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Parrhesia and Self-Care in the Late Foucault

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Abstract

The Foucauldian approach to the subject in the light of Hellenistic schools of philosophy, such as Epicureanism, Stoicism, scepticism, is an innovation in the history of the subject, as it reconstructs the Cartesian concept of the subject as a cognitive bearer of truth. Particularly, the concept of the subject as the foundation of the relation of truth to the self is contrasted with the concept of the self as an agent of self-care and use of the techniques of life. In addition, the late Foucault of the Lectures with the general title "On the Government of the Living " (1980) examines the concept of self-care in contrast to self-knowledge emphasizing the importance of the right action of the subject, which is based in the philosophy of antiquity. Furthermore, Foucault introduces the concept of parrhesia to emphasize the value of thorough self-analysis in terms of the obligation to tell one's inner truth as opposed to confessing wrongdoing under a legal system of self-control. Therefore, parrhesia transforms the Cartesian relationship between belief and truth into a question of moral quality, linked to the sincerity of the parrhesiast, who becomes the voice of truth by virtue of his moral quality.

Keywords: parrhesia, self-care, truth