CHAPTER FIVE

Truth-Telling AS AN Educational Practice OF THE Self

My role—and that is too emphatic a word—is to show people that they are much freer that they feel, that people accept as truths, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment in history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed. . . . All my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence.

MICHEL FOUCAULT, 'TRUTH, POWER, SELF: AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHEL FOUCAULT'

What is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which were poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, and adorned, and after long use seem solid, canonical, and binding to a nation. Truths are illusions about which it has been forgotten that they are illusions, worn-out metaphors without sensory impact, coins that have lost their image and now can be used only as metal, and no longer as coins.

NIETZSCHE, 'ON TRUTH AND LIES IN AN EXTRA-MORAL SENSE'

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to an examination of Foucault's approach to truth-telling in relation to the changing practice of education. The first section briefly examines the notion of truth as Foucault uses it to investigate the sociopolitical sphere. The remainder of the chapter is given over to Foucault's six lectures entitled 'Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhesia' and subsequently edited by Joseph Pearson and published as a book, *Fearless Speech* (Foucault, 2001a). Foucault prob-

lematizes the practices of *parrhesia,* 'free speech' or truth-telling speech activities in classical Greek culture intent 'not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity' (Foucault, 2001a, p.169). Foucault outlines the meanings and the evolution of the classical Greek word '*parrhesia*' and its cognates, as they enter into and exemplify the changing practices of *truth-telling* in Greek society. In particular, Foucault investigates 'the use of *parrhesia* in specific types of human relationships' and 'the procedures and techniques employed in such relationships' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 107). Central to his analysis is the importance of education, how it was central to 'care of the self,' public life and the crisis of democratic institutions.

Although the Berkeley lectures continue and partly elaborate some of the themes concerning 'technologies of the self' that Foucault (1988a, 1988b) gave as lectures at the University of Vermont a year earlier in 1982 (see chapter 2), there are significant differences in the themes Foucault pursues, the way he pursues them and his characterization of the Platonic model. In the Vermont set he characterizes the Platonic model as 'defective' in that it is dualistic (teacher/pupil) and directed at knowing oneself rather than care for the self; in the more considered Berkeley lectures he treats the Socratic/Platonic model with greater sympathy, emphasizing that the tradition is not only the source of the search for truth (as in the truth value of a statement) but also of a critical philosophy based upon an understanding of the practices of truth-telling.

He claimed 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' that Socrates pursued in his 'confrontations with the Sophists in dialogues concerning politics, rhetoric and ethics' (Foucault, 2001a, p.170). Foucault points out the problematization of truth since the end of Presocratic times has created two major branches of Western philosophy—a 'critical' tradition and an 'analytics of truth' tradition that is primarily concerned with 'ensuring that the process of reasoning is correct in determining whether a statement is true (or concerns itself with our ability to access the truth)' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 170). He states that aligns himself with 'critical' philosophical tradition 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' rather than the analytic tradition (Foucault, 2001a, p. 170). Foucault demonstrated that these practices link truth-telling and education in ways that are still operative in shaping our contemporary subjectivities, thus they are relevant in understanding the exercise of power and control of contemporary citizenship especially in situations where there is some risk for a person in telling the truth to a superior—a situation that clearly can occur in schools, in the student-teacher relationship

and which certainly occurred for some youth in their antiwar activities in 2003 as shown in chapter 6.

In the Vermont set of seminars, the technology of the self is one of the four technologies described by Foucault, along with technologies of production (Marx), technologies of signs (Saussure), and technologies of domination. Foucault does not attempt to defend this fourfold typology or his indebtedness to Heidegger's conception of technology. Technologies of the self, for Foucault, is an approach to study the ethics of an individual whereby the individual can come to know himself as well as take care of himself—twin themes in the inherited Western ethical tradition associated with specific techniques of truth-telling practices that human beings apply to understand themselves. In his examination of classical Greek and early Christian texts Foucault distinguishes two models: the ('defective') pedagogical Platonic model based on the art of dialogue between teacher and pupil, which requires that the 'pupil' know himself so that he can participate in dialogue; and, the medical model which focuses on the presence of a continuous and permanent care of oneself. In terms of these two models analysed through various texts, Foucault demonstrates that the Senecan, Plutarchian and Pythagorean understanding of the self is different from the Platonic one. He later distinguishes ethical self-mastery of the Stoics based on *askesis* (a kind of training or exercise) from the self-renunciation of the early Christians where techniques of the self were exercised through the imposition of conditions and rules for particular self-transformations leading to salvation through confession, penance, and obedience.

To date, none of the many books on Foucault, which apply his methods to educational problems or issues, or directly address the relevance of his writings to the field of education, focus specifically on the question of truth in Foucault or refer to his Berkeley lectures. Yet these lectures demonstrate not only that Foucault did directly address education, but also that education was central to his elaboration of the theme of 'care of the self.'

FOUCAULT ON TRUTH: FROM *REGIMES* TO *GAMES* OF TRUTH

In his early work Foucault, treated truth as a product of the regimentation of statements within discourses that had progressed or were in the process of progressing to the stage of a scientific discipline. In this conception, the subject, historized in relation to social practices, is denied its freedom or effective agency. This early conception of Foucault's is to be contrasted with his later notion of the subject where freedom is seen to be an essential aspect of its constitution as in the concept of governmentality and in his studies of the history of sexuality. For the early Foucault, as he indicates:

'Truth' is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements (Foucault, 1980a, p. 133).

In the progress of a scientific discipline, studying how the human sciences emerged, Foucault (1972, pp. 186–87), proposed four stages through which a science must develop. The following account is based on van Gigch's (1998) thoughtful essay. First, 'the discursive practices' begin to exhibit 'individuality and autonomy' from other discourses, although there is no attempt yet to systematize accumulated knowledge in the form of theory. Second, the emerging discipline begins to make claims of 'verification and coherence' for some of its pronouncements, which are formulated as laws, as yet unproven or justified. Third, propositions are regulated in terms of formal criteria for the production of 'true' statements and efforts are made to formalize the knowledge of the discipline into a systematic framework. Finally, the discipline moves beyond formalization to reach mature scientific status and is, accordingly, able to offer a proven methodology that demonstrates success in solving most problems exhibited by its domain. At this stage practitioners become professionals who provide valid solutions to a broad range of recognisable problems. With its institutional development and its own canon, the discipline becomes acceptable as a science also by those outside the discipline. It is at this stage that the discipline must question its own epistemological foundations, questioning both its own reasoning methods and how its reaches the truth, otherwise it will begin to repeat itself, lose its relevance, become useless and disappear, as other disciplines supersede it.

Thus, for Foucault (1972, p. 182–83) knowledge is, first of all 'A group of elements, formed in a regular manner by discursive practice' and 'The field of coordination and subordination of statements in which concepts appear, and are defined and transformed.' It is also 'That of which one can speak in a discursive practice, and which is specified by that fact,' emphasising that knowledge is not the sum of what is thought to be true, but rather the whole set of practices that are distinctive of a particular domain.

With the 'doubtful' human sciences human beings emerge as both subject and object of knowledge. In the context of the disciplines of the human sciences, Foucault investigates the internal relation of power and knowledge: power and knowledge directly imply one another, for there is no power relation without the corresponding constitution of a field of knowledge. The human sciences will be capable of distinguishing between true and false when they will 'free themselves from their involvement with power' (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p.116), that is, once it has overcome the problem of objectivity. Yet given that the human sciences are an integral part of the social practices, which they seek to investigate, it is doubtful

whether they will ever achieve objectivity and, thus, attain the status of 'normal science' in Kuhn's sense of the term.

Thus, relations of power inhere in the human sciences for they cannot meet the objectivity criterion and 'scientists' are as much a product of the cultural practices that they investigate as their subjects. It is these power relations, which sustain and regulate the procedures by which statements in the discourses of the human sciences are regulated. In other words, 'regimes of truth' are the discursive productions of the human sciences.

The shift from 'regimes of truth' to 'games of truth,' McKerrow (2001, p. 7) claims, is indicative of the shift in Foucault's thinking concerning the agency of the subject and not of Foucault's notion of truth which remains essentially Nietzschean. I dispute this interpretation. The Nietzschean perspective on truth is not straightforwardly the concept that governs Foucault's account of truth in the human sciences. McKerrow quotes a late interview with Gauthier (1988, p. 3) where Foucault says:

> I have tried to discover how the human subject entered into games of truth, whether they be games of truths which take on the form of science or which refer to a scientific model, or games of truth like those that can be found in institutions or practices of control.

And Foucault elaborates the concept of 'game' in the following way:

> when I say 'game' I mean an ensemble of rules for the production of truth.... It is an ensemble of procedures which lead to a certain result, which can be considered in function of its principles and its rules of procedure as valid or not, as winner or loser (Gauthier, 1988, p. 15, cited in McKerrow, p. 7).

In fact, Foucault in a little known paper delivered to a Japanese audience in 1978, takes up the concept of game in relation to analytic philosophy (and probably Wittgenstein's influential notion of 'language-games,' although his name is not mentioned) to criticise its employment without an accompanying notion of power. Arnold Davidson (1997b, p. 3) mentions a lecture 'La Philosophie analytique de la politique' in which Foucault (1978) makes an explicit reference to Anglo-American analytic philosophy:

> For Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy it is a question of making a critical analysis of thought on the basis of the way in which one says things. I think one could imagine, in the same way, a philosophy that would have as its task to analyze what happens every day in relations of power. A philosophy, accordingly, that would bear rather on relations of power than on language games, a philosophy that would bear on all these relations that traverse the social body rather than on the effects of language that traverse and underlie thought (cited in Davidson, 1997b, p. 3).

In the rest of the quotation, Foucault goes on to make a series of implicit criticisms of analytic philosophy in that it refrains from asking questions concerning power relations and how they operate in language. Language in this conception 'never deceives or reveals' rather simply, as Foucault asserts, 'Language, it is played. The importance, therefore, of the notion of game.' Further on he makes the comparison: 'Relations of power, also, they are played; it is these games of power that one must study in terms of tactics and strategy, in terms of order and of chance, in terms of stakes and objective' (cited in Davidson, 1997b, p. 4). As he tried to indicate, discourse considered as speaking, as the employment of words, could be studied as strategies within genuine historical contexts, focusing upon, for example, the history of judicial practices or

> even the discourse of truth, as rhetorical procedures, as ways of conquering, of producing events, of producing decisions, of producing battles, of producing victories. In order to 'rhetoricize' philosophy (cited in Davidson, 1997b, p. 5).

'Games of truth,' as McKerrow (2001) correctly points out, signifies a changed sense of agency on the part of Foucault, who, investigating practices of self, becomes interested in questions of the ethical self-constitution of the subject and self-mastery, especially in his analysis of classical texts. Thus,

> Unlike Habermas who postulates an ideal speech situation wherein games of truth would have the best chance of success, Foucault is a realist . . . Instead of an absolutely free discourse community, the best one can attain is a community in which one commands the requisite rules of procedure, as well as the 'ethics, the ethos, the practice of self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination' (Gauthier, cited in McKerrow, 2001, p. 7).

This is a valuable comment for not only does it point to the idealism of Habermas' quasitranscendentalism but also signals the new possibilities inherent in an 'aesthetics of existence' where the self *learns* the obligations involved in 'care for the self.' This is clearly exemplified in Foucault's analysis of the meanings and practices of *parrhesia*.

PARRHESIA, EDUCATION AND PRACTICES OF TRUTH-TELLING

The Meaning and Evolution of *Parrhesia*

Foucault claims that the word *parrhesia* occurs for the first time in Euripides (c.484–407 BC) and then is used in the Greek world of letters from the end of the fifth century BC. Meaning 'free speech' positions the person who uses *parrhesia* as the one who speaks the truth. Foucault elaborates on how the meaning of the

word as it evolves in Greek and Roman culture develops five major characteristics which Foucault summarizes as follows:

> *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 relation to himself or other people through criticism . . . , and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty. More precisely, *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, 2001a, pp. 19–20).

First, it is associated with *frankness: parrhesia* refers to 'a special type of relationship between the speaker and what he says' (Foucualt, 2001a, p. 12). The male pronoun is used here on purpose as the *parrhesiastes* is generally male and must know his own genealogy and status and is usually a male citizen (see Foucault, 2001a, p. 12). Unlike rhetoric, which provides the speaker with technical devices to help him persuade an audience, covering up his own beliefs, in *parrhesia,* the speaker makes it manifestly clear what he believes as he gives his own opinion.

Second, *parrhesia* is linked with *truth.* In the Greek, *parrhesia* is a speech activity where there is an exact coincidence between belief and truth. Foucault claims that 'the "*parrhesiastic* game" presupposes that the *parrhesiastes* is someone who has the moral qualities which are required, first, to know the truth, and secondly, to convey such truth to others' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 14). He points out that the *parrhesiastic* certainty about truth stands in contrast to Descartes' uncertainty about what he believes in before he obtains clear evidence since for the Greek 'truth-having is guaranteed by certain moral qualities' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 15).

Third, the moral courage of the *parrhesiastes* is evidence of his sincerity, for there is a clear risk or *danger* in telling the truth which may or may not be life-threatening. Often the danger is invoked because the *parrhesiatic* relationship is between the speaker and a man of more power and status. The compulsion or duty to sincerely and frankly tell the truth to a superior required moral courage because the *parrhesiastes* risks putting himself in danger and his life at risk for example in challenging a tyrant or a teacher or father.

Fourth, rather than demonstrating truth, the function of *parrhesia* was *criticism,* which could be directed either towards oneself or another. The *parrhesiastes* is someone who has the courage to tell the truth even though he may be putting his life at risk for the truth that the *parrhesiastes* speaks is capable of hurting or angering the interlocutor. *Parrhesia* is thus a form of criticism, directly either towards oneself or another, where the speaker is always in a less powerful position than the interlocutor. The fifth and last characteristic concerns *duty* for in *parrhesia* telling the truth is a duty.

Foucault analyzes the evolution of the *parrhesiastic* game in ancient classical Greek culture (from the fifth century BC) to the beginnings of Christianity in terms of three aspects. The first aspect was *parrhesia*'s opposition to rhetoric. The second was its political role. In the Athenian democracy (from the fourth century BC) *parrhesia* was not only 'an ethical and personal attitude characteristic of the good citizen,' but also a guideline for democracy (Foucault, 2001a, p.22). Subsequently in Hellenistic monarchies it was the sovereign's advisors' duty to help the king make decisions and prevent him from abusing his power. The third aspect was its importance in philosophy 'as an art of life (*techne tou biou*)' as exemplified in the life of Socrates and in 'the care of oneself (*epimeleia heautou*)' (Foucault, 2001a, pp. 23 and 24).

The opposition between *parrhesia* and rhetoric is clear in the Socratic-Platonic tradition (in both the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*) where the difference is spelled out in terms of 'the *logos* which speaks the truth and the *logos* which is not capable of such truth-telling' (p. 6). In politics, *parrhesia* was not only an ethical characteristic of the good citizen but also a guideline for democracy. The Athenian constitution (*politeia*) guaranteed citizens the equal right of speech (*demokratia isegoria*), equal participation in the exercise of power (*isonomia*) and *parrhesia,* as a prerequisite for public speech both between citizens as individuals and as an assembly. With the rise of the Hellenistic monarchies *parrhesia* becomes centred in the relation between the sovereign and his advisors, whose duty it is to help the king in making decisions but also to prevent him from abusing his power.

As an art of life (*techne tou biou*) *parrhesia* is typical of Socrates, although Plato, while using the word several times, never refers to Socrates in the role of the *parrhesiastes.* Socrates, for instance, appears in the *parrhesiastic* role in the *Apology* and *Alcibides Major* where he demonstrates his care for others in their concern for truth and the perfection of their souls. As Foucault comments, 'Philosophical *parrhesia* is thus associated with the theme of the care of oneself (*epimeleia heautou*)' and he suggests that by the time of the Epicureans *parrhesia,* in terms of care of the self, 'was primarily regarded as a *techne* of spiritual guidance for "'the education of the soul'"' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 24). Foucault's friend and colleague at the Collège de France, Pierre Hadot, professor emeritus of the History of Hellenistic and Roman Thought, on whom Foucault relies for so much his interpretation of classical texts in his last years, takes Foucault to task for his reading of the 'care of the self' (see Hadot, 1995; 1997; also Davidson, 1997c).

THE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES OF SOCRATIC *PARRHESIA*

Thus far, the chapter has followed Foucault's seminars chronologically. Next in order he problematizes some *parrhesiastic* practices in six tragedies of Euripides, *Phoenician*

Women: Hippolytus; The Bacchae; Electra; Ion and *Orestes.* He points out that in the first four plays, rather than being 'an important topic or *motif*' the precise context within which word appears 'aids our understanding of its meaning' whereas in '*Ion* and *Orestes* the notion assumes a very important role' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 27).

He argues that *Ion,* is a play that 'is entirely devoted to *parrhesia* since it pursues the question: 'who has the right, the duty, and the courage to speak the truth' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 27). He noted that in *Orestes,* there was a crisis in the function of *parrhesia* in democracy. Democracy threw up the discrepancy between having the right to speak freely where even bad, ignorant or immoral men had such a right and the ability to speak the truth in a way that benefited the city. Furthermore there was no legal means of protecting the *parrhesiaistes* from potential harm nor of determining who was able to speak the truth and because there also existed negative *parrhesia*—garrulousness and ignorant outspokenness. The first issue involved 'who was entitled to use parrhesia?' (Foucault, 2001a, p.72). The second involved 'the relation of *parrhesia* to *mathesis,* [learning or wisdom] to knowledge and education' because pure frankness or sheer courage had become insufficient as the means of establishing the truth (Foucault, 2001a, p.73). What was now required was a good education, intellectual and moral development and some sort of personal training. For reasons of space we shall not review or comment upon his analysis of *parrhesia* in Euripides or his discussion of '*parrhesia* and the crisis of democratic institutions,' where Foucault analyzes a form of *parrhesia,* as free speech, that may become dangerous for democracy itself. In this respect, Foucault examines an aristocratic lampoon against Athenian democracy attributed to Xenophon, Isocrates' 'On the Peace' and 'Areopagiticus,' and Plato's *Republic.*

In the fifth and sixth seminars Foucault devotes himself to an analysis of the philosophical form of *parrhesia* as *practices* used in specific types of human relationships (specified as Socratic, community life, public life, and personal relationships) and, in the final seminar, as the procedures and techniques employed in these relationships.

In time *parrhesia* shifted from the political domain to the philosophical and to the personal. Socratic *parrhesia* is a new form, different from political *parrhesia,* that began to emerge before Socrates. The new personal form that emerged was one that required education in order to achieve a prominent role in city affairs. Foucault analyzes the dialogue *Laches* ('On Courage') for the instance of *parrhesia* that occurs when two elderly men, Lysimachus and Melesias, express a concern about the kind of education they should give their sons. They are worried for, as they admit publicly, while they were both from noble families and their fathers were illustrious, they themselves achieved nothing special in their time. Clearly belonging to a noble family is not sufficient in itself to achieve a prominent city role. They realize that education is required, but what kind?

Foucault explains, at the end of the fifth century BC, educational techniques revolved around rhetoric (learning to speak before an assembly), various sophistic techniques and sometimes also a form of military training. At this time in Athens, when there was a debate about what constituted a good military education (the Athenian infantry soldiers were inferior to their Spartan counterparts), all the political, social and institutional concerns about education are related to the problem of *parrhesia:* in particular, how to recognize a truth-teller, or as Foucault expresses the issue:

> For if you are not well-educated, then how can you decide what constitutes a good education? And if people are to be educated, they must receive the truth from a competent teacher. But how can we distinguish the good, truth-telling teachers from the bad or inessential ones? (Foucault, 2001a, p. 35).

Lysimachus and Melesias consult Nicias, an experienced general, and Laches, who cannot agree on what constitutes a good education, turn to Socrates. Socrates reminds them that education concerns the care of the soul, and Nicias, in a passage that Foucault quotes from the dialogue, explains why he will play the *parrhesiastic* game with Socrates, allowing himself to be 'tested.' In analyzing Nicias' speech which depicts Socrates as a *parrhesiastes,* Foucault extracts the following characteristics of Socratic *parrhesia.* First, the game requires close proximity between the *parrhesiastes* and the interlocutor; second, it takes place in a personal, face to face context, where the listener is led by the Socratic *logos* into 'giving an account' (*didonai logon*) of himself and the kind of life he has lived. Foucault is at pains to point out that we should not read this through our Christian cultural lens as giving a 'confessional autobiography' or as a narrative of the historical events of your life. Rather, giving an account of one's life or *bios,* is a demonstration of

> whether you are able to show that there is a relation between rational discourse, the logos, you are able to use, and the way you live. Socrates is inquiring into the way the logos that gives form to a person's life; for he is interested in discovering whether there is a harmonic relation between the two (Foucault, 2001a, p. 97).

Foucault explains that Socrates' role is to determine 'the degree of accord between a person's life and its principle of intelligibility or logos' (ibid.), and as a result in such an examination, as Nicias explains,

> one becomes willing to care for the manner in which he lives the rest of his life, wanting now to live in the best possible way; and this willingness takes the form of a zeal to learn and to educate oneself no matter what one's age (Foucault, 2001a, p. 98).

It emerges that why Socrates is considered a good teacher, and why respected older men, citizens of Athens, are willing to submit themselves to Socrates, is the fact there

is an ontological harmony between his words (*logoi*) and his deeds (*erga*). Foucault explains that there were four kinds of harmony, which Plato distinguishes as Lydian (too solemn), Phrygian (too tied to the passions), Ionian (too soft and effeminate), Dorian (courageous). The harmony between word and deed in Socrates' life is courageous: unlike the Sophist, Socrates, the *parrhesiastes,* can 'speak freely because what he says accords exactly with what he what he thinks, and what he thinks accords exactly with what he does.'

Foucault compares three contemporary forms of *parrhesia:* the problematization of *parrhesia* in the form of a game between *logos,* truth and *genos* (birth) in relations between the Gods and mortals (as portrayed in Euripides' *Ion*); the problematization of *parrhesia* involved in a game between *logos,* truth and *nomos* (law) in the realm of politics; and, the problematization of *parrhesia* in the game between *logos,* truth and *bios* (life) in the form of a personal teaching relationship. The problem for Plato and Socrates, is how to bring the latter two games into line with one another so that they coincide, i.e., 'How can philosophical truth and moral value relate to the city through the *nomos*?' This is a problem, Foucault tells us, that Plato explores in the *Apology,* the *Crito,* the *Republic* and in the *Laws.* And, indeed, Socrates in the dialogues of *The Last Days of Socrates* exemplifies *parrhesia* in both the political and philosophical domains, as someone who was courageous and willing to tell the truth, risking his life despite facing a death sentence pronounced by the Athenian city fathers. As Foucault comments 'even in the city ruled by good laws there is still a need for someone who will use *parrhesia* to tell the citizens what moral conduct they must observe' (Foucault, 2001a, p.104).

This new kind of philosophical *parrhesia,* which arises in Greco-Roman culture, Foucault characterizes, first, as 'a *practice* which shaped the specific relations that individuals have to themselves' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 106). Much of the philosophy that emerged with Socrates and Plato, and shaped the philosophical tradition that is still ours today and which defines the roots of our moral subjectivity, involved the playing of certain games of truth. The philosophical role involved three types of activity: the philosopher-teacher (our construction) assumed an *epistemic* role insofar as he had to teach certain truths about the world; the philosopher-teacher assumed a *political* role insofar as he took a stand towards the city, its laws and political institutions; and, the philosopher-teacher assumed a *therapeutic* or *spiritual* (our construction) role in that he took responsibility for and clarified the relationship between truth and one's style of life, or 'truth and an ethics and aesthetics of the self' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 106). Second, this new kind of philosophical *parrhesia* is conceived in a personal teaching relationship aimed at convincing someone he must take care of himself and of others, by *changing his life*—a conversion theme important from the fourth century BC to the beginnings of Christianity—rather

than aimed at persuading citizens in the Assembly. Third, these new practices 'imply a complex set of connections between self and truth aiming to endow the individual with self-knowledge . . . to grant access to truth and further knowledge' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 107). Fourth, these new philosophical practices were dependent upon a range of techniques different from those developed earlier and linked to rhetoric and persuasive discourse. What is more these practices are no longer linked to the court but can be used in diverse situations.

Foucault goes on to problematize the new practices as they emerged in community and public and personal relationships. Foucault examines *parrhesia* in the community life of the Epicureans, the practice of *parrhesia* in public life through the example of the Cynic philosophers (including, critical preaching, scandalous behaviour and 'provocative dialogue'), and the *parrhesiastic* game in the framework of personal relationships, from examples taken from Plutarch and Galen. Limitations of space do not permit us to review or examine Foucault's analysis of these practices, rather, we comment upon Foucault's examination of the techniques of *parrhesia,* Foucault's concluding remarks, and conclude, by offering some general comments of the importance of Foucault's method and studies for the discipline of education. It is important, however, to note that Foucault, provides a reading of a fragmentary Greek text by Philodemus (with the help of the Italian scholar, Marcello Gigante) which helps him to make some observations about the practice of *parrhesia* in Epicurean community life, and in particular, the important distinction between two categories of teachers and two types of teaching, which 'became a permanent feature of western culture' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 114). As he says: 'With the Epicurean schools, however, there is the pedagogical relation of guidance where the master helps the disciple to discover the truth about himself, but there is now, in addition, a form of 'authoritarian' teaching in a collective relation where someone speaks the truth to a group of others' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 114).

We shall deal in summary fashion with what Foucault calls 'techniques of the *parrhesiastic* games,' where he focuses upon the techniques employed in truth-games 'which can be found in the philosophical and moral literature of the first two centuries of our era' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 142). Foucault's interest in comparing Greek *askesis* and Christian ascetic practices is, of course, to a large extent governed and closely related to his reading of Nietzsche, especially the *Genealogy of Morals.* In the third essay 'What do Ascetic Ideals Mean?,' Nietzsche suggests that (Christian) ascetic ideals arose to give meaning to human suffering, under the perspective of *guilt*—a kind of will to nothingness, injurious to health and life, but, nevertheless a willing. As he says 'man would sooner have the void for his purpose than be void of purpose' (Nietzsche, 1956, p. 299).

These techniques indicate a shift from the classical Greek conception of *parrhesia* where the game was 'constituted by the fact that someone was courageous

enough to tell the truth to *other people'* to 'another truth game which now consists in being courageous enough to disclose the truth about *oneself'* (Foucault, 2001a, p. 143 [italics in original]). This new kind of truth game of the self requires *askesis,* which, while the root for 'ascetic,' denotes a kind of practical training or exercise directed at the art of living (*techne tou biou*). The Greek conception of *askesis* differs significantly from Christian ascetic practices in that its goal is 'the establishment of a specific relationship to oneself—a relationship of self possession and self-sovereignty'—rather than the Christian renunciation of the self (Foucault, 2001a, p. 144). That is, the crucial difference consists in the Greek ethical principle of *self-mastery* versus that of Christian *self-renunciation.* Thus in this series of lectures, Foucault continues the arguments he put up in *Technologies of the Self* (1988b) that Christian asceticism involved 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, 2001a, p. 144)—a cry that is taken up by various citizenship education curricula in our contemporary world.

Foucault examines the differences between the practices of these new truth games involving an examination of culture. He refers in turn to Seneca's *De ira* ('On Anger'), Seneca's *De tranquillitate animi* ('On the Tranquillity of the Mind'), and the Discourses of Epictetus, emphasizing that despite the differences these practices share an implied relation between truth and the self very different from what is found in the Christian tradition. These practices he examines exhibit a shift in the relationship between master and disciple as the master no longer discloses the truth about the disciple, but rather the disciple takes on this responsibility as a duty toward himself. It is not enough to say that this personal relation of self-understanding derives from the general principle 'know thyself' (*gnothi seauton*) for the 'relationships which one has to oneself are embedded in very precise techniques which take the form of spiritual exercises—some of them dealing with deeds, others with states of equilibrium of the soul, others with the flow of representations, and so on' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 165). Finally, what is at stake in these practices is not the disclosure of a secret but 'the relation of the self to truth or to some rational principles' (Foucault, 2001a, p. 165). These exercises constitute what Foucault calls an 'aesthetics of the self.'

In his 'Concluding remarks,' Foucault states that 'My intention was not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity.' He expands this idea into the following point:

> What I wanted to analyze was how the truth-teller's role was variously problematized in Greek philosophy. And what I wanted to show you was that Greek philosophy has raised the question of truth from the point of view of the criteria for true statements and sound

reasoning, this same Greek philosophy has also raised the problem of truth from the point of view of truth-telling as an activity (Foucault, 2001a, p. 169).

Truth-telling as a speech activity emerged as a distinct philosophical problem which Socrates pursued in his confrontations with the Sophists in dialogues concerning politics, rhetorics, and ethics. He adds as a further expansion:

> And I would say that the problematization of truth which characterizes both the end of Presocratic philosophy and the beginning of the kind of philosophy which is still ours today, this problematization of truth has two sides, two major aspects. One side is concerned with insuring that the process of reasoning is correct in determining whether a statement is true (or concern [sic] itself with our ability to gain access to the truth). And the other side is concerned with the question: what is the importance for the individual and for the society of telling the truth, of knowing the truth, of having people who tell the truth, as well as knowing how to recognize them (Foucault, 2001a, p. 170).

One side he characterises the great philosophical tradition concerned with how to determine the truth-value of a statement, which he describes as the 'analytics of truth.' The other side, 'concerned with the importance of telling the truth, knowing who is able to tell the truth, knowing why we should tell the truth,' Foucault explains as the roots of the 'critical' tradition in the Western philosophical tradition and he describes his own purpose in the seminars in precisely those terms 'to construct a genealogy of the critical attitude in the [sic] Western philosophy' (Foucault, 2001a, pp. 170–71).

Foucault ends with a note defending his notion of 'problematization' of practices. It is not a form of 'historical idealism,' 'not a way of denying the reality of such phenomena' rather 'The problematization is an 'answer' to a concrete situation which is real.' It is not a 'representation' or 'an effect of a situation,' but rather a creation that explores the relation between thought and reality 'to give an answer—the original, specific, and singular, answer of thought—to a certain situation' (Foucault, 2001a, pp. 171–73).

CONCLUSION: FOUCAULT AND THE PROSPECTS
FOR *PARRHESIASTICAL* EDUCATION

What can we conclude from this brief exposition and analysis? We think we can make some quite significant conclusions. First, in the set of lectures entitled 'Discourse and Truth,' delivered at Berkeley a year before his death, we see Foucault at his best, utilising Nietzschean genealogy to problematize the practices of *parrhesia* in classical Greek culture—a set of practices, culturally speaking, that are deepseated for the West. These practices that link truth-telling, on the one hand, and education, on the other, are not only the roots of our present-day cultural practices

and conceptions, but they are still operative in shaping our subjectivities and, there-
fore, also still relevant in understanding the exercise of power and control in con-
temporary life.

Second, Foucault's problematization of *parrhesia* and especially his investiga-
tion of what he calls Socratic *parrhesia,* provides a genealogical analysis which
demonstrates the cultural significance of truth-telling as a set of educational prac-
tices, strongly wedded to the Socratic beginning of the Western philosophical tra-
dition, and, therefore, also to the West's cultural self-image or self-understanding.
Foucault excavates from a variety of sources in classical literature, with the lightness
of the palaeontologist's brush, a series of conceptual, historical and practical rela-
tions that link education and philosophy through truth-telling. Perhaps, more
importantly, he links this *parrhesiastical* form of education to democracy, in a way
that turns historical ideals into living practices. There is much more that we could
develop from this thought: perhaps, the analysis of the ways in which today our
schools, bent on teaching students generic skills as preparation for the knowledge
economy, have deviated from our historical models and begun to shed the concern
for truth and truth-telling in favour of entrepreneurship.

Third, the six lectures he gives in Berkeley demonstrate Foucault's direct con-
cern for education and educational practices. In these lectures we see the full intel-
lectual weight of Foucault settled on educational issues rather than having to infer,
deduce or apply his genealogical insights or methods to education. And in relation
to this point, fourth, we might begin to understand, in terms of Foucault's analy-
sis of the human sciences—indeed of his epistemological model for becoming a sci-
ence—that education has a history and that 'the history of non-formal thought had
itself a system' (Foucault, 1973, p. x) capable of revealing a '*positive unconscious* of
knowledge' (p. xi) but that it is incapable of becoming a science, as recent national
research planning in the US and UK now demand, until it meets the 'objectivity cri-
terion.'

Fifth, we see a very different Foucault in these six lectures than we do in, say,
his neo-structuralist period when he was writing *Archaeology of Knowledge* or *The
Order of Things,* especially when it comes to truth-telling, for the lectures reveal how
Foucault thought that the 'critical' tradition in Western philosophy—the tradition
concerned with the importance of telling the truth, rather than truth as the crite-
ria for determining the truth-value of a statement (as we might express it today)—
begins precisely at the same time as the 'analytics of truth' with the end of
pre-Socratic philosophy and the institutionalisation of philosophy in the Athenian
academies. This genealogy of the critical attitude in philosophy is to be traced to
the same beginnings that all Western contemporary philosophy is heir to. Foucault's

attitude here does not smack of the same antagonism he displayed earlier against analytic philosophy.

Sixth, with his genealogical investigations of the critical attitude in Western philosophy, Foucault delivers us both a fresh reading of the Socratic tradition and the role of education in relation to cultivating practices of truth-telling that subsequently became the basis for the West's cultural and philosophical self-definition. He provides us with the outline of a Nietzschean programme of philosophical research that seeks to question the genealogy of educational ethics. We should remember that Nietzsche, whose *Genealogy of Morals* clearly provides Foucault with a model, also gravitates back to Socrates as an archetype of the philosopher as cultural physician or sets the conditions for culture and the creation of new value. In more concrete terms, in terms of Foucault's Berkeley lectures we might discover anew the continuing relevance of the Socratic tradition. Let us briefly elaborate.

One of the most vexing questions in contemporary philosophy is the question of the relation between the philosopher and his or her work: in more precise terms the possibilities of the genre of philosophical biography. It stands at the door of questions concerning philosophical genres and philosophy as a kind of writing, especially with the emergence of the form of confession as an autobiographical philosophical genre in the work of Augustine and Rousseau, and thus helps to broach a wider set of questions concerning the relation between philosophy and literature that have become a standard reference in the work of thinkers as diverse as Stanley Cavell and Jacques Derrida. As James Conant comments, in contemporary thought we are offered an apparent deadlock:

> we are offered a forced choice between reductivism and compartmentalism—an understanding of an author's work is to be found wholly outside his work (in the external events of his life) or an understanding of the work is to be sought by attending solely to what lies wholly within the work (and the life is held not to be part of the work) (Conant, 2001, p. 19).

The case of Socrates, as the fountainhead of Western philosophy, provides an interesting example precisely because he did not *write* anything. As Conant (2001, pp. 19–20) writes: 'Socrates' life is his work and his work is his life . . . there is no understanding of his philosophy apart from an understanding of the sort of life he sought to live.' And Conant turns to Pierre Hadot, Foucault's colleague at the Collège de France, in order to explain how and why philosophy, during the Hellenistic and Roman eras, was 'a way of life,' where philosophy was a mode of existing-in-the-world and the emphasis fell on the transformation of the individual's life through *philo-sophia* as the love of wisdom. On this conception, one which motivated the late Foucault in his studies of the classical texts, 'a philosopher's life is the defini-

tive expression of his philosophy' (Conant, 2001, p. 21) and his writings are merely the means to facilitate work on the self.

Yet this conception of philosophy as an ethical form of life is not restricted to an understanding of Socrates or to truth-telling practices that invest Socratic *parrhesia.* It can be argued that it is central also to understanding some of the inherited forms of modern philosophy and modern philosophers themselves such as Nietzsche and Wittgenstein (see Peters and Marshall, 1999; Peters, 2000; Peters, 2001c). It may not be too far-fetched to argue that this problematic could act as a framework for entertaining Foucault's own life and philosophy and the question of ethical self-constitution that concerned him late in his life or that it offers great prospects for a rehabilitation of Socratic *parrhesia*—of *parrhesiastical* education— in philosophy of education as a possible innovative research program for a form of applied professional ethics in education.