



Fearless Speech

Michel Foucault , Joseph Pearson (Editor)

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I would like to distinguish between the ‘history of ideas’ and the ‘history of thought.’ The history of ideas involves the analysis of a notion from its birth, through its development, and in the setting of other ideas, which constitute its context. The history of thought is the analysis of the way an unproblematic field of experience becomes a problem, raises discussions and debate, incites new reactions, and induces crisis in the previously silent behaviors, practices, and institutions. It is the history of the way people become anxious, for example, about madness, about crime, about themselves, or about truth.

Comprised of six lectures delivered, in English, by Michel Foucault while teaching at Berkeley in the Fall of 1983, *Fearless Speech* was edited by Joseph Pearson and published in 2001. Reviewed by the author, it is the last book Foucault wrote before his death in 1984 and can be read as his last testament. Here, he positions the philosopher as the only person able to confront power with the truth, a stance that boldly sums up Foucault’s project as a philosopher.

Still unpublished in France, *Fearless Speech* concludes the genealogy of truth that Foucault pursued throughout his life, starting with his investigations in *Madness and Civilization*, into the question of power and its technology. The expression “fearless speech” is a rough translation of the Greek *parrhesia*, which designates those who take a risk to tell the truth; the citizen who has the moral qualities required to speak the truth, even if it differs from what the majority of people believe and faces danger for speaking it.

Parrhesia is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth through frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.

Michel Foucault (1926–84) is widely considered to be one of the most influe

Fearless Speech Details

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From Reader Review Fearless Speech for online ebook

Daniel says

a beautiful essay. i particularly liked ethicial component of Diogenes masturbating.

Jaime says

Michel Foucault's lectures on the evolution of the meaning of "parrhesia" - frankness in telling the truth. Interesting.

Batuhan Can says

kendi üzerine olan k?s?m daha güzel geldi ?lk k?s?mdaki Roma ve Yunan medeniyetindeki k?s?m çok ayr?nt? geldi

Tim Farrington says

As far as I can tell, this book is identical to Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhesia, six lectures given by Michel Foucault at Berkeley, Oct-Nov. 1983, unless he gave six other lectures at Berkeley in the fall of 1983. The only difference I can see is who has packaged the thing and who is making money from it: Discourse and Truth is actually downloadable free as a PDF from various locations. This is some of Foucault's last material delivered while he was alive, and so is significant simply as the furthest reach of that extraordinary mind's elaborate weavings. It is a powerful, exciting work, in which Foucault introduces and explores the evolving meaning of "parrhesia."

"To begin with, what is the general meaning of the word " parrhesia "? Etymologically, "parrhesiazesthai" means " to say everything --from " pan " [π?υ] (everything) and " rhema " [ῥ?μα] [sic*] (that which is said). The one who uses parrhesia, the parrhesiastes, is someone who says everything he has in mind : he does not hide anything, but opens his heart and mind completely to other people through his discourse. In parrhesia, the speaker is supposed to give a complete and exact account of what he has in mind so that the audience is able to comprehend exactly what the speaker thinks. The word " parrhesia " then, refers to a type of relationship between the speaker and what he says. For in parrhesia, the speaker makes it manifestly clear and obvious that what he says is his own opinion. And he does this by avoiding any kind of rhetorical form which would veil what he thinks. Instead, the parrhesiastes uses the most direct words and forms of expression he can find. Whereas rhetoric provides the speaker with technical devices to help him prevail upon the minds of his audience (regardless of the rhetorician's own opinion concerning what he says), in parrhesia, the parrhesiastes acts on other people's mind by showing them as directly as possible what he actually believes." Michel Foucault, Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhesia, 2

* "rhema" [ῥ?μα] should of course read "[ρ?μα]"

Alex Obrigewitsch says

Foucault's analysis and problematization of the Greek word parrhesia is most enlightening for what it does not explicitly say, but what flows beneath its surface.

Parrhesia, speaking the truth or free-speech, is not only an ethical relation of the public, political, and personal spheres; it also plays itself out as a power-game.

To speak the truth one must be free, but to be free one must also be able to speak the truth. Parrhesia is a vicious circle of the production of freedom and truth. Those who are free, ie. the powerful, are those who speak, and create, the truth, what is true. The other is thus suppressed and stripped of power by the denial of freedom through the denial of parrhesia, which is also the denial of parrhesia due to the lack of freedom. Such a self-reproducing parrhesiastic power game allows the powerful to maintain and sustain their rule over the other. They create and hold the truth not only through the knowledge they possess and deny to the other, but through the speech which they also wield in a similar fashion.

The upheaval and displacement of this parrhesiastic power game plays itself out by playing with its rules. For it is exactly this freedom of speech, of speaking the truth, that may not be housed in law but which flows from the human being that may cut through the imposed systemization of the parrhesiastic game used for the power of the one over the other; used in order to see the fundamental untruth and groundlessness of this power game.

While such thinking is not explicitly expressed in this look at Greek culture and thought, it underlies what is said and comes forth through the saying. As Heraclitus wrote, "Physis loves to hide."

Kahfi Ananda says

Buku ini merupakan hasil saduran dari enam kuliah umum yang diberikan Foucault, yang membuat menarik adalah, bahasan yang diangkat oleh Foucault dalam buku ini sangat berbeda dalam rentang waktu, namun sedikit mirip perihal kontekstualitas.

Buku ini merupakan salah satu kepingan yang merangkum perjalanan sejarah pemikiran, wabillkhusus pada masa Yunani kuno, Foucault berusaha memunculkan konsep dalam buku ini dengan harapan mampu menimbulkan telaahan kritis yang baru.

Tak lupa, pendekatan yang dilakukan Foucault dalam buku ini terbilang unik, ia menggunakan pendekatan melalui karya sastra.

Trevor says

"Fearless Speech" takes the form of a series of lectures to examine the identity and role of the truth-teller, using examples from classical drama and philosophy. Using this problematic identity as a starting point, Foucault delves into the patterns by which a neutral act or identity, like truth telling, becomes socially complex and moralized.

The book is a nearly-literal transcription of Foucault's lectures and wasn't edited by him, so expect to wade

through long, conversational examples to get at the gems of revelation.

Kelly Phillips says

Foucault's seminar on speaking truth in community, politics, the dyad and internal dialogue.... and the moral complexities that arise from uninhibited speech. I loved Diogenes' interview of Alexander the Great.

Mert says

understanding of "parrhesia" and ways of actualisation during Ancient Greek

Charlie says

Ah yes, Foucault's acidic philosophy has made me nostalgic for a time in which rulers amassed power and subjugated their citizens through sheer brut honesty. The Greeks, tellin' it like it is.

Jerry Stackhouse says

Me?er do?ruyu söyleyebilmek ne kadar önemliymi?.

Ieyla says

Kitap, Foucault'nun California Üniversitesinde verdi?i seminerlerdeki ders notlar?ndan derlenerek olu?turulmu?. Kitapta "hakikati dürüstçe söyleme eylemi" yani "parrhesia" ile ili?kili dü?üncelerin ortaya ç?k??? ve parrhesia'n?n sorunsalla?t?r?lmas? sürecinin Yunan Felsefesindeki izleri sürülüyor, Yunan Edebiyat?nda parrhesia anlay???na ili?kin yakla??mlar inceleniyor, parrhesian?n ki?isel ili?kiler, demokratik kurumlar ve bireyin kendini bilmesi ve kendini te?hisi ile ili?kisi tart???l?yor. Özellikle hakikat ile demoktarik kurumlar aras?ndaki ili?kinin tart???ld??? üçüncü bölümde sa?l?kl? bir demokrasi ve hakikati dile getirecek bireylerin varl??? aras?ndaki ili?kiye ili?kinin tart???malar çok güzel sunulmu?. En sevdi?im bölüm kendilik kayg?s? ve hakikat aras?ndaki ili?kinin tart???ld??? dördüncü bölüm oldu. Kitapta Foucault ile harika bir dü?ünce yolculu?una ç?k?yorsunuz. Felsefi metinlerde s?kça problemleri çevirilere rastl?yoruz, ama bu kitap sorunsuz, Kerem Eksen'in çevirisi harika olmu?. Kesinlikle okuman?z? öneriyor, sizi kitaptan seçti?im bir kaç al?nt?yla ba? ba?a b?rak?yorum.

"..Hükümdar?n kendisi parrhesiastes de?ildir, ama iyi yöneticinin özelliklerinden biri, parrhesia oyununu oynayabilmesidir."

"..Ve ele?tiri hakk? olmazsa, bir hükümdar taraf?ndan kullan?lan iktidar?n s?n?r? olmaz. Böylesi bir s?n?rs?z iktidar, ?okaste taraf?ndan "delilerle deliliklerine bulu?mak" olarak nitelendirilir. Zira s?n?rs?z iktidar delilikle do?rudan ba?lant?ld?r."

"..Ve amathia hakk?nda Platon ?öyle der: "Cehalet insanlar için kötü olan her?eyin kök sald???, filizlendi?i ve koparanlar?n a?z?na ac? bir tat b?rakan meyvelerin yeti?ti?i toprakt?r."

"..Kendi özel i?lerinle ilgili tavsiye alman sözkonusu oldu?unda zekaca senden üstün insanlar?n pe?ine dü?ersin ama devlet i?leri üzerine dü?ündü?ün zaman bu tür insanlara kar?? güvensiz ve ho?nutsuz bir tutum tak?n?r ve onlar yerine bu platformda önüne gelen hatiplerin en ahlaks?z?yla arkada? olursun; ve sarho?lar?n ay?klardan, ak?ls?zlar?n bilgelerden ve halk?n paras?n? sa?a sola da??tanlar?n kamusal hizmetlerini kendi cebinden kar??layanlardan daha iyi birer halk dostu oldu?unu söylersin. Öyle ki bizler, bu tür ak?l hocalar?ndan faydalanan bir devletin daha iyi mertebelere gelece?ini dü?ünen insanlar?n bulunmas?n? pekala hayretle kar??layabiliriz.(?sokrates'ten al?nt?)"

"..Zira cesur ki?inin cesuru sevmesi bir anlamda do?ald?r; oysa ödlekler cesurlar? ?üpheyle süzer ve dü?manlar? gibi görüp onlardan nefret ederlerken, alçaklar? ho? kar??lay?p severler. Bu nedenle birinci gruba göre hakikat ve aç?ksözlülük dünyadaki en güzel ?eyken, di?er grup yaltaklanmay? ve düzenbazl???n yüceltir. ?kinici gruptakiler girdikleri ili?kilerde kar??s?ndakinin gönlünü ho? tumaya çabalayanlara büyük bir istekle kulak verirlerken, birinci gruptakiler hakikati önemseyenleri kaale al?rlar. (Dio'dan al?nt?)"

Sebastian says

i learned a good amount about free speech and even more about democracy. but thats not the main focus of this very academic text. unless you want to learn how ancient greeks approached truth speakers, this will be a waste of time
