

## Heidegger and Foucault: Truth-telling and Technologies of the Self

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### ABSTRACT

Foucauldian philosophical notions of 'technologies' and in particular 'technologies of the self' are derived from Nietzsche's 'genealogy' and Heidegger's understanding of technology in a reconsideration of Greco-Roman antiquity and early Christianity. The first section of this paper explores Heidegger's work as a basis for Foucault's understanding of 'technology' in relation to the self. The second examines Foucault's understandings about the self, *parrhesia* (truth telling), culminating in his formulation of 'technologies of the self'. The third section provides a genealogy of Foucault's notions of confession that are outlined in *Technologies of the Self* (Foucault, 1988b).

### Foucault and Heidegger

Foucault makes clear his intellectual debt to Heidegger, who he says "has always been the essential philosopher ... My entire philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger" (Foucault, 1985: 8). This is not to say that Foucault was first and foremost a Heideggerian, for he was influenced by many other writers (see Besley, 2002; Marshall, 1996; Olssen, 1999), but he acknowledges that Heidegger was crucial for his understanding of Nietzsche. Without Heidegger he may not have read Nietzsche whose work he had tried to read in the fifties, but found that reading it alone did not appeal, "whereas Nietzsche and Heidegger, that was a philosophical shock!" (Foucault, 1985: 9). He took up Heidegger's critiques of subjectivity and Cartesian-Kantian rationality in terms of power, knowledge and discourse. In this respect Foucault's stance against humanism is a rejection of phenomenology for he sees the subject as being within a particular historic-cultural context or genealogical narrative. Similar to Heidegger, Foucault explored ancient Greek philosophy and took some of his ideas on archaeological method from him - ideas about uncovering that Heidegger derived from Husserl. For Husserl some objects were clearly disclosed in consciousness while others were obscure or on the fringe.

In this respect, one notion that Heidegger focussed on was *aletheia* (ancient Greek for 'truth' that included notions of revealing, unveiling or disclosing). Such 'truths' about oneself can involve various forms of confession about the self with thoughts, feelings, and actions being disclosed or brought out of concealment. This stands in contrast to correspondence theories about truth, so prevalent in science and in law, that consider something to be truthful when statements and objects are matched. In his later work, Foucault harnessed another Heideggerian notion, that of *techne* and technology. Both *aletheia* and *techne* as discussed in Heidegger's essay "The Question Concerning Technology" (1977) are explored in this paper.<sup>1</sup>

Heidegger argued that *aletheia* is the fundamental, first truth because beings or subjects can only be known, encountered or experienced as beings if they are unconcealed; and that since statements and their objects are beings, they must come before any correspondence or equational truth that matches them up. Unlike Heidegger though, who focuses on understanding the 'essence' or coming into presence of being or *Dasein*, Foucault historicises questions of ontology and in the process is therefore not concerned about notions of *aletheia* or uncovering any inner, hidden truth or essence of self. He too looks to the ancient Greeks for understandings about self, but not to the pre-Socratics that Heidegger particularly focussed on (Heraclitus, Parmenides and Anaximander). Foucault's work, especially the seminar that this paper focuses on, "Technologies of the Self" (1988b) looks to the Stoics and Alcibiades.

In introducing his theme of *questioning* technology, or finding ways of thinking about it, Heidegger warns we are never free regardless of whether we accept or deny the question, but worse still, "we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it, to which we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology" (Heidegger, 1977: 4). First, Heidegger points out the current instrumental and anthropological definition of technology as both a means to an end and a human activity that manufactures and uses tools of various kinds. However, Heidegger is concerned about us mastering technology so that it does not slip from human control, and about our relationship to its essence, but this is not revealed by an instrumental definition. Second, Heidegger points out that "wherever ends are pursued and means are employed, wherever instrumentality reigns, there reigns causality" and proceeds to explore the four causes that philosophy teaches: *causa materialis*, *causa formalis*, *causa finalis* and *causa efficiens* (Heidegger, 1977: 6).

He points to the importance to us today of Plato's understanding in *Symposium* 2056: "Every occasion for whatever passes over and goes forward into presencing from that which is not presencing is *poiesis*, a bringing-forth [*Her-vorbringen*]" (Heidegger, 1977: 10). *Poiesis* can be both unaided (*physis*) and aided (*techne*). *Physis* (Greek for nature) is unaided bringing-forth, like a bud blossoming, something within nature and *techne*, aided bringing-forth, involves nature being assisted by craft persons or technicians. For the ancient Greeks, *techne* - the relationship between nature and human activity- comprised three dimensions, "the arts of the mind" (thinking), "fine art" and "the activities and skills of the craftsman" (which were not separate for the Greeks) (Heidegger, 1997: 13). Heidegger alerts us that until Plato's time *techne* was linked with *episteme*, both words meaning "knowing in the widest sense ... to be at home in something, to understand and be expert in it. Such knowing provides an opening up. & an opening up it is a revealing" (Heidegger, 1977: 13). Furthermore, "it is as a revealing, and not as manufacturing, that *techne* is a bringing-forth" (Heidegger, 1977: 13). Therefore, "technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *aletheia*, truth, happens" (Heidegger, 1977: 13). For Heidegger, Greek technology was "the gentleness of 'bringing-forth' rather than the violence of making this happen" - an important difference between earlier and modern epochs (Young, 2002: 40).

Heidegger points out that because modern machine-power technology grew out of the modern physical sciences, it established "the deceptive illusion that modern technology is applied physical science" (Heidegger, 1977: 23). But this illusion results from us not questioning our relationship to the essence of modern technology, as shown in "Enframing" [*das Geste*].<sup>2</sup> Rather than something intrinsically technological or machine-like, Enframing is "the way in which the real reveals itself as standing-reserve" (Heidegger, 1977: 23). Standing-reserve is not simply stock that is waiting to be used. Rather, it is the revealing of modern technology that challenges nature to supply or expose energy that is unlocked, transformed, stored, distributed - a resource. In explanation, Heidegger is highly critical of the relationship of modern technology to nature, pointing out that the difference between peasant farming and the mechanised food industry means that the earth is not there simply to be tilled but to yield to machines in ways that "sets upon [*stellt*] nature" (1977: 15). Heidegger holds a somewhat romanticised view of nature and man's relationship to it in earlier

times, suggesting that the earlier relationship was more harmonious, respectful and gentle. Heidegger (1977: 16) points out that "setting-upon, in the sense of challenging-forth" happens as "the energy concealed in nature is unlocked". This implies a violence or violation that "is more than mere damage or harm" in modern technology (Young, 2002: 52). As Julian Young (2002) argues, earlier technological practices were no less violent in their treatment of nature but, because of the nature of their technology, the scale is reduced - it takes longer to effect change with handtools although fire can, of course, rapidly and violently destroy habitats.

Furthermore, the earth is not just to be cultivated but must yield coal to be mined, stockpiled and used as steam power for factories as water is now seen as a means of providing hydro-electric power. In this manner modern technology is an "expediting that is always directed from the beginning toward furthering something else, i.e., toward driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense" (Heidegger, 1977: 15). It treats everything, including people, as a resource that aims at efficiency.

Heidegger quotes Hölderlin, to point out that while modern technology holds high danger for humans (e.g. ecological destruction, nuclear war) at the same time, within it there is a saving power that takes root and eventually grows. He suggests that, through reflection, people will come to see that "all saving power must be of a higher essence than what is endangered, though at the same time kindred to it" (Heidegger, 1977: 34). Since *techne* once "a single manifold revealing" encompassed the fine arts as part of *poiesis*, "the poetical pervades every art, every revealing of coming into presence of the beautiful" therefore maybe it is the arts that foster the saving power (Heidegger, 1977: 34). What is salient about technology is that:

the human being is, then, essentially, uniquely, and almost always a worker, a technological being engaged in a technological activity. But (the first thinker clearly to articulate this point was Arthur Schopenhauer) work requires that things are represented, that they show up, in work-suitable, 'ready-to-hand' instrumental, technological ways (Young, 2002: 48).

And in this regard what is new about modern technology is that in being different from earlier forms it invokes a new understanding of being where humans are not simply subjects who objectify and dominate the world through technology. Rather, as a consequence of modern technology, humans are constituted by this technology.

### Truth-telling (*parrhesia*) and technologies of the self

The combination of Nietzsche's and Heidegger's philosophy helped Foucault to analyse the modes by which human beings become subjects without privileging either power (as in Marxism) or desire (as in Freud) and also to overcome the limitations of his early work. Foucault's historicising of the subject/self aims to reveal the contingent and historical conditions of existence. Thus he not only provides quite a shift from earlier discourses on the self, but also adds notions of disciplinarity, governmentality, freedom and ethics, corporeality, politics and power, and the historico-social context.

Foucault's later work extends and more fully explains the idea of agency through both technologies of the self and ethical self-constitution, thereby overcoming some of the problematic political implications in his earlier work (Foucault, 1985, 1988a, 1990). His later work emphasises self-determination or agency as self-regulation where individuals, without needing the expertise of the priest or therapist, are continually in the process of constituting themselves as self-determining ethical subjects "capable of challenging and resisting the structures of domination in modern society" (McNay, 1992: 4). Hubert Dreyfus points out that for both Foucault and Heidegger, it is the practices of the modern world that produce a different kind of subject "constituted as the source of a deep inner truth about itself" (Dreyfus, 2002: 18).

In the seminar, "Technologies of the Self" (19886) presented late in his life at the University of Vermont in the fall of 1982, Foucault says that his project has been to historicise and analyse how in Western culture the specific 'truth games' in the social sciences such as economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology (prisons/criminology) have developed knowledge and techniques for people to understand themselves. Foucault (19886: 18) sets out a typology of four inter-related "technologies" - namely, technologies of production, technologies of sign systems, technologies of power (or domination) and technologies of the self. Each is a set of practical reason that is permeated by a form of domination that implies some type of training and changing or shaping of individuals. Instead of an instrumental understanding of 'technology', Foucault uses technology in the Heideggerian sense as a way of revealing truth and focuses on technologies of power and technologies of the self. Late in his life he notes that he may have concentrated "too much on the technology of domination and power" (Foucault, 19886: 19).

Technologies of power "determine 'the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject'" (Foucault, 19886: 18). His earlier work emphasised the application of such technologies of domination through the political subjugation of "docile bodies" in the grip of disciplinary powers and the way the self is produced by processes of objectification, classification and normalisation in the human sciences (Foucault, 1977). Technologies of the self are ways the various "operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being" that people make either by themselves or with the help of others, in order to transform themselves to reach a "state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault, 19886: 18).

For Foucault both "technologies of domination" and "technologies of the self" produce effects that constitute the self. They define the individual and control their conduct (Marshall, 1997). These technologies are harnessed "to make the individual a significant element for the state" through the exercise of a form of power, which Foucault coined as "governmentality" (a neologism for 'governmental rationality') in becoming useful, docile, practical citizens (Foucault, 1977, 1988c, 1991). Governmentality emerges with the development of liberalism and is directed through the notion of policing, administration and the governance of individuals (Foucault, 1979, 1991). For Foucault "governmentality" means the complex of calculations, programs, policies, strategies, reflections and tactics that shape the conduct of individuals, "the conduct of conduct" for acting upon the actions of others in order to achieve certain ends. Those ends are "not just to control, subdue, discipline, normalize, or reform them, but also to make them more intelligent, wise, happy, virtuous, healthy, productive, docile, enterprising, fulfilled, self-esteeming, empowered, or whatever" (Rose, 1998: 12). Governmentality is not simply about control in its negative sense but also in its positive sense, in its contribution to the security of society. Foucault poses questions about the *how* of government - "how to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor" (Foucault, 1991: 87). Self-government is connected with morality; governing the family is related to economy and ruling the state to politics.

*The History of Sexuality*, Vol. I (Foucault, 1980a) presents a change from technologies of domination. A common assumption of Western culture, that the body and its desires - its sexuality - reveal the truth about the self is explored in this book. From this assumption it is then proposed that if one tells the 'truth' about one's sexuality, this deepest truth about the self will become apparent and then one can live an authentic life that is in touch with one's true self. Foucault's work on sexuality is concerned with problematising how pleasure, desire and sexuality - the regimes of power-knowledge-pleasure - as components of the art of living or "an aesthetics of existence" have become discourses that shape the construction of ourselves as the 'truth' of our sexuality and the 'truth' of ourselves are revealed (Foucault, 1985: 12). Foucault (19886) points out that since a common cultural feature is the paradoxical combination of prohibitions against sexuality on the one hand and strong incitations to speak the truth on the other, his project became focused on a history

of this link, asking how individuals had been made to understand themselves in terms of what was forbidden, i.e. the relationship between truth and asceticism.

In "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom" (Foucault, 1997), an interview in 1984, the year of his death, Foucault explains the change in his thinking about the relations of subjectivity and truth. In his earlier thinking he had conceived of the relationship between the subject and 'games of truth' in terms of either coercive practices (psychiatry or prison) or theoretical-scientific discourses e.g. the analysis of wealth, language and living beings in *The Order of Things* (Foucault, 1970). In his later writings he emphasises games of truth not as a coercive practice, but rather as *an ascetic practice of self-formation*. "Ascetic" in this context means an "exercise of self upon the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being" (Foucault, 1997: 282). 'Work' completed by the self upon itself is an *ascetic* practice that is to be understood not in terms of more traditional left wing *models of liberation*, but rather as (Kantian) *practices of freedom*. This is an essential distinction for Foucault because the notion of liberation suggests that there is a hidden self or inner nature or essence that has been "concealed, alienated, or imprisoned in and by mechanisms of repression" (Foucault, 1997: 282). The process of liberation, on this model, liberates the 'true' self from its bondage or repression. By contrast, Foucault historicises questions of ontology: there are no essences only 'becomings', only a phenomenology or hermeneutics of the self - the forging of an identity through processes of self-formation.

Foucault (1997) contrasts two different models of self-interpretation: liberation and freedom, suggesting that the latter is broader than the former and historically necessary once a country or people have attained a degree of independence and have set up a political society. For example, a person in chains is not free and although they may have some choices, these are severely limited by their lack of freedom. They have to be liberated or freed from their total domination so they have the freedom to practice their own ethics. Ethics is a practice or style of life. Freedom that equates to liberation is therefore a pre-condition of ethics, since 'ethics' constitutes the practices of the 'free' person. Foucault suggests that the ethical problem of freedom in relation to sexuality is politically and philosophically more important than a simple insistence on liberating sexual desire. In other words, he wishes to understand freedom as the ontological condition for ethics especially when freedom takes the form of a kind of informed reflection. This general understanding he begins to outline in terms of the ancient Greek imperative of 'care for the self'.

The notion of truth is highly valued in Western society, enshrined in how our laws operate, and has occupied philosophers for years and led to two different philosophical traditions - comparative and analytic. In a series of six lectures given at the University of California, Berkeley in 1983, Foucault utilises Nietzschean genealogy to problematise the practices of *parrhesia* (truth-telling, truth-games or free speech) in classical Greek culture - a set of cultural practices that take various forms (Foucault, 2001).<sup>3</sup> Foucault states that his "intention was not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of the truth-teller, or truth-telling as an activity" (Foucault, 2001: 169). He claims that truth-telling as a speech activity emerged with Socrates as a distinct set of philosophical problems that revolves around four questions: "who is able to tell the truth, about what, with what consequences, and with what relation to power" (Foucault, 2001: 170). Socrates pursued these in his "confrontations with the Sophists in dialogues concerning politics, rhetoric and ethics" (Foucault, 2001: 170). These lectures reveal how Foucault thought that the end of the Presocratic philosophy allowed the beginning of two traditions of Western philosophy that problematise 'truth'. The 'critical' tradition in Western culture that is concerned "with the importance of telling the truth, knowing who is able to tell the truth, and knowing why we should tell the truth" begins at precisely the same time as an "analytics of truth" that characterises contemporary analytic philosophy (Foucault, 2001: 170). Foucault says that he aligns himself with the former 'critical' philosophical tradition, rather than the latter analytic tradition (Foucault, 2001).



The classical Greek use of *parrhesia* and its cognates exemplify the changing practices of *truth-telling* with implications of frankness, risk, criticism and duty (Foucault, 2001). From the fifth century BC to the fifth century AD:

*Parrhesia* is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In *parrhesia*, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy (Foucault, 2001: 20-21).<sup>4</sup>

Foucault explores how, over time, *parrhesia* and the parrhesiastic game shifted in terms of rhetoric, politics and Philosophy, from being a situation where someone demonstrated the courage to tell other people the truth, to a different truth game that focussed on the self and the courage that people displayed in disclosing the truth about themselves. This new kind of truth game of the self requires *askesis* which is a form of practical training or exercise directed at the art of living (*techné tou biou*).

Foucault demonstrates that these practices link truth-telling and education in ways that continue to shape our contemporary subjectivities. They are therefore relevant in understanding the exercise of power and control in contemporary life. Yet 'truths' change, so when interviewed, he states that his role:

is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed ... to show people that a lot of things that are part of their landscape - that people think are universal - are the result of very precise historical changes. All my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence (Foucault, 1988a: 10 & 11).

In the disciplinary regimes of schools, systems of 'truth' are pursued that shape the student's self and their identities. Yet schools seldom formally perform this task or even consciously attempt it, despite official state educational goals often referring to the type of person they are trying to form that are variations on the theme of a 'good' citizen. Foucault's investigations of the use of *parrhesia* in education show that education was central to the 'care of the self', public life and the crisis of democratic institutions (see Peters, 2003).

In "Technologies of the Self" (19886), Foucault's emphasis shifts to the hermeneutics of the self in his study of the first two centuries AD of Greco-Roman philosophy and the fourth and fifth centuries of the Roman Empire when Christian spirituality and monastic principles were prevalent. What Foucault argues is that there was an inversion of the hierarchy of the two ancient principles so that the Delphic moral principle, "know yourself" (*gnothi sauton*) became dominant, and took precedence over another ancient principle and set of practices, to take "care of the self", or to be concerned with oneself (*epimelesthai sautou*) (Foucault, 19886). "Care of the self" formed one of the main rules for personal and social conduct and for the art of life in ancient Greek cities. The two principles were interconnected and it was from the principle of "care of the self" that the Delphic principle was brought into operation as a form of technical advice or rule to be followed when the oracle was consulted. In modern Western culture moral principles have been transformed, perhaps due to the emphasis accorded in Western philosophy to Plato's own privileging of the Delphic "know yourself". Foucault argues that "know yourself" is the fundamental austere principle nowadays because we tend to view "care of the self" in rather negative terms as something immoral, narcissistic, or selfish and an escape from rules.

Although there is no direct continuity from ancient to present times, Foucault indicates some continuities. First, Christianity adopted and modified themes from ancient philosophy and made renouncing the self (self-renunciation) the condition for salvation, but paradoxically, to know oneself required renouncing the self to the will of God. Second, the basis of morality in our secular tradition since the sixteenth century involves "recognizing and knowing the self" in how we relate

to others (Foucault, 19886: 22). Echoing Nietzsche (in *Genealogy of Morals*, 1956) Foucault argues that our respect for external law, in contradiction to more internalized notions of morality, is an ascetic morality whereby the self can be rejected and care of the self becomes seen as an immorality. As a result, the principle "know yourself" obscures "take care of yourself" (Foucault, 19886: 22). Furthermore, theoretical philosophy since Descartes has positioned the *cogito* or thinking subject and knowledge of the self as the starting point for Western epistemology. Foucault argues for the return of the ancient maxim of 'care of the self' because the since the Enlightenment, the Delphic maxim became over-riding and inextricably linked with constituting subjects who are able to be governed. However, Foucault does not discuss the idea that "care of the self" involves "care for others", or that "care for others" is an explicit ethic in itself. He states that "care for others" became an explicit ethic later on and so should not be put before "care of the self" (see Foucault: 1984). He accepts that the ancient Greek notion embodied in "care of the self" is an inclusive one that precludes the possibility of tyranny because, by definition, a tyrant does not take "care of the self" since he does not take care of others. Foucault seems to display a remarkable naivete about the goodness of men in depicting how 'care of the self' involved a considerable generosity of spirit and benevolent relations for a ruler of others, be they one's slave, wife or child.

The Greek practice of *askesis* differs significantly from the Christian counterpart. Foucault (19886) argues that Christian asceticism involves detachment from the world, whereas Greco-Roman moral practices were concerned with "endowing the individual with the preparation and the moral equipment that will permit him to fully confront the world in an ethical and rational manner" (Foucault, 2001: 144). The crucial difference in the ethical principle of self consists of ancient Greek *self mastery* versus Christian *self renunciation*.

"Technologies of the Self" (19886) elaborates on both the Greek (Platonic and Stoic) and Christian techniques of self. The Stoic techniques include first, "letters to friends and disclosure of self"; second the "examination of self and conscience, including a review of what was to be done, of what should have been done and a comparison of the two"; third, "*askesis* not a disclosure of the secret self but a remembering"; and fourth, "the interpretation of dreams" (Foucault, 19886: 34-38). He points out that rather than renunciation, this is "the progressive consideration of self, or mastery over oneself, obtained not through the renunciation of reality but through the acquisition and assimilation of truth ... that is characterised by *paraskeuaze* ('to get prepared')" (Foucault, 19886: 35).

In fact it transforms truth into a principle of action or *ethos*, or ethics of subjectivity that involved two sets of exercise - the *melete* (or *epimelesthai*) or meditation and the *gymnasia* or training of oneself. The *melete* was a philosophical meditation that trained one's *thoughts* about how one would respond to hypothetical situations. The *gymnasia* is a *physical* training experience that may involve physical privation, hardship, purification rituals and sexual abstinence. Foucault (19886) remarks that despite being a popular practice, the Stoics were mostly critical and sceptical about the interpretation of dreams. It is interesting to note the re-emergence of many of these practices of the self in the different helping professions or 'psy' therapies (e.g. psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, counsellors, doctors etc) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and Foucault does a real service in pointing us to the philosophical and historical roots of some of these. Perhaps Foucault's emphasis on the centrality of truth in relation to the self is to be developed only through the notion of the 'other' as an audience - intimate or public - that allows for the politics of confession and (auto)biography.

### Foucault's genealogy of confessional practices

Foucault points to a significant change in confessional practices from the religious world to the medical, then to the therapeutic and pedagogical in secular contemporary societies. Verbalisation techniques of disclosing the self through confession have been transposed and inserted into the human sciences "in order to use them without renunciation of the self but to constitute, positively,

a new self. To use these techniques without renouncing oneself constitutes a decisive break" (Foucault, 19886: 49). Contemporary notions of 'confession' are derived not simply from the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and its strategies for confessing one's 'sins' where sins mostly equated with sexual morality so that confession became the principal technology for managing the sexual lives of believers, but from ancient, pre-Christian philosophical notions (Foucault, 1980a, 19886). Confession has also been profoundly influenced by confessional techniques embodied in Protestant and Puritan notions of the self and its relation to God and by Romantic, Rousseauian notions of the self (Gutman, 1988; Paden, 1988).

Two main forms of disclosing the self emerged in the first centuries of early Christianity- first, *exomologesis*, then *exagoreusis*. Despite being very different, with the former a dramatic form, the latter a verbalised one, what they have in common is that disclosing the self involves renouncing one's self or will. *Exomologesis* or 'recognition of fact' was a public approach that lasted until the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, whereby Christians disclosed themselves through publicly acknowledging both their faith and by recognising themselves as both "a sinner and penitent" (Foucault, 19886: 41). If one had committed very serious sins they would seek penance from a bishop, explaining their faults and why they sought this status. They would remain in a state of penance for several years, observing punishments such as fasting, clothing and sexual restrictions that publicly exhibited or disclosed their shame, humility and modesty until they became reconciled or atoned for their sins. Foucault says that this is not confession: "it was not a way for the sinner to explain his sins but a way to present himself as a sinner" (Foucault, 19886: 42). The paradox is that "expose is the heart of *exomologesis* ... it rubs out the sin and yet reveals the sinner" (Foucault, 19886: 42). Penance became elaborated around notions of torture, martyrdom and death, of renouncing self, identity and life in preferring to die rather than compromising or abandoning one's faith. Christian penance did not involve establishing an identity but "a break with one's past identity", the refusal or renunciation of self, so that "self-revelation is at the same time self-destruction" (Foucault, 19886: 43). Whereas for the Stoics the "examination of self, judgement, and discipline" that lead to self-knowledge by "memorizing rules" was a private matter, for Christians, "the penitent superimposes truth about self by violent rupture and dissociation" through a form of *exomologesis* that is public, "symbolic, ritual and theatrical" but not verbal (Foucault, 19886: 43).

In the fourth century a different and more important set of technologies for disclosing the self - *exagoreusis* - that were derived from some Stoic technologies of the self emerged in Christianity (Foucault, 19886). This form of self-examination took the form of verbalising exercises or prayers that involve taking account of one's daily actions in relation to rules (as in Senecan self-examination). With monastic life, different confessional practices developed based on the principles of obedience and contemplation while confession developed a hermeneutic role in examining the self in relation to one's hidden inner thoughts and purity. Furthermore, because evil was believed to be hidden and unstated and "because evil thoughts cannot be expressed without difficulty and shame", the only way to weigh the quality, reality and purity of our thoughts, is to permanently verbalise thoughts or 'confess' all one's thoughts, intentions and consciousness to a master (Foucault, 19886: 47). It was only after a verbal confession that the devil went out of the person, so confession became "a mark of truth". But since it is impossible to permanently verbally confess, the result was "to make everything that couldn't be expressed into a sin" (Foucault, 19886: 48). *Exagoreusis* was 'an analytical and continual verbalisation of thoughts carried on in the relation of complete obedience to someone else ... the renunciation of one's own will and of one's own self' (Foucault, 19886: 48).

Until the Council of Trent in the mid-sixteenth century, when a new series of procedures for the training and purifying of Church personnel emerged, confession in the Church was an annual event, so the confession of and surveillance of sexuality was quite limited (Foucault, 19806). After the Reformation, confession changed profoundly to involve not just one's acts but also one's thoughts. Then in the eighteenth century techniques of confession changed with "brutal medical techniques emerging, which consist in simply demanding that the subject tells his or her story, or narrate it in writing" (Foucault, 19806: 215). This was the beginning of the medical model of healing where a



patient 'confesses' the problem and inadvertently reveals the 'truth' about themselves as part of the diagnostic clinical examination.

Foucault (1980a) points to a shift from the medical model to a therapeutic model where both the confession and examination are deliberately used for uncovering the truth about one's sexuality and one's self. The therapeutic situation uses techniques of both the examination and the confessional that require a person to speak about their psyche or emotions to an expert or professional - a doctor, priest or therapist - in both observation and interpretation. They would determine whether or not the truth, or an underlying truth that the person was unaware of, had been spoken. To access this inner self or 'truth', professionals may administer certain 'technologies' for speaking, listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said, for examining the conscious, the unconscious, and for confessing one's inner-most thoughts, feelings, attitudes, desires and motives about the self and one's relationships with others. The professional's expert knowledge might be used to re-interpret and re-construct what a person says. However in this therapeutic process, as one gains this form of self-knowledge, one also becomes known to others involved in the process which can, in turn, constitute the self (Foucault, 1980a).

A form of power-knowledge is found in confession where the agency of domination does not reside in the person that speaks, but in the one who questions and listens. Sexual confession became constituted in scientific terms through "a clinical codification of the inducement to speak; the postulate of a general and diffuse causality; the principle of a latency intrinsic to sexuality; the method of interpretation; and the medicalization of the effects of confession" (see Foucault, 1980a: 59-70). In the process, the therapy can create a new kind of pleasure: pleasure in telling the truth of pleasure. But speaking the truth is not only descriptive. In confession one is expected to tell the truth about oneself- a basic assumption that most therapists and counsellors continue to make about their clients. Because language has a performative function, speaking the truth about oneself also makes, constitutes, or constructs or forms one's self. By these discursive means and through these technologies, a human being turns him or herself into a subject.

As confession became secularised, a range of techniques emerged in pedagogy, medicine, psychiatry, and literature, with a highpoint being psychoanalysis or Freud's "talking cure". Since Freud, the secular form of confession could be argued as having been 'scientised' through new techniques of normalisation and individualisation that included clinical codifications, personal examinations, case-study techniques, the general documentation and collection of personal data, the proliferation of interpretive schemas and the development of a whole host of therapeutic techniques for 'normalisation'. In turn, these 'oblige' us to be free as self-inspection and new forms of self-regulation replace the confessional. This new form of confession is an affirmation of our self and our identity that involves "contemporary procedures of individualization" that "binds us to others at the very moment we affirm our identity" (Rose, 1989: 240). In truthfully confessing who one is to others (e.g. parents, teachers, friends, lovers and oneself etc.) " ... one is subjectified by another" ... "who prescribes the form of the confession, the words and rituals through which it should be made, who appreciates, judges, consoles, or understands" (Rose, 1989: 240). Through speech acts of confession a person constitutes his/her self.

Foucault talks of technologies of the self as "models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for deciphering the self by oneself, for the transformation one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object" (Foucault, 1985: 29). When the subject is confessing and creating its 'self', it seems to feel compelled to tell the truth about itself. Therefore, confession involves a type of 'discipline' that "entails training in the minute arts of self-scrutiny, self-evaluation, and self-regulation, ranging from the control of the body, speech, and movement in school, through the mental drill inculcated in school and university, to the Puritan practices of self-inspection and obedience to divine reason" (Rose, 1989: 222). Whilst confession is autobiographical, compelling us to narratively recreate ourselves, reworking the past, in public, or at least in dialogue with another, it is also about assigning truth-seeking meaning to

our lives. In our secular society, therapeutic forms of confession, where the psychotherapist or counsellor is akin to the priest, despite using listening techniques and uncovering the 'self', the elements of advice, admonition and punishment that are involved in the religious forms of confession have no part of contemporary counselling - a practice predicated on the assumption that the client is telling the truth about his/her self.

In ancient times philosophy was considered to be a way of life, a quest for wisdom, a way of being and, ultimately through spiritual exercises, a way of transforming the self, one's world-view, personality, intellect, imagination, sensibility and will. In the contemporary world, schools are frequently seen as an appropriate location for the moral education of young people. Schools need to be aware of the technologies of power (domination) and of the self that they bring to bear on their students and the effect these have in constituting the self. Furthermore, they need to more consciously provide the means to address technologies and care of the self, of which truth-telling and confession form only a part. Philosophy could provide a practical component in educating the young and could again become a way of life, of being and a search for wisdom that transforms the self without renunciation.

## Notes

1. The essay was written in 1949 and revised in 1955.
2. Julian Young (2002: 44) argues that Lovitt's translation of *das Gestell* is unsatisfactory, because it ignores 'das' and suggests human action rather than a mode of disclosure which determines the action." He suggests that "a better translation would be something like 'the frame-up'" but opts to leave it untranslated.
3. These lectures, edited by Joseph Pearson, first appeared on the Internet and were published in 2001. Foucault did not write, correct, or edit any part of the text, which is primarily a verbatim transcription of the lectures from the notes of one of the attendees (see [www.repb.net](http://www.repb.net) & Foucault, 2001).
4. The pronoun 'he' is used because these discussions about ancient Greek society referred only to free males as citizens, not to women.

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