

PARRHESIA AS ALETHURGIC PRACTICE

1. Introduction

Few words depend on the time of utterance as much as the concept of *parrhesia*.¹ Because of that dependence, and especially on the time of the now, parrhesia is a particular way of speaking. It is insofar an undelayable speech in which the one who speaks, tells the truth, but that truth is at the same time necessarily an expression of his opinion or attitude. The concept of parrhesia is semantically related to the ancient Greek verb παρρησιάζομαι, as well as the noun παρρησίαστής. In the beginning, when it appeared in the Greek thinkers' works, it was related to democracy, and only later to the action within the autocratic form of government.

Although it is possible to speak about parrhesia after the period of ancient Greece, it is in its true sense a substantially Greek concept, which refers to the action in the *polis*, the political action. Michel Foucault defines it as “the courage of the truth in the person who speaks and who, regardless of everything, takes the risk of telling the whole truth that he thinks, but it is also the interlocutor’s courage in agreeing to accept the hurtful truth that he hears”²

1 The word *parrhesia* is of Greek origin and literally translated means “to say everything” (παρρησία; from παν, everything and ρημα, that which is said). It is translated also as free speech or open speech, and it appears for the first time in Euripides' plays *The Phoenician Women*, *Hippolytus*, *The Bacchae*, *Electra*, *Ion*, and *Orestes*. Cf. more on that in: Michel Foucault, *Fearless speech*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles 2001, p. 12.

2 Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2011, p. 13.

2.

In *Fearless Speech* Foucault states that the first characteristic of parrhesia, i.e. the parrhesiast, is frankness. The parrhesiast is the one “who says everything he has in mind.”³ A definition of this kind is doubtful because Foucault also distinguishes two kinds of parrhesia. There is parrhesia in the negative sense, which is affirmed as early as in Plato’s *The Republic* and *Phaedrus*. Parrhesia understood in the negative or pejorative sense is not at all different from “chattering”, saying everything one has in mind, and it characterizes the bad form of democracy, in which everyone thinks they have the right to say anything at all to their fellow citizens, regardless of its importance, harmfulness to the city-state⁴ and, lastly, even truthfulness. The second kind of parrhesia, the one Foucault talks about, is a sort of open and risky speech, which is at the same time a criticism of the real state of affairs, most often presented in the way it is not. The fundamental characteristic of parrhesia in the antiquity is the correspondence of truth uttered by the parrhesiast and that what he truly thinks. When it is said that the parrhesiast is telling the truth, it means that he “says what is true because he *knows* that it *is* true; and he *knows* that it is true because it is really true.”⁵ Therefore, parrhesia can also be defined as true discourse, but truth is not an epistemological problem for Foucault. His concept of *episteme*, which will be discussed, has little to do with comprehending what cognition is in the history of philosophy. The object of Foucault’s interest is not the problem of truth itself, but the problem of truth-telling as a kind of activity and the problem of the one telling the truth. Thus, Foucault distinguishes two questions and two methodologies which link the Greek and the modern age Western thinking. The first question is about the certainty of the process of considering truthfulness, and it is at the same time the basis of the thinking of Western civilization, which Foucault calls the “analytics of truth”.⁶ The second question is about who tells the truth, which entails other questions: the one about the importance of the individual who utters that truth for the

3 M. Foucault, *Fearless speech*, p. 12.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

6 Michel Foucault, *Vladanje sobom i drugima*, Antibarbarus, Zagreb 2010, p. 28.

society, and the one about the importance of telling the truth which Foucault, unlike the “analytics of truth,” classifies into the so-called “critical” tradition, which raises the question of present reality.⁷ Foucault founds his thinking in the “critical” tradition and attempts to construct a genealogy of the critical attitude of Western philosophy.

In accordance with the said, Foucault distinguishes between the epistemological analysis of the truth structure and the alethurgic form.⁸ The emphasis is on the subject’s constitution of the self as the subject in front of others, but even more importantly, in front of himself.⁹ That is the reason why Foucault in *The Government of Self and Others* highlights that parrhesia should be looked for in “the effect that its specific truth-telling may have on the speaker, in the possible backlash on the speaker from the effect it has on the interlocutor”.¹⁰ The basis of this problem presents the relation of the subject and truth through which its discursive forms, i.e. the total practice of the happening of truth and the truth of the subject as such, are brought into the domain of the reviewable. The alethurgic practice of this kind actually rests on the importance of the principle of truthful speaking about the self as the assumption of thorough care for singularity.

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Characteristics of parrhesiasts can inasmuch correspond to the characteristics of different persons telling the truth, although these persons still cannot be called parrhesiasts. In parrhesia, namely, there is often a relation of the superordinate and the subordinate. The parrhesiast addresses a sovereign, e.g. a tyrant, and tells him the truth about his terror. In doing so, the parrhesiast risks his life because often the tyrant cannot stand listening to an unpleasant truth about his form of government. It is not necessary that the parrhesiast’s

7 Ibid.

8 *Alethurgia* (αλεθηουργία) is Foucault’s neologism, which marks “the production of truth” or “the act through which truth manifests,” the manifestation of truth. In other words, alethurgia is the analysis of the conditions of that kind of act through which the subject manifests itself by telling the truth, presenting it to himself, while others acknowledge his truthfulness. Cf. more on that in: M. Foucault, *Hrabrost istine*, San-dorf & Mizantrop, Zagreb 2015, p. 13.

9 Ibid.

10 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2011, p. 56.

interlocutor be a sovereign. It could also be his friend, completely equal to the parrhesiast, but once again the emphasis is on danger because the parrhesiast could make his friend angry, and in that way put their friendship at risk.¹¹ Thus, parrhesia is related to courage. Telling the truth demands courage of the one doing so. That is why Foucault emphasizes that sovereigns or gods cannot be parrhesiasts because they do not risk anything.¹² In the relation between the parrhesiast and his interlocutor a certain kind of game is established, which Foucault calls the game of parrhesia. Besides playing that game, the game of life and death, with himself, the parrhesiast is also playing it with his interlocutor, e.g. a tyrant. The game of parrhesia is a kind of pact between the parrhesiast, i.e. the one who takes the risk of telling the truth, and the one who agrees to listen to it.¹³ Foucault also uses the term the parrhesiastic pact and says that “if he wishes to govern properly, the one with power must accept that those who are weaker tell him the truth, even the unpleasant truth.”¹⁴ Therefore, a twofold relation is established in the game of parrhesia. The parrhesiast takes the risk of angering another person by telling the truth, and it requires communication or a relation. But the parrhesiast values telling the truth more than a safe and peaceful life without the spoken truth. Thus, the parrhesiast values the relationship with himself more than with others, because he prefers himself as the one telling the truth, rather than the one not being true to himself, and so to others as well.¹⁵ Since the parrhesiast directs his objection at the tyrant, parrhesia can also be defined as a distinctive criticism. But that does not mean that every criticism is parrhesia.

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The goal of parrhesia is not to provoke the interlocutor, but simply to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, so that it corresponds to all attitudes of the one telling it, because otherwise there could be no parrhesia. Parrhesia always concerns duty as well. The speaker who tells the truth to those who cannot accept it is still not a parrhesiast because he has a choice to keep it for himself.¹⁶

11 M. Foucault, *Fearless speech*, p. 16.

12 Ibid.

13 M. Foucault, *Hrabrost istine*, p. 22.

14 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 163.

15 M. Foucault, *Fearless speech*, p. 17.

16 Ibid., p. 19.

The parrhesiast's criticism of a friend is a duty of helping the friend become better, and his criticism of a sovereign is a duty to his own *polis*. According to all of the said, "*parrhesia* is a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself or other people through criticism (self-criticism or criticism of other people), and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty."¹⁷ Foucault goes on to say that the parrhesiast uses his freedom and chooses frankness, not persuasion. He chooses "truth instead of falsehood or silence" and the risk of death rather than life and security. He chooses criticism "instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy," which is, unlike its negative meaning, *parrhesia* in the true sense of the word.¹⁸

3.

It was already said that *parrhesia* presents a relation between the subject and the truth he tells, which is at the same time his truth, his opinion, and his attitude, so in that way the parrhesiast also establishes a relationship with himself. That relationship could be called the care of the self. Foucault gives an example of the Delphic oracle, at the entrance of which it says γνῶθι σεαυτὸν, and highlights that the inscription is misinterpreted, as many ancient Greek texts and fragments are. When one says "know yourself," the relation between the subject and truth is emphasized,¹⁹ and that could be an epistemological approach, which does not interest Foucault. But it can also be an instruction for man's relationship with god, as a distinctive principle by which man always has to be conscious of his mortality and that he has to act accordingly to the kind of being he is, not allowed to defy gods nor ask too much of them when he comes in the Delphic oracle.²⁰ Foucault relates the phrase γνῶθι σεαυτὸν rather to Socrates. There is something in its very base, and that is ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ, the already mentioned care of the self. Ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ has an atti-

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., p. 20.

19 Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of Subject*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2005, p. 3.

20 Ibid., p. 4.

tude “towards the self, others and the world,” but in a way that it is also a form of attention directed at its own thinking, and it is closely related with exercise, practice or meditation (μελέτη).²¹ Ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ is the basis of what γνῶθι σεαυτὸν really means and is inseparable from it, because to know oneself defines and is defined by the attention we direct at the care of the self and with the care of the self.²²

In Plato’s *The Apology of Socrates*, for example, Socrates defends himself in court against the charge of corrupting the youth of Athens, saying he would change nothing and would always encourage others to take care of themselves and practice philosophy.²³ Socrates takes the role of the parrhesiast who helps others in becoming better in the care of the self. It is a command²⁴ he received from the gods to help people pay attention to themselves. Elsewhere Foucault gives a second definition of parrhesia as “a virtue, duty, and technique which should be found in the person who spiritually directs others and helps them to constitute their relationship to self.”²⁵ Therefore, the parrhesiast does not only have the established relationship with himself, even though that is primary. The parrhesiast is most often “the other” who speaks truthfully. In the care of the self, in establishing the relation to oneself, therefore, a different judgment is needed which could prove helpful. Foucault highlights that in such a case a respectable and mature person to whom parrhesia gives a sound personal integrity²⁶ should be discussed and that “truth-telling by the other, as an essential

21 Ibid., p. 10–11.

22 M. Foucault, *Vladanje sobom i drugima*, p. 45.

23 Plat. *Apol.* 29d2–29e1, as quoted in: Platon, *Obrana Sokratova*, Demetra, Zagreb 2000, p. 91.

24 A question is raised here on how is it possible to speak of Socrates as the parrhesiast telling the truth and helping others, because he was ordered to do so by the gods. But that is still possible because one of the basic characteristics of parrhesia is duty. Duty in a way that Socrates would do the same, no matter if it came from the gods or from him. Although it seems that such an argument would go in favor of the person who is not a parrhesiast, but is trying to present himself as such, by following orders of a man superior to him, it is still necessary to notice that in this case it is certainly not about parrhesia. The alleged truth, namely, which a man who is ordered to utter, and who would utter it, would not be his personal attitude, his personal truth, which is at the same time also truth in general.

25 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 43.

26 M. Foucault, *Vladanje sobom i drugima*, p. 46.

component of how he governs us, is one of the essential conditions for us to be able to form the right kind of relationship to ourselves that will give us virtue and happiness”.²⁷ According to all of the said, Socrates is a parrhesiast because he speaks truthfully and believes what he is telling to be true because it is indeed true. Thus he has the relationship established with himself and encourages others to take care of themselves by realizing a relationship with themselves. Plato compares Socrates to a gadfly, an insect that aggravates animals, because by encouraging and almost compelling man to take care of himself, he presents the care which is, as the care of the self, a special kind of discomfort in man, in his existence, which compels him forth²⁸ and that is what Foucault calls the continuous concern or constant care.

4.

Parrhesia was primarily related to politics, and in accordance with that, there are two forms of political parrhesia. The first is the political parrhesia as a political act in Athenian democracy, as witnessed as early as in Euripides’ plays, and the play *Ion* is completely dedicated to the question of the relationship among parrhesia, individual, and democracy. The second form of political parrhesia occurs when democracy weakens and monarchies become stronger during the Hellenistic period. Parrhesia is no longer practiced in the agora, but in the royal court, and such parrhesia is at the root of the relationship between the sovereign and his advisor.²⁹

Athenian democracy is the government of *demos* (δῆμος), people or free citizens. In a broad sense it is a defined arrangement or constitution (πολιτεία) in which free people practice *isonomia* (ισονομία, equality of all citizens in participation in governance), *isegoria* (ισηγορία, equality of right to speak, right to take the floor) and parrhesia, which is what Polybius, a Greek historian of the Hellenistic period, mentions in *The Histories*, where he defines the Achaean system of government as exemplary and states that isegory and parrhesia are

27 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 45.

28 Plat. *Apol.* 30e1–6.

29 M. Foucault, *Fearless speech*, p. 22.

the basic elements of Achaean democracy, while isonomy is included in the general concept of democracy.³⁰ But what is the difference between parrhesia and isegory? Isegory is, namely, a statutorily determined right to speak, that is to say, in the function of city-state organization (*politeia* as a framework which defines citizens' status and their rights)³¹ everyone has the right to speak their mind. Parrhesia is a way of speaking, but it is not statutorily determined, so not everyone can be a parrhesiast. Because of isegory in a *politeia*, either good or bad parrhesia is possible. The bad parrhesia is the above-mentioned negative parrhesia and, because everyone has the right to speak their mind, it can be realized by every citizen. The good parrhesia, the first and true kind of the so-called political parrhesia, is harder to realize because it is "what ensures the appropriate game of politics"³² and "a hinge between *politeia* and *dunasteia*, between the problem of the law and the constitution on the one hand, and the problem of the political game on the other."³³ Thus, isegory is only an institutional framework which enables parrhesia to be a free activity of remarkable individuals, who take the floor and strive to direct others, all for the benefit of the city-state.³⁴ Therefore, the goal of political parrhesia is to arrange the balance between *dunasteia* (δυναστεία, governance, power, governing) and *politeia*. Problems related to political parrhesia arise here. These are problems of *politeia* as an arrangement and problems of *dunasteia* as the game of politics.³⁵ Politics is understood as a certain practice "having to obey certain rules, indexed to truth in a particular way, and which involves a particular form of relationship to oneself and to others on the part of those who play this game".³⁶ In order to explain this problem more clearly, Foucault provides an example of the rectangle of parrhesia. Democracy, which gives all citizens equality and freedom of speech, is at the first corner of the rectangle.³⁷ It is clear from the above-mentioned that the concept of democracy also includes concepts

30 Polybius, *The Histories*, Oxford University Press, New York 2010, p. 106.

31 M. Foucault, *Vladanje sobom i drugima*, p. 145.

32 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 159.

33 Ibid.

34 M. Foucault, *Vladanje sobom i drugima*, p. 145.

35 Ibid., p. 146.

36 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 158.

37 M. Foucault, *Vladanje sobom i drugima*, p. 157.

of isonomy and isegory. Democracy is at the same time a formal condition needed to realize parrhesia. “The game of ascendancy and superiority” is at the second corner.³⁸ As a factual condition, it enables those taking the floor and speaking to be listened to and to persuade others, in that way managing them and increasing the prosperity of the *politeia*. The third corner is defined as truth-telling, the already mentioned characteristic of parrhesia, the same as the fourth corner, which is courage. The final two corners make for the truthful condition, i.e. the truth condition and the moral condition.³⁹ This symbolic rectangle of parrhesia makes it clear that democracy in ancient Greece was a condition of parrhesia, or at least the above-mentioned political parrhesia. Parrhesia did not make sense without democracy, and vice versa. Parrhesia was at the root of the democratic government. If there were no truthful speech, democracy would not be possible as well. Therefore, the said circularity is necessary, so Foucault defines political parrhesia as “an element which, within this necessary framework of the democratic *politeia* giving everyone the right to speak, allows a certain ascendancy of some over others”.⁴⁰ Political parrhesia allows individuals to speak their minds, but only to say what they really think is true, so with such a speech and advice they could persuade the people and govern the city-state more easily.

The weakening of democracy in ancient Greece brought about the rise of the autocratic form of government. Parrhesia and the game of parrhesia no longer took place in the agora among citizens. The monarch’s court became the place of parrhesia. The game of parrhesia took place between the monarch and his advisor or teacher, and it is very important to emphasize that the advisor had to be a philosopher. Philosophy did not play a key role in democracy because truthful speaking, even as the relationship toward the self and others, always had the political, governing the *polis* as the goal. It is no longer about a morality exercise or the influence of some over others in order to realize a true government, but about philosophy.⁴¹ As an example of parrhesia in the

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 157.

41 Nancy Luxon, *Crisis of Authority. Politics, Trust, and Truth-Telling in Freud and Foucault*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2013, p. 147.

autocratic governance Foucault uses Plato's *The Seventh Letter*, in which Plato describes his three visits to the court of Syracuse and the tyrant Dionysius.

In Plato's most important political works,⁴² when he is dealing with who and how should govern, philosophy always takes center stage. Philosophy and upbringing make for the foundation of every city-state. Philosophers or those who know and practice philosophy are the ones who should intervene when it is about the city-state governance. The said is affirmed as early as at the beginning of *The Seventh Letter*, in which Plato expresses his discontent due to the bad governance in all city-states at the time: "And so, when praising true philosophy, I was forced to claim that it enables the knowledge of all that is just in public and private life. Thus, mankind will not free itself of trouble until either true and right representatives come to state power or those in power by some divine providence become true philosophers."⁴³ Plato goes on in *The Seventh Letter* to describe his three visits to Syracuse, to the tyrant Dionysius' court. The second visit is particularly important because Dion, Dionysius' relative, who was hated among the blinded Dionysius' subjects, what Plutarch also testifies to,⁴⁴ invited him to teach the tyrant philosophy, in order to improve the state governance. The said teaching is not only a lecture on a specific subject of knowledge. In Plato's case it is about *psychagogy* (ψυχαγωγία). The goal of the philosopher-advisor, who is at the same time the parrhesiast because he is taking a risk by speaking the truth that the sovereign may not like, is to advise the sovereign-student and teach him philosophy because, according to Plato, that is the only way for him to become a true sovereign. The advisor's goal is not to advise on how to govern. In his lectures on parrhesia in the autocratic governance, Foucault highlights that philosophy is not politics. Philosophy and politics are in a necessary relationship, but it is impossible to consider them identical.⁴⁵ "Philosophical discourse in its truth, in the game it necessarily plays with politics in order to find its truth, does not have to plan what political action should be. It does not tell the truth of political action, it does not

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42 *The Republic, The Statesman, The Seventh Letter, and The Laws.*

43 Plat. *Epist.* VII, 326a.

44 Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives VI; Dion and Brutus, Timoleon and Aemilius Paulus*, William Heinemann LTD, London 1954, p. 17.

45 M. Foucault, *Vladanje sobom i drugima*, p. 257.

tell the truth for political action, it tells the truth in relation to political action, in relation to the practice of politics, in relation to the political personage.⁴⁶ Therefore, the advisor would always help the sovereign by pointing out things the sovereign could not see, in that way acting as his signpost and enabling him to realize the relationship with himself and others. Plato always thinks truth-telling as philosophical truth-telling.⁴⁷ Similar to Socrates' action and the Cynics' life, Plato thinks philosophy and parrhesia find their reality in practice, so Foucault highlights: "Philosophical truth-telling is not political rationality, but it is essential for a political rationality to be in a certain relationship, which remains to be determined, with philosophical truth-telling, just as it is important for a philosophical truth-telling to test its reality in relation to a political practice."⁴⁸ The above-mentioned clearly constitutes the relation of parrhesia, philosophy and politics. That relation is necessary, but it is not the same as in the democracy of ancient Greece, where parrhesia conditioned democracy and vice versa. The one in power has to practice philosophy, but it does not mean that philosophy determines the way of governance. Philosophy is a factor perfecting the individual, enabling him a stable relationship with himself and others in order to improve the political action. It is about an overlap of subjects, and not of politics and philosophy.⁴⁹ The subject is the same, the one in power and the one practicing philosophy, which helps him improve his governance. Therefore, the essence of Plato's psychagogy is to shape the sovereign's soul to make him better in his political action, but also in life generally. That is why the game of parrhesia in the autocratic governance takes place in the sovereign's soul, and not his court or agora. In that way the whole state regime is the subject of the philosopher's intervention. In what way does the philosopher-advisor-parrhesiast shape the sovereign's soul? "Philosophy can only address itself to those who want to listen."⁵⁰ So, the first circle is the circle of listening. The second is the circle of learning, and the third is the circle of practice. The sovereign or the one yet to govern has to practice philosophy in

46 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 288.

47 N. Luxon, *Crisis of Authority*, p. 147.

48 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 288.

49 M. Foucault, *Vladanje sobom i drugima*, p. 266.

50 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 235.

his reality. Foucault highlights three necessary abilities of the learner. The first is εύμαθής, i.e. the ability to learn easily. The second is μνημων or the ability of good memory and permanently retaining everything learned, and the third is λογιζεσθαι δύνατος, the ability to reason and apply everything learned.⁵¹ Therefore, it is important that both sides are willing to cooperate, because that is the only way to achieve the goal.

5.

Parrhesia in a relationship with philosophy⁵² is called moral or ethical parrhesia. Although political parrhesia demands certain practice, ethical parrhesia is completely dedicated to it, or in other words, ethical parrhesia is practice. There is no place for ascendancy and competition with others in ethical parrhesia. It is about the relationship with the self and one's own life, about the concept of ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ, with an emphasis on the relationship with the self through one's own living, i.e. life (βίος). What makes the man practicing ethical parrhesia the parrhesiast "is not to be found in his birth" nor his citizenship nor his intellectual competence, but "in the harmony which exists between his *logos* and his *bios*."⁵³ Furthermore, the target audience is not made of masses which need to be directed to state prosperity. The parrhesiast-philosopher addresses the one who needs to take care of himself, but others as well. The parrhesiast strives to change someone's life.⁵⁴ When it was about taking care of the self in the previous chapters, it turned out that the parrhesiast is always "the other", who needs to be addressed by the person seeking help in order to realize the relationship with himself, truth, and others. The parrhesiast will not lead the listener to clear-cut solutions, but will be his support and act as his signpost, directing him toward the goal. One of the best examples of the said parrhesiast is certainly Socrates, who had practiced parrhesia throughout his life and had taken care of himself, but also the youth in the state, which

51 M. Foucault, *Vladanje sobom i drugima*, p. 217.

52 Namely, it is about a different kind of parrhesia, which in this case has nothing to do with improving the state governance.

53 M. Foucault, *Fearless speech*, p. 106.

54 Ibid.

is why he was eventually sentenced to death. Another good example, besides Socrates, are the Cynic philosophers. Their way of life entailed everyday and complete practice of parrhesia, which is indeed practice, ἄσκησις. Parrhesia is no longer explicitly related to the agora or the king's court. Parrhesia began to be practiced in different places and throughout life. So parrhesia becomes one of the foundations of philosophy, but also vice versa, and Foucault even gives it a status of the reality of philosophy: "Philosophy finds its reality in the practice of philosophy understood as the set of practices through which the subject has a relationship to itself, elaborates itself, and works on itself. The reality of philosophy is this work of self on self."⁵⁵

Many of Plato's dialogues inform us of the protagonist Socrates and his life, but Socrates the parrhesiast is best witnessed in Plato's *The Apology of Socrates*. The sentence Socrates utters as early as in the prologue is a proof that he was a parrhesiast and that he considered himself as such: "Not, however, men of Athens, [will you hear from me] speeches finely tricked out with words and phrases, as theirs are, nor carefully arranged, but you will hear things said at random with the words that happen to occur to me. For I trust that what I say is just; and let none of you expect anything else."⁵⁶ Foucault calls this Socratic parrhesia the positive game of parrhesia or "the propitious form of *parrhēsia*,"⁵⁷ which is a complete practice, a way of living. Socrates always seeks the consent of his interlocutors, who reward his courage and virtue with the courage of their own, and Socrates will not let go until his interlocutor has been led to the point where he can give an account of himself (διδόναι περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον, explain himself).⁵⁸ Thus, Socrates tempts his interlocutors by establishing a relationship with them, leading them to a lifelong self-examination. The concept of the care of the self or ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ was analyzed in the first chapters of the paper. It will not be elaborated here again, but it completely applies to Socrates, i.e. Socrates is a true example of the parrhesiast acting as it has already been described. Socrates is "the other" taking care of man, acting as his signpost thanks to parrhesia. Foucault describes Socratic discourse as the one which can

55 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 242.

56 Plat. *Apol.*, 17c.

57 M. Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, p. 143.

58 M. Foucault, *Hrabrost istine*, p. 128.

“deal with men’s care for themselves inasmuch as Socratic *parrhēsia* is precisely a discourse joined to and ordered by the principle ‘attend to yourself’”.⁵⁹ Socratic parrhesia can also be called ethical parrhesia because “telling the truth in the realm of the care of men is to question their mode of life”.⁶⁰ The place of such parrhesia is never determined. The Socratic game of parrhesia takes place anywhere, but throughout the whole life, the same as with the Cynics.⁶¹ Socratic parrhesia also includes all features of parrhesia described in the first chapters: frankness, courage, risk, and duty.

6.

Foucault’s philosophy as a whole is composed of three parts – the archaeology of knowledge, the genealogy of power, and the hermeneutics of the self – where each part includes a fundamental concept (knowledge, power, subject), and it is in fact a criticism Foucault directs at Western society, i.e. the modern age society. The primary goal of the criticism lies at the center of the so-called third part, the hermeneutics of the self. Foucault’s intention primarily was not to describe the ways in which knowledge and truth had been produced and the procedures and apparatuses (*Le dispositif*) on which they had been based, but the foundation of the subject over whom the mentioned power is exercised. In Foucault’s philosophy parrhesia is not mentioned explicitly, except in his lectures at the Collège de France. If it really is about such a task with the goal of founding the subject in the modern age, then the concept of parrhesia has to be inserted in it. Before discussing that, however, some of the basic terms of Foucault’s philosophy, like power, discourse, sexuality, and apparatus, need to be elaborated.

59 M. Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, pp. 148–149.

60 Ibid., p. 149.

61 Cf. Diogen Laertije, *Knjiga VI: Diogen*, in: Diogen Laertije, *Životi i mišljenja istaknutih filozofa*.

The Order of Things, subtitled *An archaeology of the human sciences*, is a peculiar methodology and a kind of anti-historical work, in which Foucault analyzes the concept of language and discourse. Foucault starts from the fact that in every period of human history there were certain limitations of the ways in which people could think, giving an example of a Chinese encyclopedia and an animal taxonomy strange to Western thinking.⁶² Foucault's idea was to show that each way of thinking includes the rules which limit the range of thinking and, if we uncover these rules, we will be able to see how seemingly arbitrary limitations completely fit into the framework defined by those rules.⁶³ Besides, his goal is also to show the way in which discursive practices create subjectivity and truth, i.e. to show the way in which that which is epistemological, the knowledge we have of society, reflected on that which is ontological, the individual body that became the place of the exercise of power. The history Foucault describes has no hermeneutical character. It does not want to interpret given texts by seeking their profound meaning. It deals with texts, but reads them as an archaeologist would, treating them as monuments.⁶⁴ In other words, archaeologists of knowledge will take a text, e.g. Leibniz's text, yet they will not be interested in the meaning of the concrete text, but will find in it the main structure of the system in which Leibniz lived and worked. It is clear that the emphasis was never on the individual, what Foucault at the same time criticizes. Although such a subject does exist, he is submissive to the way of thinking characteristic of the period in which he lives. That brings us to the concept of *episteme*, completely different from its traditional sense. Foucault's epistemology has little to do with former attitudes on cognition in the history of philosophy, which is proven also by his reckoning with Kant and the theory of conditions of the possibility of all cognition in *The Critique of Pure Reason*.⁶⁵ *Episteme* Foucault writes about in *The Order of Things* marks a set of relations or a defined space of the order which unites different discursive practices that

62 Michel Foucault, *Riječi i stvari. Arheologija humanističkih znanosti*, Golden marketing, Zagreb 2002, p. 9.

63 Gary Gutting, *Foucault. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York 2005, p. 33.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

65 Cf. M. Foucault, *Riječi i stvari*, pp. 239–273.

define knowledge of some period. That concept is extremely broad and it is impossible to define in a sentence, so it needs to be examined in a broader sense. Foucault differentiates three types of episteme: the Renaissance *episteme*, the Enlightenment *episteme*, and the modern age *episteme*.

Up to the end of the 16th century, the resemblance had a fundamental role in the knowledge of virtually all of Western culture.⁶⁶ Going back to the ancient culture, art, and philosophy, the Renaissance practiced this method in all areas; even painting “imitated the universe”.⁶⁷ At the beginning of the 18th century, during the Baroque, the similar weakened, then ceased to be the fundamental characteristic of the period and gave way to another peculiarity and *episteme*, which as the fundamental category of knowledge, both the form and the content of cognition, establishes the concepts of identity and difference, in that way establishing the new meaning of *episteme*.⁶⁸ The said Classical *episteme* is first and foremost enabled by the relation to order. Hence Foucault highlights as crucial the concepts of *mathesis* and *taxonomy*, but especially that of order: “For the fundamental element of the Classical *episteme* is neither the success or failure of mechanism, (...), but rather a link with the *mathesis* which, until the end of the eighteenth century, remains constant and unaltered. This link has two essential characteristics. The first is that relations between beings are indeed to be conceived in the form of order and measurement, but with this fundamental imbalance, that it is always possible to reduce problems of measurement to problems of order.”⁶⁹ Therefore, one resorts to the *mathesis* when simple natures need to be ordered because its universal method is algebra. When dealing with complex natures (Foucault mentions representations in general, as they are given in experience),⁷⁰ it is necessary to constitute a system of signs, and then a *taxonomy*.

Archaeology is the one to show the way in which configurations characteristic of each science were modified, the one to analyze changes of empirical givens in sciences, study mutual relations of individual sciences and, lastly, at

66 M. Foucault, *Riječi i stvari*, p. 35.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., p. 72.

69 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Routledge, London and New York 2005, p. 63.

70 M. Foucault, *Riječi i stvari*, p. 91.

the very end of the Enlightenment, show that the general area of knowledge is no longer that of identities and differences, *mathesis* and *taxonomy*, but an area in which *Analogy* and *Succession* appear as the organizing principles.⁷¹ They are organic structures, i.e. internal relations “whose totality performs a function”.⁷² Foucault highlights that history since the 19th century, after the Enlightenment, is the birthplace of the empirical.⁷³

By the concept of discourse Foucault means representation “unfolding in the verbal signs that manifest it”.⁷⁴ Discourse is used to form an image of the world, and it can at the same time be material, as a realization of an apparatus, and immaterial, as speech. Discourse is always about “the relationship of language and speech in the historical pre-reflexive way of thinking”.⁷⁵ Each discourse is a historically determined language as speech, but in the structurally set area of time and the world.⁷⁶ It could be said that discourse itself is power because it establishes truth. It is a power that needs to be acquired. Power itself, namely, does not have an active operating force, so it needs knowledge, i.e. institutionalization, to directly influence society. Every *episteme* has its own discourse which defines it, so the main task of Classical discourse was “*to ascribe a name to things, and in that name to name their being.*”⁷⁷

The relation of knowledge, power and the subject needs to be clarified by concepts of the genealogy of power and sexuality. In the interview “Microphysics of Power” Foucault defines genealogy as “the form of history which takes into account the constitution of knowledge, discourse, fields of subjects etc., with no need to address a subject that would be transcendent with regard to the field of happening which he covers in his empty identity throughout history.”⁷⁸ Genealogy has to rid itself of the subject as such and arrive at the historical analysis “which could be held accountable for the constitution of

71 Ibid., p. 240.

72 M. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 63.

73 M. Foucault, *Riječi i stvari*, p. 241.

74 M. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 88.

75 Žarko Paić, „Parresia vs. Phronesis: Foucault i političko danas“, *Croatica* 38 (58/2014), p. 296.

76 Ibid.

77 M. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 132.

78 Michel Foucault, *Znanje i moć*, Globus, Zagreb 1994, p. 149.

the subject in the historical weft”.⁷⁹ The genealogy of power at the same time problematizes the modern age *episteme* and the subject’s subjectness. Foucault thinks the subject as “the game of the transcendental and empirical double, and the task of the modern episteme amounts to the construction of the subject”.⁸⁰ Therefore, the subject is a product of the historical formation of the subjectivation process. The first part of *The History of Sexuality, The Will to Knowledge*, is a distinctive question about technologies which serve to establish relations of power and domination over culture and nature. In it Foucault examines two hypotheses: the repressive hypothesis and the biopower hypothesis. After the 17th century, an age of repression and censorship of discourse on sex, sex had been introduced more and more into discourse, and eventually it was institutionalized.⁸¹ It is important to highlight that, according to Foucault, power is not possessed – it is exercised. Neither the very discourse on sex nor its suppression is the main goal of the technologies of power. They are just a part of the means power uses in order to shape discourse. Technologies of power serve as a manipulation which produces more power, but knowledge as well. The introduction of sex into discourse had brought about a multiplicity of discourses, until a whole network of discourses was created, which goes as far as to force speaking about sex.⁸² The multiplicity of discourses on sex brought about a great sexual diversity. That act could also be called a distinctive defense mechanism because the multiplication blurs the real truth of sex, a new truth is produced, and it is about sexual perversions.⁸³ In that way discourse serves power, instead of truth. Truth is related to the systems of power which produce it and the effects of power which it induces and which reproduce it. Foucault calls it the “regime of truth”.⁸⁴

With the concept of apparatus Foucault wanted to define “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural

79 Ibid.

80 Žarko Paić, „Tehno-scientia sexualis: Što nakon *Povijesti seksualnosti?*“, *Holon* 4 (2/2014), p. 222.

81 Michel Foucault, *Znanje i moć*, Globus, Zagreb 1994, pp. 15–16.

82 Ibid., p. 27.

83 Ibid., p. 39.

84 M. Foucault, *Znanje i moć*, p. 160.

forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short the said as much as the unsaid.”⁸⁵ The apparatus is a system of relations which can be established among these elements. These are the elements of the apparatus, and the apparatus itself is a system of relations which can be established among the said elements.⁸⁶ The apparatus, therefore, links discourse as knowledge and power as government, but also sexuality and power. The apparatus is a kind of a *mechanism*, which can be anything, from an institution to a book, even to language itself. It serves the creation of the societies of control and discipline, and Foucault is interested in the way power manifests in such societies, i.e. how the subject is submitted to that power.

7. Conclusion

The individual not aware of his complete submission affirms Foucault’s attitude about the missing subject in the modern age, in which power appears in the form of the scientific discourses of discipline and control of the body as an object of its own thirst for freedom, where the individual realizes himself as a set of practices of thirst, the unconscious, and language, while his limits are given in the relation of truth, power and ethics.⁸⁷ Parrhesia assumes freedom of speech and vice versa, considering it was inseparable from democracy in the very beginning, and later on it existed in the autocratic forms of government. An excessive control and monitoring brings into question democracy and freedom of speech, which is also a possibility of freedom as a kind of practice that needs to be provided for everyone.⁸⁸ If there is no practice of free speech, there can also be no equality and justice in democracy and vice versa, as it is said in the previous chapters on the relation of parrhesia and democracy. When democracy is threatened by a possibility of falling into a tyrannical or

85 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, Pantheon, New York 1980, p. 194.

86 Michel Foucault, *Istorija seksualnosti I. Volja za znanjem*, Karpos, Beograd 2006, pp. 182–183.

87 Ž. Paić, »Parrhesia vs. phronesis«, pp. 308, 316.

88 Ibid., p. 322.

an oligarchic form of government, it tries to defend itself through the principles of freedom of speech, justice and equality.⁸⁹ Parrhesia is Foucault's answer to the social situation of the modern age Western civilization. It is the active truthful living and working in the present for the purpose of a better future, its own and that of society. Foucault wants to replace what is considered to be true in the modern age by producing truth, and not by disclosure, with a new relation to truth. With parrhesia as the question of human existence, a different model of existence begins. Foucault calls it the *aesthetics of existence*, and it has "an ethical meaning of the dignity of truth in the political area of democracy".⁹⁰ So parrhesia needs to emerge as the answer to the procedures and mechanisms of power and to its relation to truth, knowledge and the apparatus, i.e. power. After reckoning with Kant and his subject based on the moral imperative and the mind, in his lectures on parrhesia and the essence of government Foucault gave directions for the reconstruction of the subject. Life itself resists subordination and reducing to the relation of power and knowledge of an apparatus, which emerged as the system of effects of the dictatorship policy over human freedom, and only the practice of parrhesia would better that resistance.⁹¹

132

89 Ibid., p. 323.

90 Ibid., p. 324.

91 N. Luxon, *Crisis of Authority*, p. 199.

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