Foucault Studies

ARTICLE

Foucault as an Ethical Philosopher:
The Genealogical Discussion of Antiquity
and the Present

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ABSTRACT. The paper further realises Foucault's genealogy of ethics to grasp genealogy as the totality of three axes – power, truth, and ethics – driven by the ethical axis. The paper demonstrates that Foucault's discussion of antiquity is genealogical. The main focus is Foucault's late work and, in particular, his final lectures on *The Courage of Truth*. The paper highlights the genealogical function of the distinction between 'Laches' and 'Alcibiades'. 'Laches' provides a heuristic source for self-care in the present in the form of practices of living tied to the 'Laches' parrhesia. But, it is also a critique of the present applied to democratic theories that have used the neo-platonic line of the 'Alcibiades' parrhesia – of which Foucault disapproves – as their source in creating traceable technologies of the self tied to structures of domination. Such technologies freeze games of power and governmentalise the problematisation of how to govern the self. Hence, the genealogical discussion of antiquity in connection with an understanding of genealogy as problematisation should be perceived as a heuristic source of self-creation with critical implications for evaluating power regimes in the present. The paper introduces the link between the ancient past and the present with respect to Foucault vis-à-vis certain democratic theories. The central aim is to consider on what grounds placing the problematisation of the self at the centre of a new politics can be also linked to governmentality. In this context, the paper also clarifies the wider implication of its core premise for Foucauldian studies and the emerging discussion of parrhesia.

Keywords: Foucault, genealogy, parrhesia, (neo) governmentality

INTRODUCTION

This paper argues that Foucault's discussion of antiquity is genealogical and that this genealogical reading is instructive in contemporary discussions of power relations. The first section discusses the nature and development of Foucault's account of genealogy in relation to his overall work. The next explains how Foucault's engagement of antiquity is genealogical. The third establishes in a more concrete manner the importance of linking Foucault's engagement with antiquity to two distinct forms of truth-telling/philosophical

lines and the governmental connotations of such a distinction. The final section builds upon the previous sections to navigate the present by discussing Foucault in opposition to a certain type of literature that leads to a governmentalisation of, and/or that governmentalises, the problematisation of the self.

FOUCAULT, GENEALOGY AND ETHICS

The paper argues for an underlying unity in Foucault as an ethical philosopher. This is not to say that Foucault was executing a master plan with no loose ends. Rather, it is to agree with Elden that there is a continuity in Foucault's writings in that each new project incorporated Foucault's reaction to problems that had arisen in his analysis.[1] Similarly, Koopman argues that Foucault's work is tied to an overall aim whilst acknowledging the different, but not incompatible, methodologies Foucault used.[2]

Thus, each period of Foucault's work cannot be respectively attached to knowledge, power, or ethics. It is not that he was initially solely concerned with knowledge; then understood that power produces knowledge; and then attempted to provide ethical guidance. His archaeological concern with knowledge did entail an understanding of power albeit one that presented knowledge as a form of power. However, archaeology lacks the necessary historicity to move from studying immobile accounts of knowing, that are only transformed through major shifts, to envisioning historically contingent assumptions of how the interaction between knowledge and power progressively influences the present.[3]

With respect to Foucault's genealogy, we can identify two phases. Foucault's early genealogy elevated power to an autonomous force that interacts with knowledge for the purpose of moving beyond contemporary forms of domination. This involved the core methodological characteristic of genealogy, which is to study the past as a means to find connections with the present by unmasking the hidden contingency of the positivist historian. Foucault's late account of genealogy – tied to his excursions into antiquity – has been recently perceived as an ethical attempt to resolve the problems that his earlier use of genealogy unveiled.

Foucault speaks of a history of thought whose scope is much broader than the history of scientific disciplines or philosophic systems:

> It posits all forms of experience as potential objects of thought, and thus of the history of thought. The task of the history of thought is to identify and delimit the development and transformation of these domains of experience; as these domains and these experiences are diverse, it follows that so, too, are modes of thought.[4]

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[1] See Stuart Elden, *Foucault's Last Decade* (2016).

[2] See Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (2013), 52.

[3] Ibid, 36-37.

[4] Paul Rabinow, "Introduction: The History of Systems of Thought," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* Vol. 1, ed. Paul Rabinow (1997), XXXIV.

Foucault suggests that the thought of wanting to think critically about one's experiences allows one to presume that the present could be the sum of one's observations of how one and others think about the present:

> Thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning; rather, it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and to question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem.[5]

Therefore:

> Precisely because thought is not a given, thought is an action; and actions arising from experience and formed by thought are ethical ones.[6]

Critique is meaningful in Foucault only in relation to such work on the self.

Foucault's late genealogy continues tracing the power-knowledge dynamic at the level of problematising our own formation. As Koopman argues, problematisation is not a third methodology, but a more prominent development of the ethical axis.[7] Foucault's aim was to contemplate how one can become different in the present by means of self-formation and/or self-transformation. Genealogy not only shows us that things could be other than they are but how exactly we could consciously transform them by transforming ourselves in connection with understanding the contingencies that surround our present formation.[8] Problematisation puts into perspective Foucault's earlier blend of archaeology with genealogy and it becomes the nodal point of Foucault's late genealogical discussions.

Veyne suggests that Foucault's overall aim was to

> 'problematize' an object, find out how a human being was envisaged in a particular epoch...and describe the various social practices - scientific, ethical, punitive, medical and so on - that determined how a human being was envisaged'.[9]

In the end, Foucault's archaeology does not attempt to be universalistic but to show why nothing can be universalised while 'genealogy traces everything back to an empirical occurrence: contingency has always made us be what we were or are'.[10]

Thus, as Gutting notes, Foucault did not abandon archaeology in favour of genealogy,[11] but rather:

> Foucault's development of a genealogical approach to history is a matter of (1) returning archaeology to its role of describing both discursive and nondiscursive practices, (2) thereby exhibiting an essential tie between knowledge and power, and (3) exploiting this tie to provide a causal explanation of changes in discursive formations and

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[5] Michel Foucault, *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth, Vol. 1*, ed. Paul Rabinow (1997), 117.
[6] Rabinow, "Introduction: The History of Systems of Thought", XXXV.
[7] See Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique,* 46.
[8] Ibid, 44.
[9] Paul Veyne, *Foucault. His Thought, His Character* (2010), 107.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (1989), 265-272.

epistemes. Accordingly, genealogy does not replace or even seriously revise Foucault's archaeological method. It rather combines it with a complementary technique of causal analysis. If the above account is essentially correct, then archaeology continues to hold a central place even in Foucault's genealogical work. This would strongly support our claim that archaeology is compatible with Foucault's later formulation of his philosophical project.[12]

Gutting's analysis of Foucault's overall methodology is compatible with Foucault's own arrangement of his work with respect to genealogy in the following passage:

> 'Three domains of genealogy are possible. First, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents. So, three axes are possible for genealogy. All three were present, albeit in a somewhat confused fashion, in *Madness and Civilization*. The truth axis was studied in *The Birth of the Clinic* and *The Order of Things*. The power axis was studied in *Discipline and Punish*, and the ethical axis in *The History of Sexuality*.[13]

Foucault does not claim that all axes had to work together. However, all axes revolve around one concern. Foucault's observation that at the beginning of the seventeenth century there was an extensive use of practices of incarceration in relation to 'the insertion of the mad in this type of truth game' led him to focus on institutions of power rather than on ideology.[14] Foucault monitored the relationship between knowledge and power by posing their interaction as a problem. But, this problem was only used as an instrument that could lead him to a more precise analysis of the relationship between the subject and truth.[15]

In other words, the issue of self-care is related to how one constructs knowledge and exercises truth or one's relationship to knowledge and truth. Then, by identifying different relationships between truth and self-care, the power axis comes into play. Although no relationship between truth and self-care is beyond power, certain relationships do freeze games of power. In this way, a genealogy of ethics tied to Foucault's discussion of antiquity is essentially the sum of the interaction of the three axes (i.e., power, truth, ethics), but it is the issue of self-care that drives this inquiry into the interaction of the three axes. Hence, in genealogy as problematisation (i.e., genealogies of ethics), although we are concerned with genealogy in relation to self-care, the three axes have to interact. In this context, power is now identified when the problematisation of how to govern the self is governmentalised on the grounds of turning truth-telling into legislating doctrinal forms of knowledge tied to technologies of the self vis-à-vis an apheretic non-doctrinal mode of truth-telling tied to practices of living.

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[12] Ibid., 271-272.

[13] Michel Foucault, *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 262-263.

[14] Ibid., 290.

[15] Ibid.

GENEALOGY AND ANTIQUITY

The aim of this section is to advance a certain reading of Foucault's genealogy in connection with better crystallising the genealogical value of Foucault's engagement with antiquity. This contrasts with Gutting's unwillingness to perceive Foucault's engagement with antiquity as genealogical in the 'traditional' sense. Gutting described Foucault's genealogy of antiquity as a unique type of philosophy that unfolds through the use of history (i.e., philosophy as a historical-critique of reason). But it is essential to be clear that Foucault's engagement with antiquity provides not only an ethos for self-creation in the present but also a critique of a certain account of self-care that, due to its re-emergence in the enlightenment, can be traced in the present.

Of course, Gutting does not doubt that a genealogy of ancient ethics has value in the present. Rather, he suggests that Foucault's discussion of antiquity cannot be a genealogy

> ...because genealogy is concerned with the lines of power connected to our present system of domination. It is, as Foucault said in *Discipline and Punish*, a history of the present. But the power regimes of ancient Greece and Rome are too distant to figure in our understanding of our present power structures. When only these structures were Foucault's concern, he needed, as he originally planned, to go no further back than medieval notions of pastoral care. But once the topic became problematisations and self-creative responses to them – matters that develop in the interstices of a power regime – the ancients immediately became interesting. Not, however, because of the specific origin of their problems, which would require a genealogical study, but because of the kinds of creative responses the ancients gave to these problems.[16]

It is true that a 'proper' genealogy needs to be able to trace practices in the past in order to uncover their operation in the present. However, as will be shown in the next sections, what is presented as the 'Alcibiades parrhesia' does function in the present, so this late genealogy does trace power relations in the past in order to uncover the present.

Hence, a contemporary genealogist ought to seek the origins of our current problems, and one can go as far back as antiquity to achieve that.[17] Such an excursion is partly done at the level of problematising similar issues with the ancients in an achronic and existential manner to identify creative responses. But, one has still to wonder to what extent one can genuinely problematise. So, the aim to problematise should be tied to an evaluation of the power regime itself. This evaluation does not attempt to define such a regime but to remove obstacles through a way of living.

For this to be possible, one still needs to contemplate structures and techniques of governance. Power can be exercised not only via the structural apparatus and the spaces of freedom that it provides but also at the level of the problematisations that develop, in Gutting's words, in 'the interstices of a power regime'. Given that a problematisation is linked to the issue of the self, one has to monitor whether self-care is encouraged, or a self-

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[16] Gary Gutting, *Foucault. A Very Short Introduction* (2005), 105.

[17] In this sense, even though such distinctions can end being loose, Foucault's discussion of antiquity is genealogical rather than a genealogy of antiquity.

governance tied to an inward direction of conducts emerges through the way that the power regime operates in the present.

Gutting holds that Foucault calls philosophy as history – in relation to further substantiating the philosophical background of the West – a genealogy because Foucault wishes to maintain his connection with Nietzsche.[18] Others, such as McGushin, when they speak of the late Foucault's genealogy of philosophy suggest that Foucault expands his narration of how our present came to be with respect to this displacement of the ancient philosophical project by the modern scientific project of knowledge:

> ....we will see that the care of the self as an experience of freedom also comes to be appropriated as a field of control. The struggle for power, which was enacted in the political assembly, will come to be enacted in the relationships and techniques of caring for oneself and others. The soul and one's existence will become the new battlefields in the struggle for power, truth, and freedom.[19]

The issue with such understandings of Foucault's late use of genealogy in connection with the present is that they describe, albeit in a more nuanced way, the same instrumentally rational shaped present vis-à-vis now a more substantiated ethically genealogy that transforms philosophy into a mode of self-care. Thus, there is a refusal to see Foucault's engagement with antiquity as being connected with the power-lines of our present. Foucault's discussion of antiquity is not a genealogy only because it enriches its 'fictional' narrative of the historical background of our present while evolving a philosophical ethos. 'Laches' and 'Alcibiades' do not both pave the ground for an ethos of self-care detached from the political field that is envisioned further through aspects of Hellenistic philosophy as it derives from McGushin.[20] Even if Alcibiades is also concerned with the care of the self, it still favours an ethos that is connected with the polis.

The problem with linking self-care to the 'polis' is also highlighted by Hindess. Hindess suggests that the late Foucault indicates that one ought to oppose not only the governance of the state and of the population by the state (political rationality) but also the rationality of the governance of the self. These are closely related as the 'enduring modern perception of politics as public life has its roots in the desire to reproduce central features of the polis' (the ancient 'polis').[21] The public life depends on the willingness of its participants to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

The connection of the present with the power lines of antiquity is evident in McGushin's admission that:

> ...the dialogue takes on a special weight genealogically because of the way it was appropriated by the Neoplatonists. The *Alcibiades* was placed at the head of the Platonic oeuvre. Foucault argues that this reflects the centrality of philosophy as the spiritual

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Edward McGushin, *Foucault's Askesis. An Introduction to the Philosophical Life* (2007), 96.

[20] McGushin, even though he recognizes throughout his work differences between 'Laches' and 'Alcibiades', seems to pair up Foucault's discussion of Socrates and Plato under this common denominator. See Ibid, 103.

[21] Barry Hindess, "Politics and Governmentality," *Economy and Society* 26:2 (1997), 269.

practice of *parrhēsía*. In the genealogy of ethical subjectivity and care of the self, *Alcibiades* must take a central place.[22]

'Laches' and 'Alcibiades' should not merely be perceived as the foundation of this historical ontology of how we can become different than we are. We cannot speak of a unified ancient project when there is a notable ethical differentiation between 'Laches' - 'Alcibiades' – this is made implicit in the next section – which ought to make us problematise not only the displacement of problematisation but also the power relations that revolve around problematisation from the ancient past to the present.

Of course, it can be argued that problematisation is an attempt to contemplate the limitations of the modern scientific project of knowledge. The implications of this argument become clearer in discussing Gutting. Gutting has extracted an implied distinction from Foucault between marginalisation and problematisation:

> There is an implied contrast – although Foucault never makes it explicit – between problematization and marginalization. In the ancient context…it is the lives of free Greek males that are problematized, not those of marginalized groups such as women and slaves…My suggestion is that, in moving to the history of the subject (and to the history of ancient sexuality), Foucault implicitly switches his primary focus from those whose lives are marginalized to those whose lives are merely problematized.[23]

Hence, an aesthetics of existence can be derived from the ancients by those who are not marginalised and, therefore, trapped between submission and resistance.[24] At the same time, even though it is true that marginalised groups – such as the mad, sick, prisoners, homosexuals, etc., – were Foucault's initial focus, it became apparent in Foucault's lectures on liberalism and neoliberalism that he thought the majority in liberal societies were governed by techniques of governance that were marginalising them from the ability to problematise. In this sense, Foucault's focus on marginalisation always carries some value. It is problematisation that puts into perspective why Foucault was interested in marginalisation.

Still, problematisation is not ipso facto a tool of dealing with marginalisation. By focusing on problematising, Foucault displays his interest in identifying the right conditions for problematisation and/or for the right type of problematisation. In other words, Foucault characterised

> the philosophical ethos appropriate to the critical ontology of ourselves as a historico-practical test of the limits we may go beyond, and thus as work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings.[25]

In this way, one should also contemplate how the power relations around those who appear capable to problematise operate.

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[22] Edward McGushin, *Foucault's Askesis*, 78.

[23] Gary Gutting, *Foucault. A Very Short Introduction*, 103-104.

[24] See Gary Gutting, Thinking the Impossible. French Philosophy Since 1960 (2011), 144.

[25] *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 316.

As established, problematisation is distinct from the original conception of genealogy in its way of monitoring power. But, as noted above, the issue of the self does not operate as an independent existential exercise but is something that is linked to a way of monitoring power through an explicit connection between power, truth, and self-care. Foucault found the opportunity to form an art of existence as a means of making a conscious effort to show the historical contingency of restrictions and to remove the obstacles tied to the justification of values that guide our lives that prevent us from achieving these values.[26] But, he also found the opportunity to enrich his understanding of the power relations operating in his present. A genealogist, more than anything, makes a history of the present. In other words, even if one acknowledges Foucault's genealogy of ethics as a historic-critical practice (of reason), one should link this with the observation that Foucault's historic-critical account also critiques aspects of the past as a means of preparing for further critical evaluation of the contemporary power regime from the point of view of self-care.[27]

Hence, the genealogical connotations of Foucault's discussion of antiquity are not adequately understood in the literature. Koopman, like Gutting, reads Foucault's discussion of antiquity as a way of further envisioning genealogy rather than as genealogical. That said, Gutting at least appears to be content with the way that Foucault established a project that could be called almost ethical.[28]

Koopman revises Fraser's critique. Fraser suggests that Foucault lacks a normative framework with the well-known aim of rejecting Foucault as an ethical philosopher. Koopman defends Foucault's earlier archaeological and genealogical work by highlighting that it was not trying to offer any sort of guidance. But, he justifies Fraser's critique of Foucault, not with respect to the work of Foucault that she chose to criticize, but aimed at the late work on ethics which Koopman finds normatively incomplete.

There is then an important disagreement between my approach and Koopman's with respect to how genealogy as problematisation ought to function in the present. This is revisited in the last section of this paper. What is of direct concern here is that Koopman does not focus on monitoring the critical implications of Foucault's discussions of antiquity for the present as a means of asserting a Foucauldian ethos.

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[26] See Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason,* 285.

[27] Then, Gros suggests that: 'One gets the impression...that in 1984 Foucault put in the balance philosophy as discursive domain, as constituted knowledge, and philosophy as test and attitude, rather than two possible types of study (transcendental or historical-critical)'. Frédéric Gros, "Course Context," in Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth. Lectures at the Collège de France,* 1977–1978, ed. Frédéric Gros (2011), 350. This distinction -that underpins the two types of parrhesia discussion of the next section(s)- makes even more explicit that Foucault's engagement with the past leading to philosophy as test and attitude becomes a critique of philosophy as constituted knowledge in connection with the problematisation of the self that is supposed to be linked to the present.

[28] Gutting considers Fraser's question of 'where Foucault's philosophical project finds the justification for its own norms and how it shows these norms to be preferable to those that it criticizes'. See *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason,* 281. Gutting suggests that philosophy in Foucault 'is not the foundation of the project of liberation but an underlaborer clearing the path for it'. See, ibid., 283. I suggest that this is Gutting's way of finding continuity in Foucault's work by arguing that Foucault's project consistently progresses without seeking normative justifications in the traditional sense and without necessarily needing them.

Koopman's understanding of problematisation lies at the intersection of two complementary approaches. He writes,

> Hacking has most frequently taken up archaeology and genealogy for a history of present practices that would reveal something about our philosophical sensibilities. Rabinow has most frequently taken up the same for the quite different purposes of an inquiry into the present and contemporary significance of our practices themselves.[29]

In this way, Koopman uses problematisation as the final methodological account of genealogy so as to embark on new uses of genealogy tied to continuing to make histories of the present. This is evident in his most recent argument that biopolitics evolves into infopolitics.[30]

Koopman is a careful reader of the late Foucault's methodology, but because he fails to acknowledge the ethical self-sufficiency of genealogy as problematisation, he is forced to seek normative support where new forms of domination can be traced. This ignores the significance of the different ethical orientations that come into play in Foucault's discussion of enlightenment and antiquity. Infopower cannot be introduced via a genealogy of ethics while only building upon critical concepts tied to Foucault's earlier genealogical work.[31]

My focus is how the discussion of antiquity tied to the parrhesia lectures (particularly *The Courage of Truth)* develops the importance of Foucault's use of genealogy as problematisation in engaging with present power relations from the point of view of self-care. Foucault's nuanced understanding of the West, tied to providing a history of Western philosophy which culminates in two major ethical positions, is not meant as an incomplete genealogical problematisation nor is it merely philosophy through history. It substantiates the core ethical premise of a philosophy through history, while entailing a discussion of lines of power that can be connected with Foucault's emerging present, and more so, our current present.

Hence, I can more concretely suggest now that what is lacking from various accounts of Foucault's engagement with antiquity is the way that one can observe how, during Foucault's era and afterwards, the focus on 'democratising' liberalism has created parallels between the power regime of antiquity and the contemporary power regime with respect to how to govern the self.

Foucault's engagement with enlightenment could be an attempt to identify heuristic sources of self-creation rather than a direct critique of something because enlightenment for Foucault is not an epoch or a concrete system of knowledge that one can analyse while

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[29] *Genealogy as Critique*, 86.

[30] Colin Koopman, *How We Became Our Data: A Genealogy of the Informational Person* (2019).

[31] This problem is reflected in the absence of a discussion of Nikolas Rose's ethopolitics. Although he acknowledges Rose's overall work on Foucault, he does not really discuss Rose's critique of cosmopolitan politics. It is also reflected in that he does not agree with Thomas Osborne's or David Owen's critical ways of differentiating Habermas from Foucault which, as is shown below, are compatible with the claims made in this paper. See, *Genealogy as Critique,* 298 (note 43) and 304 (note 17).

presenting opposing analyses as parts of structures of domination.[32] The discussion of enlightenment is, of course, what starts the debates between Foucault and other critical thinkers. By this time, Foucault's re-appropriation of Nietzsche is already evident and, eventually, he does the same with Kant.[33] However, Foucault had to go further back not only to identify sources of otherness that could help him formulate an ethos, but to trace those foundations of thought that can substantiate his critique of other present theories of emancipation.

THE TWO LINES OF PARRHESIA AND GOVERNMENTALITY

Foucault's late genealogical discussion of antiquity in relation to parrhesia tracks two strands of ethics that give us an account of contemporary power relations and emerging 'techniques/structures of domination' in connection, now, with technologies of the self. Very schematically, 'parrhesia' has its origins in ancient Greece, and it refers to the courage of telling the 'truth' to yourself and others as a means of taking care of both the self and others. Foucault's genealogical discussion of antiquity highlights that the relationship between self-care, politics and philosophy is a permanent one in the West. As suggested, this account is not at all a direct involvement in the governance of the 'polis', the state or the institution, *per se*. In Foucault, the attempt to define philosophy and/or enlightenment is tied to the ancient Greek struggles of philosophy to identify how one ought to practice the truth in relation to taking care of the self and others.

But, Foucault does not position parrhesia outside power relations as freedom is not something external to such relations. The concern is to identify a form of parrhesia that can retain power-relations as open-ended. The philosopher remains a part of her society and an individual in her quest for truth rather than a pure ascetic scientist. As such, Foucault shares something with Weber. But, Foucault does not quite accept the objectivism of science as a vocation. As Rose suggests, what unifies us in the critical quest is not the various contested beliefs of human nature, but that we are all governable subjects governed in the name of such beliefs.[34] Therefore, the critique is based on the grounds 'that nothing is bad, but everything can be dangerous' if not analysed at the embryonic stage of its formation.[35]

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[32] Hendricks links this late understanding of Foucault's genealogy to an ontology of ourselves. She suggests that Foucault aims to critique the present not in a detached way but from a position within his own present which, to a large extent, is historically determined by enlightenment. See Christina Hendricks, "Foucault's Kantian Critique: Philosophy and the Present," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 34:4 (2008), 367-368. Foucault explores the possibilities of changing what enlightenment ought to mean on the basis that the power relations attached to it remain open-ended.

[33] The connection between Foucault and Kant is obviously tied to Foucault's own engagement with Kant in his essay 'What is Enlightenment?' (see *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth,* 303-320). Foucault finds in Kant the practice of critique as ' 'ontology of the present' that emphasizes freedom through transgression of limits'. See, Hendricks, "Foucault's Kantian Critique," 368.

[34] See Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (1999), 284.

[35] *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 256.

In response to the question of whether it is possible to have the problematisation of the care of the self at the centre of a new politics, Foucault welcomes this problematisation. It is this problematisation that this paper explicitly attempts to contemplate. What kind of theory of ethics has picked up this problematisation as a means of a new governance of the self and others, and what kind of theory of ethics keeps the problematisation open? In engaging with these questions, I focus on the governmentalisation of the problematisation of the self.

Hence, we should not linger on the governmentality presented in the lectures on liberalism and neoliberalism, but recognise the transition from the Foucault of *Society Must be Defended, Security, Territory, Population*, and *The Birth of Biopolitics* to a different Foucault concerned with problematisation. The lectures *On the Government of Living* built on the importance of the counter-reformation through the pivotal role of confession that was also discussed in *The History of Sexuality: Volume I*. In this transition, the Foucauldian take on the dominant problematisation that has structured the West became more and more nuanced and the issue of truth-telling more vital. Moreover, the first parallel discussion between antiquity and pastoral power with respect to this issue appeared.

However, this focus on forms of truth-telling does not quite bring ethics into the discussion in the way that they appear in Foucault's late lectures. There is still no account of the way in which the ancient Greeks formulated their problematisation of governance and freedom other than that found in *Security, Territory, Population*.

In this context, governmentality is concerned with strategies of governance and the processes of their institutionalisation (although the concept of 'technologies of the self' does appear). However, even though the lectures on governmentality bring together power and knowledge, and subjectivity and truth, this confluence is obscured by the emphasis on a certain trajectory that still highlights 'states of domination' tied to structures. The concern remains how to govern the freedom of others without an explicit link to how to govern the self.

Foucault acknowledged that in his earlier work 'on asylums, prisons and so on' he focussed too much on techniques/structures of domination as power relations were examined from the point of view of acting on others. In this context, he realised that power relations should also be examined in connection with techniques of the self.[36]

Foucault, as noted above, progressively reformulated his understanding of power, which matured in his late lectures (from the beginning of the '80s). It is then that he starts crystallising the relationship between knowledge and the subject. The lectures *Subjectivity and Truth, The Hermeneutics of the Subject, The Government of the Self and Others,* and *The Courage of Truth*, which informed his publication of the next two volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, represent a matured Foucault.

The Foucault of the '80s then describes how philosophy as test and attitude has almost disappeared from the West, while philosophy as constituted knowledge was for a time re-appropriated and/or marginalised by Christian pastoral power. Here, one can find the Foucault of the governmentality lectures tied to the concern of how to govern others (i.e.,

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[36] See ibid., 177.

the power axis of genealogy). But, the late Foucault focusses on tracing ancient Greek philosophical practices and their account of reason in the West. In this way, the concern with governing the freedom of others is linked to the problematisation of governing the self.

In *Subjectivity and Truth*, Foucault poses the question of governance clearly from the point of the self. The importance of 'Alcibiades' in the discussion of governmentality becomes even more explicit below:

> Plato's *Alcibiades* can be taken as the starting point: the question of the "care of one-self"…appears in this text as the general framework within which the imperative of self-knowledge acquires its significance. The series of studies that can be envisaged starting from there could form a history of the "care of oneself," understood as an experience, and thus also as a technique elaborating and transforming that experience. Such a project is at the intersection of two themes treated previously: a history of subjectivity and an analysis of the forms of "governmentality."…The history of the "care" and the "techniques" of the self would thus be a way of doing the history of subjectivity; no longer, however, through the divisions between the mad and the nonmad, the sick and nonsick, delinquents and nondelinquents, nor through the constitution of fields of scientific objectivity giving a place to the living, speaking, laboring subject; but, rather, through the putting in place, and the transformations in our culture, of "relations with oneself," with their technical armature and their knowledge effects. And in this way one could take up the question of governmentality from a different angle: the government of the self by oneself in its articulation with relations with others (such as one finds in pedagogy, behavior counseling, spiritual direction, the prescription of models for living, and so on).[37]

Taking account of these reflections, governmentality now becomes 'this encounter between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self'.[38] Foucault suggests that he has insisted on the relation between 'the technology of domination and power', but that his interest has shifted, and it now lies,

> in the interaction between oneself and others, and in the technologies of individual domination, in the mode of action that an individual exercises upon himself by means of the technologies of the self.[39]

Individual domination is linked to power relations. This shift reflects the ethical domain of genealogy which is better tied to an approach based on the history of thought.[40]

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[37] *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 88.

[38] Ibid, 225.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Discussing the potential of a discontinuity between a history of governmentality and genealogy is beyond the scope of this paper. See Thomas Biebricher "Genealogy and Governmentality," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 2:3 (2008). Biebricher acknowledges that there are arguments in favour of the connection between genealogy and governmentality (Saar, Lemke, Dean and others). See Biebricher, "Genealogy and Governmentality," 395. I also subscribe to this view in the specific way that my argument so far unfolds. But, I find value in Biebricher's suggestion that we need to develop more heterogenous accounts of modern governmentalities. See "Genealogy and Governmentality," 396. In the context of this paper, one can develop more heterogeneous accounts of contemporary governmentality by focusing on leftist democratic interactions with neoliberalism and not only on progressions of neoliberalism per se. As is evident here, Foucault opened

Hence, governmentality in Foucault is initially reflected in structures of domination (dispositif), and it progressively focusses on how the individual internalises and reproduces power at the level of self-governance. Even in the lectures on neoliberalism and homo economicus, Foucault's account of 'direct biopolitics' with respect to American neoliberalism suggests this interactive relationship between power and economic knowledge is internalised at the level of self-governance (ethics).[41] When it becomes understood, though, that governmentality is not an account of the economic governmental rationales of neoliberalism, but a critique of the interaction of power, knowledge and self-governance (even if in that case the focus has been on the practises of governing the freedom of the population), it becomes obvious that political rationales other than liberalism and neoliberalism could exhibit types of interaction capable of being considered 'governmental'. In this way, as hinted above, governmentality as a concept can bridge the genealogies of power with the genealogical discussion of ancient ethics in connection with Foucault's ethical project of keeping the games of power open-ended. After all, a governmentality critique can be applied to any interaction among power, knowledge/truth, and ethics to which a structural apparatus can be traced and subsequently tied to technologies of internalisation at the level of self-governance.[42]

And, where a governmentality critique can be applied, the 'games of power' stop being open-ended. In other words, when the 'games of truth' come to a standstill, the 'games of power' interact with knowledge in a manner that freezes the movement of self-realisation.

Understanding the definition of a 'game of truth' is important. Gutting, pursuing the 'loose' connections between different periods of Foucault's work, suggests that games of truth could exist in relation to linking systems of discourse to archaeology, and power relations to genealogy, while one can argue that, for Foucault, 'games of truth' are related to the bodies of knowledge that he studied through his histories. Hence, Foucault suggests, that 'games of truth' can be directly related to problematisations as these games are tied to the philosophical theories that ancient Greeks created to deal with the problems of human existence: philosophy is the response of the Greeks to problematisations. Importantly, for Foucault, philosophy is not about the development of theoretical knowledge. Rather, ancient philosophy is about 'a way of life'; 'games of truth' are tied to practices of telling the truth rather than to systems of thought. Therefore, Foucault was always aware that he needed to keep his distance from Plato and Plato's tendency to treat philosophy 'as a theoretical vision rather than just a way of life'.[43]

It is clear, then, that 'games of truth' are not merely any interaction between truth and the subject. There is a distinction here between knowledge and truth. Such a distinction

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the door for tracing such alternative governmentalities in relation to how genealogy as problematisation operates in his discussion of antiquity. This line of argumentation is further developed below.

[41] See Michel Foucault, The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–*1979*, ed. Michel Senellart (2008).

[42] Hindess suggests that Foucault eventually criticizes 'political understandings of conduct of conducts, whether the conduct in question is that of others or of oneself'. See Hindess, "Politics and Governmentality," 269.

[43] *Foucault. A Very Short Introduction*, 109.

does not quite appear in Foucault, who used 'games of truth' broadly to capture the production of knowledge and/or to indicate how power interacts with knowledge.[44]

Note that the truth axis is often referred to as the truth-knowledge axis. However, in the lectures *The Will to Know*, there is a difference between a will to truth and a will to know, albeit an inconsistent and underdeveloped one.[45] Progressively the will to truth operates in Foucault as a pivotal re-appropriation of the will to power.[46] Such a will to truth is attached to the philosophical ethos that Foucault favours.[47] In the end, games of truth are not concealed games of power. After all, Foucault stated that if power is everywhere it is because there is freedom everywhere.[48] The point is to understand 'how they are set up and how they are connected with power relations'.[49] Ultimately, we ought to strive to keep the games of power open-ended by developing 'the *ethos,* the practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible.'[50] The antithesis between traditionality of existence, and of doctrine, that Foucault eventually develops into two distinct forms of telling the truth as a means to take care of the self emerges here.[51]

With the dynamics of such a distinction in mind, I want to emphasise that only a form of governance which concerns itself with the notion of the population or the self in relation to its freedoms qualifies as governmentality. For this reason, it is essentially the ethical axis of genealogy that drives the critique of the ways that it connects with power and knowledge. The philosophical ethical concern with truth-telling is deeply embedded in governmental analysis.

Hence, one could perceive my account of governmentality as not necessarily new, but as an effort to put governmentality into its proper context; the interpretation of such things with respect to the overall reading of Foucault is open-ended. Nevertheless, governmentality makes sense only in connection with Foucault's overall ethical project of monitoring how freedom is governed as a means of opposing structures of domination. And, in putting forward such an ethical project, Foucault had to envision a genealogy of

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[44] See *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 281-282.

[45] See "Introduction: The History of Systems of Thought", XII.

[46] In the second volume of *the History of Sexuality*, the will to truth refers to 'the way that the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself as the prime material if his moral conduct.' Rabinow quoting Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol.2, p.26. Ibid., XXIX.

[47] Foucault links games of truth to 'an ascetic practice, taking asceticism in a very general sense-in other words, not in the sense of a morality of renunciation but as an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain to a certain mode of being.' *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 282.

[48] By power I do not mean biopower. As Koopman puts it, Agamben insists on finding biopower everywhere when Foucault was careful to trace it in very specific contexts. See *Genealogy as Critique*, 232. When Foucault speaks of power as being everywhere in the sense of power relations, he is careful, as noted before, not to condemn power relations as such. See *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 292.

[49] *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 296.

[50] Ibid, 298.

[51] See Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth. The Government of Self and Others II. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984*, ed. Frédéric Gros (2011), 208-209.

ethics to identify heuristic sources of self-creation, while possibly criticizing other similar attempts by observing directly how the issue of the self interacts with truth and power.

As noted above, focussing on the continuities in Foucault's work is not the same as claiming that Foucault was executing a master plan. Nevertheless, a case can be made that Foucault was very close to using governmentality in a manner that could lead to a critique of various theories of democratic emancipation. But, his late work was only starting to create the foundations for what his engagement with antiquity could mean for the present when it was abruptly stopped. Hence, one cannot argue with certainty that a governmentality tied to the problematisation of the self exists in Foucault.

Thus, the formulation of a new form of governmentality is not a matter of the meaningless creation of terms, and it does not mean that the original governmentality is not still tied to Foucault's ethical project. But, to the extent that governmentality can be still connected with power and governing the freedom of others, governmentality as what I call 'neogovernmentality' can be something distinct that also recognizes a possible interaction between itself and governmentality with respect to how freedom is governed. Hence, this new form of governmentality appears because the problematisation of how to govern the self concerned not only Foucault but many other scholars aiming at further envisioning enlightenment and democracy. Such scholars have contributed to a re-appropriation of the way that games of power unfold which one can criticize by envisioning how governmentality could function within Foucault's late ethical concern (i.e., self-care).

Therefore, it is possible to grasp how the care of the self is tied to two different strands of philosophy in the West:[52]

> When we compare the *Laches* and the *Alcibiades*, we have the starting point for two great lines of development of philosophical reflection and practice: on the one hand, philosophy as that which, by prompting and encouraging men to take care of themselves, leads them to the metaphysical reality of the soul, and, on the other, philosophy as a test of life, a test of existence, and the elaboration of a particular kind of form and modality of life.[53]

In other words, there is the Socrates in Plato's 'Alcibiades', who is concerned with transcendental reason and care of the self for the sake of the 'polis'. Caring for one's self (i.e., *epimeleisthai heauto*) here is constituent of knowing oneself (i.e. *gnōthi seauton*). Then, there is the Socrates in Plato's 'Laches', who points towards an art of living in which parrhesia appears as a way of telling the truth to the self and others as a means of practicing a genuinely self-driven art of existence.[54] In this latter case, taking care of the self is clearly

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[52] Foucault does not ipso facto proclaim an incompatibility between the two (particularly in Plato), but focusing on how-why they differ becomes an important aspect of his work. See ibid., 127.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Foucault's reading of Phaedo is also important in identifying an apheretic and 'apolitical' mode of self-care tied to this particular truth-telling. As Foucault put it: 'It is important to remember that the whole cycle of Socrates' death…this great cycle which begins with the Apology, continues with the Crito, and ends with the Phaedo is permeated by this theme of epimeleia'. Foucault suggests that 'Socrates defined his parrhesia, his courageous truth-telling, as a truth-telling whose final objective and constant concern was to teach men

the prominent objective as knowing the self is only important in the sense of exploring one's self through living. It is this type of connection between self-care and an approach to knowledge as a certain truth-telling that Foucault favours (tradionality of existence) as it is vital that caring for one's self is not subordinated to knowing one's self and/or 'knowing' in connection with transcendental connotations (i.e., tradionality of discourse). Hence, in 'Laches' one takes care of the self through one's way of living and 'asks' others to do the same.

THE TWO LINES OF PARRHESIA, GOVERNMENTALITY AND THE PRESENT

I have so far established an overview of Foucault's work in connection with the genealogical implications of his discussion of antiquity and indicated on what grounds the two types of parrhesia are tied to two distinct lines of philosophical development. Following this distinction suggests that problematisation in connection with the ancient ethical project ought to be envisioned in a certain manner vis-à-vis one that is capable of leading to a governmentalisation of the self. Thus, at this point my focus shifts to the implications of this distinction for the present.

Hence, the sparring of critical theory, reflexive modernisation—and even possibly postmodernism (which is not as such a direct concern here)—with instrumental rationality in relation to modernity as an epoch that should be replaced or further evolve can also be understood at the level of 'governmentalities'. This 'sparring' should be perceived as a 'game of truth' that can become one that halts 'games of power', since a contemporary history of our present suggests that critical theory, reflexive (new) modernists' and postmodernists' concerns regarding the contingency of instrumental rationality—concerns which are a by-product of their own contribution to the 'game of truth'—have influenced the way that the social is reproduced.[55] Hence, there is the need for an updated analysis of power relations tied to the interaction of power, knowledge and ethics in regard to problematising possible 'states of domination'.

In the present day, it seems we have to choose between either a utilitarian self-centred approach tied to the biopolitical management of the population or manifestations of the 'Alcibiades' concern for the greater good (i.e., taking care of others as a means of taking care of the self) within the inner struggles of the liberal democratic paradigm and global governance agendas. The 'Alcibiades' line of ethics might show a concern for self-care, but such a concern is also subordinated to knowing oneself.[56] It is subordinated because self-care is tied to the quest to find that knowledge that leads to a transcendental account of a universally applicable self-governance as moral, reasonable, and effective.

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to take care of themselves. Socrates took care of men, but not in the political form: he wants to take care of them so that they learn to take care of themselves'. Ibid., 111.

[55] Rose, by building upon Deleuze, perceives the situation as a struggle between problematisation and new forms of domination within a shift to control. See Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom*, 273.

[56] See *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 226-228.

The third choice – a more modest and ascetic concern for the self as a means to envision the greater good through 'practices of living' (i.e., taking care of the self as means of taking care of others rather than vice-versa) – that is tied to 'Laches', remains unfound. It is unfound in terms of appearing as a dominant approach to living, but it is envisioned when one uses the 'Laches' line of ethics to critically engage with the present. In this way, it is possible to trace how the problematisation of how to govern the self is linked to the concern with how to govern others in a manner that freezes the games of power (i.e., the governmentalisation of the problematisation of the self).

My focus is on the present implications of this clash between 'Laches' and 'Alcibiades' which can be extracted from Foucault's engagement with antiquity. I have already discussed Foucault's preference for a certain kind of truth-telling that is dissociated from the concerns of the 'polis' and the quest for the transcendent truth which links reason with the universals of a permanent soul and its metaphysical plane.

It is for this reason that, in various interviews and monographs, Foucault clearly stated that he opposes Sartre's ideal subjectivity; Habermas's utopia of a communication space outside of relations of power; any forms of humanism on the basis of crafting 'projects of man'; and the way that ecological movements re-appropriate scientific absolutism.[57] As Foucault put it, in terms of the supra-historical perspective, if there is a belief in eternal truth, the immortality of the soul, or the nature of consciousness as always identical to the self, then a certain theme of philosophy, with its quest for the transcendent truth that in turn becomes knowledge, is the one that is in play.

This understanding of Foucault can be linked to a dangerous form of revolutionary spirit that can add to the fragility of existing emancipatory gains. If people want simply to rebel, then soon after the moment that something novel arises, it can become a new target of critique. Therefore, one has to focus on the Foucault of the 'problematisation'. This Foucault had to believe that power games can be open-ended. But, the Foucault who links problematisation to parrhesia wishes to orientate us towards a certain way of thinking. If Foucault was raising the question, 'Is it any safer to believe in human rights than it was to believe in the god Jupiter?',[58] then given his late shift, his focus would be on the contingency of human rights in an era in which the language of such rights is associated with a claim to an all-encompassing moral universality. He would want to move beyond such certainties, not only via incoherent anti-modern and/or post-modern inventions, but through his provision of a certain orientation in thinking. And, as much as this orientation tied to a revolutionary spirit can be tied to a pluralistic creation of subjectivities within the context of social struggles, I stress that, in the late Foucault, the effort to keep the games of power open-ended is a personal struggle. But, it is one that contemplates the sociopolitical environment in which the person has to operate.

As Veyne has pointed out, the early Foucault, without passing any sort of judgement or having an overall aim, seemed content to present a map with potential points of

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[57] See again, for example, *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth.*
[58] Paul Veyne, *Foucault. His Thought, His Character*, 85.

resistance for those who want to fight whatever battle they choose to fight.[59] Despite not focusing on how to dominate, but on how to resist, such an account is not an ethical one in the sense that can be found in the late Foucault. Since everything comes down to power relations, there is no guarantee that those who resist would not end up exercising power in a way that can lead to domination, while there is no claim that such a choice makes one's life more meaningful. It is Foucault's evolved understanding of problematisation as the foundation of self-transformation which proposes to others an aesthetic way of living rather than an aesthetic preference. The former is tied to contemplating our formation and the formation of the things around us in a manner that makes the individually driven process of resistance an end in itself. Rose in interpreting Deleuze argues that we can be '"against" identity, "against" ideas of human essence, "against" the humanist conception of the individual subject, but in favour of life.'[60] Foucault's detestation of judging becomes a will to pivot into the mode in which one will work on the self by refraining from certainties. In this way, Foucault moved away from his early activism tied to aesthetic relativism.

But, instead of focussing on enlightened citizens that can 'forge' the right type of governor or choose between good and less good accounts of how to live, one should merely put the issue of governance into the right perspective, leaving open the question of what is the best constitution.[61]

As Gros puts it in his remarks on the as yet infrequently discussed *Courage of Truth* lectures:

> It has always been said that the political philosophy of the Ancients was obsessed with the search for the 'best regime.'…Foucault attempts here a different reading: to show that the search for the 'best constitution' does not confirm a moral quest, but constitutes the insertion of a principle of ethical differentiation within the problem of the government of men… But Foucault's contribution is crucial in that he points out that this ethical differentiation is not in fact the moral quality of a leader, or even the singularity of a stylization of existence which would mark out an exceptional individual from the anonymous mass. Rather, it presupposes bringing the difference of the truth into play in the construction of the relation to self, or rather the truth as difference, as distance taken from public opinion and common certainties. Hence the structural fragility of democracy, for if it is possible to think of an individual or small group managing to carry out this ethically differentiating work on themselves, it seems improbable that an entire people will succeed in doing so. It remains that ethical difference, which allows the best *politeia* to exist, is only the effect of the difference of truth itself in a subject.[62]

At this point, I want to expand on the public-private dynamic in Foucault. Doing so further crystallizes Foucault's connection with 'Laches' while showing how certain

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[59] *Foucault. His Thought, His Character*, 119-120.

[60] *Powers of Freedom*, 283.

[61] Hindess argues that Foucault's critique targets also 'the forms of government of the self which political discourse associates with a government of a state by its citizens'. "Politics and Governmentality", 269.

[62] Gros, "Course Context", 345-346.

Foucauldian literature essentially tends to homogenize 'Laches' and 'Alcibiades' and/or misunderstands 'Laches' and, as a result, Foucault.

Rorty, as cited in Gutting, has made a distinction between a private and a public philosophy.[63] Such a distinction, although useful, is not set in stone. For when one works on the self as a means of being able to shape one's own surroundings in a manner that such self-care would always remain possible, this private type of philosophy becomes public. But, it is only in this context that one can find a concern with the public in the late Foucault.

A line must be drawn then between the personal and the collective. There are grey areas; for example, Bauman and Castoriadis present examples of writing in favour of both some type of autonomy and the public sphere. Koopman, although he speaks of ethics of self-transformation, attempts to let the concern with the polis in through the back door by using the reflection/intervention distinction to argue that:

> Foucault's genealogy locates itself at the intersection of reflection and intervention, or of what can safely be referred to as philosophy and politics...Locating genealogy at the intersection of philosophy and politics enables us to see this tradition as making a contribution in the form of a political philosophy, a public philosophy, or what I elsewhere call a "cultural critical philosophy.[64]

But, when Foucault suggests that one needs to 'acquire the rules of law, the management techniques, and also the morality, the *ethos,* the practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible' he might hint towards a broader social transformation but, at the same time, he speaks of a work on the self by the self in the Socratic apolitical fashion mentioned before.[65] Foucault's self-transformation can become collective only by orientating others towards such a self-transformation rather than by providing a political project of reconstruction of society. It is only through this orientation that he 'intervenes'. In this way, the 'Laches' line of philosophy, even though apolitical in the narrow sense of participation in organized politics, is also political as it both reflects and intervenes.

Koopman in his own way agrees with Rorty – as he does with Fraser – on the complaint of Foucault's lack of normative commitment. It seems that Rorty, owing to his more concrete distinction between private and public, suggests that if one subscribes to this private philosophy then one might dwell too much on reflection rather than intervention. Within this reflection-intervention dynamic that echoes the public-private one, Koopman discusses that autonomy is related to an understanding of freedom that is inherently tied to the power-freedom dichotomy of modernity. Foucault's struggles to further envision his work has indeed resulted in potentially conflicting accounts of freedom. Given the progression in Foucault's work discussed in this paper, a distinction between autonomy-liberation-emancipation and transformation-experimentation-resistance could be understandable. And, it could be argued that such a distinction does not lead directly to the

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[63] *Thinking the Impossible,* 133-134.
[64] *Genealogy as Critique,* 26.
[65] *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth,* 298.

emancipation/post-emancipation discussion that one can find in the likes of Giddens. But, this is the very point that opens the door for a use of Foucault by reflexive modernisation theory and/or for a Foucauldian literature that has made Foucault accessible to all sorts of democratic theories. The problem is that the notion that Foucault 'did not find a positive conception of freedom in the idea of autonomy working against power to liberate itself, but rather in the idea of transformative freedom working through power to re-create it-self'[66] has been taken by certain authors to indicate that one can work through institutional power and subjectivity to transform the self.

For example, Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg find an underdeveloped democratic agenda in Foucault.[67] Similarly, Torben Bech Dyrberg, by underplaying Foucault's 'purpose' and taking the route of appropriation, approaches the Foucault of parrhesia as a latent political theorist capable of shaping democratic politics. Dyrberg contemplates Foucault's compatibility with a democratic space that exists somewhere between Rawls and Laclau and Mouffe.[68] James Tully, who accepts a connection between Habermas and Foucault, advocates room for debate as to Foucault's contribution to democratic theories on the basis of the controversy that surrounds Foucault's late explorations of new formations of subjectivity.[69] Thompson has made the argument that Foucault's shift from tactical reversal to his late ethical concern tied to aesthetics of existence and self-transformation suggests that, although the subject acknowledges the governmentality connected with technologies of the self, it can consciously act towards re-envisioning subjectivity in a manner that establishes a sense of autonomy.[70] Prozorov offers a reading of Foucault tied to the Cynic parrhesia that is further informed by Agamben.[71] Prozorov claims that biopolitics can become affirmative biopolitics in connection with radical action.

In other words, when Koopman recognizes how one can use transformation to 'work at those crucial interstices where modern liberationist freedom and modern disciplinary power interlock, interleave, and interdigitate', this does not acknowledge that one must use transformation not to cancel power but to monitor the power-relations that are created around self-transformation in order to move beyond them. This literature perceives working through power as a form of resistance rather than as a problematisation of how and when working through power can still halt the games of power. For, in such a literature, it is only the former that strikes the right balance between reflection and intervention.

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[66] *Genealogy as Critique*, 174.

[67] See Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg, "Michel Foucault: an Ethical Politics of Care of Self and Others," in *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: Authors and Arguments*, ed. Catherine H. Zuckert (2011).

[68] See Torben Bech Dyrberg, *Foucault on the Politics of Parrhesia* (2014) and Torben Bech Dyrberg, "Foucault on Parrhesia: The Autonomy of Politics and Democracy," *Political Theory* 44:2 (2016).

[69] See James Tully, "To Think and Act Differently: Foucault's Four Reciprocal Objections to Habermas' Theory," in *Foucault Contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory*, ed. Samantha Ashenden and David Owen (1999).

[70] See Kevin Thompson, "Forms of Resistance: Foucault on Tactical Reversal and Self-Formation," *Continental Philosophy Review* 36:2 (2003).

[71] See Sergei Prozorov, "Foucault's Affirmative Biopolitics: Cynic Parrhesia and the Biopower of the Powerless," *Political Theory* 45:6 (2017).

However, although I have not, so far, directly tried to exclude that a creative self-care can be connected with the agonism that radical theories of democracy advocate, Foucault's preference for an orientation in thinking is related to a meaningful self-creation beyond the production of more exotic or more radical subjectivities tied to social reforms.[72] Foucault has notably argued in favour of disassembling the self.[73] This premise ought to mean something different than perceiving the formation of subjectivity as a field open to 'agonism'. Despite Foucault's gloomy account of subjectivity having to do originally with his earlier work on discipline, security and biopolitics, problematisation ought not to be seen as a form of subversion in the sense of transforming the social order even if it is by transforming ourselves as subjects. Subjectivation is definitely not an end. The ongoing process of being self-critical of our formation becomes an end in itself not in the sense of a fluent or constantly re-appropriated subjectivity or the nihilist identity politics, but in the sense of breaking down again and again the walls that naturalise our sense of self in the form of subjectivity/identity. It is only the latter that secures that self-transformation is not tied to inwardly directed conducts (technologies of the self) but to an ongoing self-critique (technologies of living).

Thus, no clear agenda for reformulating the political system towards more democracy arises in Foucault—not because such an agenda merely remained underdeveloped—but because that was not Foucault's purpose. But, given that Foucault points towards the dead ends that the ancient Greeks faced, embracing democracy would align him with declarations suggesting that some type of democracy is the least bad regime or the only acceptable foundation for building something emancipatory. Foucault does not want to re-appropriate these types of questionable 'truths', for then his purpose would not be the ongoing exploration of truth and/or the best regime. Foucault instead attempts gradually to build upon the premise that what matters is the effect of the difference of truth itself in a subject, an account of the relationship between knowledge and the self that can challenge modern power structures.

By contrast, readings of Foucault such as Koopman's sympathize with the desire to universalize what is good in the present thereby accepting that structured moral values inevitably tied to doctrines such as Human Rights, Liberty, Equality, etc., ought to be considered 'good'.[74] Koopman uses Human Rights to explain how a form of universality

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[72] Rose refrains from condemning radical ethico-politics to the extent that the focus is on 'the active, material, technical, creative, assembling of one's existence, one's relation to oneself, even one's corporeality.' But, by being critical of communitarianism and its cultural politics of identity and recognition (i.e., ethopolitics) (see also below), Rose suggests that radical culture warriors and their politics of identity 'are merely the mirror image of communitarianism and are traversed by analogous moralisms and analogous practices of inclusion and exclusion'. *Powers of Freedom*, 196. Similarly, Hindess argues that Foucault's subsequent History of Sexuality volumes and late work trace the problem of subjectivation before his discussions of modern rationality, namely in the technologies of the self of the ancients. Hindess suggests that the enlightenment and post-enlightenment ideals of self-formation are 'another variation of the perennial Western construction of the individual as subject'. The individual appears to be independent and autonomous when it is really dependent and subordinate. See "Politics and Governmentality", 268-269.

[73] See "Introduction: The History of Systems of Thought", XXXVIII.

[74] See *Genealogy as Critique,* 267.

rooted in historic contingency can work.[75] This use can be a direct attempt to address the dangerous revolutionary spirit mentioned above. But, the premise that there could be a relative universalisation on the basis that one can project one's context-based normative assumptions to more and more arenas is flawed because even our context-based knowledge ought not to be that structured as to be tied to concrete normative positions and moral codes. Koopman reiterates that universality can be context-sensitive while he accepts that a project of reconstruction can end up being changing one's self.[76] However, Koopman takes for granted that self-transformation goes hand in hand with an overall democratic socio-political reconstruction, while he attempts to favour normative values that simply tend to work within broader moral frameworks (i.e., projects of men).

In this way, Koopman's very careful understanding of Foucault still reduces genealogy to a tactical rude interruption of universalisation along the lines of problematisation as his understanding of reconstructing the present is tied to proliferating ideals to ever more contexts.[77] Such an approach does not do Foucault's history of thought justice. Rose quotes Deleuze's discussion of Nietzsche to speak of 'an attitude to the present that is capable of acting counter to our time and thereby on our time, and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come'.[78]

All in all, Koopman, has argued that Foucault's ethical project is incomplete. However, as shown above, once one understands Foucault's late work as a self-sufficient ethical project, then this reading become strained and a different reading of Foucault's significance for contemporary discussions of power emerges.

In this context, it should be evident that the distinction between 'Laches' and 'Alcibiades' is important and must remain intact. Then, the contrast between, and significance of, the strands of philosophy represented by Laches and Alcibiades appear in the moral philosophies of reason (e.g., Habermas) in which there is a definite quest for an eternal truth (i.e., cognitive ethics). Their particular concern resembles what we find in 'Alcibiades'; self-cultivation on the basis of finding 'the original bond of the immortal *psukhe*—and transcendent truth' in relation to the issue of governing the "polis".[79] The clash between an 'orientation in thinking' tied to Foucault and a 'legislation in thinking' tied to Habermas, which Owen has most notably introduced, is vital in grasping the core differences between two very different accounts of how truth-telling and self-care ought to interact.[80]

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[75] Ibid, 238.

[76] Ibid, 268.

[77] Ibid, 268-269.

[78] *Powers of Freedom*, 13.

[79] "Course Context", 350.

[80] Owen's contribution is important in my understanding of the Habermas-Foucault debate. As with Osborne and Rose, it has helped me realise the foundations of my argument. See David Owen, "Orientation and Enlightenment: An Essay on Critique and Genealogy," in *Foucault Contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory,* ed. Samantha Ashenden, and David Owen (1999). The work that Dean has done in terms of 'defending' Foucault by means of highlighting Habermas's lack of understanding of the historicity of his own ideas and Habermas's legalistic approach of democratisation has also been useful. See Mitchell Dean, "Normalising Democracy: Foucault and Habermas on Democracy, Liberalism and Law," in

Foucault is not beyond subjectivity because he is beyond reason. Foucault does not seek the 'other' which is different from reason in an instinctive mode tied to the body.[81] The problem with the knowing subject is that it has to know. When Foucault criticises the connection of reason and the knowing subject, he criticises neither reason nor any connection between reason and subjectivity. He simply searches for a type of connection that will lead not only to an envisioning or an expansion of subjectivity through communication, but to one that will allow the subject to be self-critical. The subject does not need to know how she ought to envision herself. The subject needs to be able to problematise her own formation. The ability of self-critique is what allows one to move beyond the boundaries of one's own subjectivity.

However, Habermas's concern with a certain type of subjectivity (the subject of rights) tied to the failure to acknowledge the historicity of such subjectivity, and/or the ethical preference to envision a certain version of Western historicity that reflects 'Alcibiades', leads inevitably to a certain type of institutionalism. Habermas aims to use 'communicative action' manifested by subjects of cognitive ethics as a means to democratise the institutions of the liberal state, and, as a consequence, international institutions. Thus, we have in Habermas an attempt to forge a global 'polis' as the sum of democratised states capable of supporting more democratic supra-national institutions and policies by developing rational-critical public spheres.

On such an account, individual self-care beyond a subjectivity tied to citizenship and legalised authorities cannot exist. It remains a struggle for governing civil society. Only, in this case the parrhesiatic ethics of the 'polis', rather than merely political economy, formulates subjectivities at the level of the civil society, as a means of envisioning enlightenment as a legislation in thinking. To put it differently, at no point does it seem plausible for one to trace in the above an account of the public that captures Foucault's claim that it is in public rather than in private that one should exercise an unlimited critical thinking tied to enlightenment as an ongoing self-realization.[82]

Similarly, reflexive modernisation (i.e., Beck and Giddens) links its new politics to a utopian realism. It attempts to envision a critical ethos of enlightenment tied to subjectivity. This attempt is made on the basis that subjectivity, as such, is not an aspect of the 'techniques/structures of domination'. Hence, subjectivity cannot become a vehicle of reappropriation of the already weakened politico-juridical matrices and the capitalism that such matrices regulate. Here, it is rather hard to distinguish where the descriptive estimation of what constitutes reality ends and the utopian analysis of the concepts that actually constitute reality in a certain manner begin. We are dealing with moral theories that in many respects have abandoned absolutist meta-narrative claims while at the same time still using a loose meta-narrative utopian vision as a means to assert a form of moral superiority.

Foucault Contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory, ed. Samantha Ashenden, and David Owen (1999).

[81] See Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity. Twelve Lectures* (1987), 308.

[82] See *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, 303-320.

In actuality, in reflexive modernisation we are dealing with a more reflexive attitude towards envisioning the transcendent truth. A connection can be made with the ethics of truth that Foucault describes in 'Alcibiades' in the sense of the emphasis on the 'polis'. The 'polis', due to the emergence of the problematisation of globalisation, is now understood and put forward as a deterritorial crisscross of communities that form the global civil society (i.e., a cosmo-'polis'). Such reflexivity operates as a reflexive engagement with transferable expertise, which is in turn linked to inwardly oriented conducts tied to a reflexive subjectivity.

The aim so far was to explicate the importance of the 'Laches' vs. 'Alcibiades' clash and, by extension, Foucault's genealogy of antiquity in understanding present power relations. Hence, the way in which the ongoing project of defining modernity can be linked to the ethical concerns of the ancient world should by now be evident. The problematisation now concerns modernity and globalisation, but it is linked to the issue of how to govern the self and others. In this way, the intellectual sparring to define modernity, which has emerged with enlightenment and has yet to find its philosophical fulfilment, comes back to the fore. At the same time, if one links Foucault's engagement with antiquity to enlightenment then one can identify the same clash of ethics. The 'Laches' and 'Alcibiades' distinction – put forward here – mirrors Osborne's clash between an 'aesthetic enlightenment' tied to 'Laches' and a 'therapeutic enlightenment', which, in some ways, can also align with a 'scientific enlightenment'[83] tied to Alcibiades. But, it is the genealogical discussion of antiquity that can really substantiate this clash of ethics that Osborne identifies via a discussion of enlightenment.[84] On the one hand, there is, in Osborne's terms, a therapeutic ethos tied to universality, morality and politics that operates at the level of the technologies of the self. Owen's critical account of discourses that legislate is applicable to such a therapeutic ethos. Rose has also used the critical term 'ethopolitics' to approach certain cosmopolitan discourses in particular (i.e., reflexive modernisation) tied

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[83] There is an absolutist humanism that regulates the individual by means of its own cognition (e.g., Habermas) or a reflexive engagement with a 'non-dogmatic' but black-boxed scientific knowledge (e.g., Beck's subpolitics and Giddens's life-politics). As a result, 'therapeutics' become an issue. In his essay on Nietzsche and Genealogy (See Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (1977), Foucault acknowledged that genealogy is a form of medicine. Therefore, therapeutics is not the problem, *per se*. The problem's location becomes clear in Osborne, who indicates that there is an inward internalisation of conduct tied to the governability of the subject which dictates how a certain account of enlightenment operates at the level of the technologies of the self. See Thomas Osborne, *Aspects of Enlightenment: Social Theory and the Ethics of Truth* (1998). Foucault's reference to the possibility of using governmentality to approach the connection to the care of the self and others in forms such as 'pedagogy, behavior counseling, spiritual direction, the prescription of models for living etc.', cited in the main text, also points towards a problem with such guiding therapeutics.

[84] Osborne has identified sources that take into account Foucault's late excursions in antiquity. See Thomas Osborne, *Aspects of Enlightenment*, 1998 and "Critical Spirituality: On Ethics and Politics in the Later Foucault," in *Foucault Contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory*, ed. Samantha Ashenden and David Owen (1999). However, Osborne's discussion of Foucault's engagement with antiquity is limited. It is only a thorough reading of Foucault's engagement with antiquity in connection with his account of Enlightenment that explains why a new conceptualization of governmentality is needed in order to bind together certain concepts such as the 'Laches' parrhesia and 'aesthetic enlightenment' vis-à-vis the 'Alcibiades' parrhesia and 'therapeutic enlightenment'.

to this line of defining modernity.[85] Such ethos has been linked in this paper to 'Alcibiades'. On the other hand, there is the critical ethos tied to the 'art of living'. This ethos is not concerned with structuring subjectivities. It, therefore, operates at the level of 'practises of living and existence'. Such ethos has been linked in this paper to 'Laches'.

In conclusion, a new form of understanding present governmentality can emerge – i.e., neogovernmentality – tied to establishing the Foucauldian ethics of critique. This paper has worked towards presenting this clash of ethics that appears in antiquity and re-appears with the question of enlightenment. It allows one better to distinguish between forms of resistance and new forms of control with respect to the governance of the self and others in the present. Such an approach introduces a new form of governmentality (i.e., neogovernmentality) centred on the problematisation of the self vis-à-vis an ethos of orientation tied to identifying heuristic sources of a creative self-care.[86]

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[85] The term has been more properly introduced by Nikolas Rose in Nikolas Rose, "Community, Citizenship, and the Third Way," *American Behavioral Scientist* 43:9 (2000), although it is related to aspects of the work that Rose did in *Powers of Freedom*, and in Nikolas Rose, "The Politics of Life Itself," *Theory, Culture & Society* 18:6 (2001). It functions as a critique of cosmopolitanism and the politics of the Third Way powered by Foucault. Such a critique is close to acknowledging a governmentalisation of the problematisation of the self.

[86] This opens up new territory in the study of Foucault – for example, in his relations to Habermas, on the one hand, and Giddens and Beck, on the other, that exist in my thesis and are the subject of future publications with respect to the premise that a version of the left has created its own governmentality.

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