms by which to understand the working in Rome of what we would call sovereignty. Hammer finds this metaphor in property ownership and corporate formation of a business (*societas*). Instead of operating with a legalistic model in which the sovereign state is a structure of domination that

sustains the social hierarchy and in which state power mirrors the absolute power of the *pater*, the notional state would seem to emerge as a metaphorical *societas*; a collective operation of non-domination (though hierarchical) in which owners co-operate to maintain and achieve collective interests. The predominant metaphor of property means that the state becomes a union of stake-holders united to maintain their stakes (which would include property). The association of citizenship and the right to hold property runs deep in Roman political thought. Such an under-standing would render property redistribution or any reordering of property rights a fundamen-tal assault on the constitution such as to undermine legal and social bonds and the customary morality that was integral to the workings of the state.

Power without the sovereign is structured through social relations. In a very Foucauldian move, Hammer argues that *libertas* was not the quality of non-domination, but emergent with and cen-tral to the structuring of social and political power. *Libertas* comes to be related to particular rights over things and the manner in which those property rights are combined in a *societas* to preserve hierarchical order. In looking forward to the neo-Roman conceptions of freedom, Hammer shows, and this matches Willis' argument, that the Roman version of *libertas* was useful since it rendered natural a conception of freedom that had a notion of property rights embedded within it. As Fou-cault's conception of Classical historiography drained the agonistic nature of the history from the texts, so the neo-Romanists denude the concept of *libertas* of its disputatious history. Hammer is as wary of utopian versions of *libertas* as Foucault.

Bhatt moves the analysis on a generation and also applies a Foucauldian reading to the Augustan period. She finds in the Augustan period an increasing intensity and complexity of governmental-ity that would seem to parallel the emergence of the modern, thus undermining Foucault's per-ception of the genealogy of the modern state as a unique historical experience. But she also finds a close relationship between the emergence of the sovereign and the new governmentality, arguing that the Augustan monarchy was the moment when the manufacture of subjects became thor-oughly enmeshed in networks of power. Consequently, the genesis of the sovereign worked in conjunction with the creation of a new mode of citizenship. Sovereignty was, like *libertas*, emer-gent from a diffused rhetoric of power that was in itself dependent on the person of the sover-eign.

If Foucault's political philosophy plucked the king's head from his shoulders, Bhatt is engaged in recapitation. She shows that sovereignty underpins and is in itself dependent upon the sorts of discursive operations of power that generate the citizen and the provision of social goods (food, security, a moral foundation, political and religious order) that enable social reproduction. As with liberty, sovereignty works within epistemological families. But Bhatt shows (in parallel with Willis) a "violent appropriation of interpretation" by which the regime can assert what truth is and, in particular, the dependence of the citizen on the sovereign. It is not just the gentler forms of enabling power that operate, but the violent power of an imperial regime that can and does re-

move or intimidate oppositional elements. In these circumstances, citizens work under a physical and moral requirement to support the state and adhere to imperial norms to both benefit the state and produce the social goods on which life depends. Consequently, *obsequium* – adherence to the structures of power – becomes defining of the good citizen since the sovereign's presence is a pre-condition of Imperial peace, and it is Imperial peace that secures property and citizen rights and enables provision for the citizens (see also Alston's contribution). This allows her to draw a contrast with Agamben's bleak assessment of the sovereign in which the power to reduce to bare life, to exclude, and to kill establishes a thanatopolitics at the heart of all sovereign regimes. For Bhatt, the power of the regime is more insidious, pervasive and inescapable because it provides the conditions for life. As with Hammer's analysis, Bhatt shows how complex political notions are embedded within the Imperial *habitus*, and this is all the more notable since the Augustan state is effectively a revolutionary political formation.

Bhatt's close comparison of the modern and the ancient once more undermines their differences. In emphasizing the moral-political discourse as a "total" structure within a period of revolutionary upheaval, she draws attention to the way in which the subject position is being always embedded within hegemonic epistemes. The reconstitution of sovereignty entails a reconstitution of the citizen; not within a causal relationship (citizenship reformulated because of the Augustan sovereign), but within a dialectical one. Bhatt's analysis is more Foucauldian than Foucault.

Alston also engages with the construction of the citizen in an Imperial regime. Following on from the engagement with Habermas in this introduction, he continues a focus on the agency of the individual in a bio-political regime. He argues for a limited zone of freedom through an association with the heterodox embedded within societal orthodoxies. The subject position of the heterodox self allows social change through the development of heterotopic zones which have the potential to influence the *habitus*. Yet, Alston argues that the resultant spaces of freedom are slight. Reading from Tacitus, such spaces of freedom seem ineffective since the carefully constructed spaces are always dependent on sovereign power; firstly to guarantee the bio-political regime that makes those limited freedoms possible, secondly through its role in licensing those freedoms, and finally in its restraint in not exercising repressive power to quieten heterodox elements. Speaking truth to power requires a political accommodation that embeds this freedom as a practice in the bio-political regime (*pace* Hammer and Bhatt).

The capacities of free thought may be greater than those for free speech, at least according to Tacitus, but that renders the spaces of freedom very small indeed: potentially a freedom in the head. Alston argues (*pace* Willis) that the capacities of reception to disrupt the *habitus* are limited since heterodox discourses are repeatedly enfolded into the Imperial orthodox. He concludes by suggesting that the "voice from outside" that might generate change is unlikely to stem from within a Classical or philosophical reception, and is more likely to result from frictions within a socio-economic system. This is because the mechanisms by which discourses and epistemological sys-

tems rise and fall are too complex to be contained by sovereign power (which Tacitus sees as guaranteeing truth) and the epistemological universe is more anarchic than either Foucault or Tacitus allow. The consciousness that power can assert truth and truths are relative undermines discursive regimes and creates a distance between the citizen and the Prince that has the potential to develop political action in alienation from the regime of truth.

Porter also explores the discourses of the self and the social and, in particular, the limitations of those discourses. He argues that the production of the self in Foucault involves a *praxis* that works on the substance of self to give it form in society. This production fails to account for the "depth, range and complexity of ancient subjectivities." Porter finds in his readings of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Augustine a powerful engagement with the abyss which manifests itself in a form of existential dread. The disciplines of the self offer small protection against this dread, which is in obvious parallel with modern alienation. Such anxiety and uncertainty is almost entirely absent from Foucault's reading of the Imperial Roman self, though is a feature of several contemporary accounts.[87] Porter presents us with a self far from perfectly integrated into the Imperial *habitus*. It is the very failure of these narratives of the self in antiquity and modernity that are the root cause of this dread.

The Romes our contributors offer are far more violent, disputatious, and unsettling than Foucault's Rome. Foucauldian analyses of the workings of power in Roman society erode the differences between the modern and the Roman. They show how the workings of biopolitics support sovereignty, embed political notions within social structures, and the limitations of resistance. Roman regimens emerge as more powerful and pervasive than Foucault imagined. Our authors, especially Willis, show that the politics of reception offer no solid basis for resistance. They problematize core notions such as *libertas* (a feature of a particular conjunction of social power in Hammer, a near impossibility in Bhatt). Yet, in Porter's conception of the abyssal, and perhaps in Alston's micro-spaces of freedom and the processes of discursive reformulation, there is a strong sense of uncertainty and of the incompleteness of the discursive regime. As Kant and Foucault asked the question "What am I now?", so the Romans questioned their place in an Imperial world. Lurking behind that question is a fundamental discomfort or a form of friction with discursive forms and socio-economic structures. That discomfort seems to us to resonate throughout Foucault's work: in his engagement with sanity and sickness, the prisoner and the criminal, the sexually marginal, and the Classical. It fuelled a refusal to integrate that renders his work often

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[87] See the discussions in Richard Alston and Efrossini Spentzou, *Reflections of Romanity: Discourses of Subjectivity in Imperial Rome* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2011) and Shadi Bartsch, *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

startling and always challenging. Foucault brings us back to Rome as our contributors' Romes take us back to Foucault.

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