



## 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Still unpublished in France, *Fearless Speech* concludes the genealogy of truth that Foucault pursued throughout his life, starting with his investigations in *Madness and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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## Daniel says

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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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, wabilkhusus 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.

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## Jaime says

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

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## 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 " [δ?μ?α] [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" [δ?μ?α] should of course read "[ρ?μ?α]"

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## 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."

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## Mert says

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

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## Ieyla says

Kitap, Foucault'nun California Üniversitesinde verdiği seminerlerdeki ders notlarından derlenerek oluşturulmuştur. Kitapta "hakikati dürüstçe söyleme eylemi" yani "parrhesia" ile ilgili düşüncelerin ortaya çıkması ve parrhesia'nın sorunsallaştırılması sürecinin Yunan Felsefesindeki izleri sürülüyor, Yunan Edebiyatında parrhesia anlayışına ilişkin yaklaşımlar inceleniyor, parrhesianın kişisel ilişkiler, demokratik kurumlar ve bireyin kendini bilmesi ve kendini teşhisi ile ilgili tartışılıyor. Özellikle hakikat ile demokratik kurumlar arasındaki ilişkinin tartışıldığı üçüncü bölümde sağlam bir demokrasi ve hakikati dile getirecek bireylerin varlığı arasındaki ilişkiye ilişkin tartışmalar çok güzel sunulmuştur. En sevdiğim bölüm kendilik kaygısı ve hakikat arasındaki ilişkinin tartışıldığı dördüncü bölüm oldu. Kitapta Foucault ile harika bir düşünce yolculuğuna çıkıyorsunuz. Felsefi metinlerde sıkça problemleri çevirilere rastlıyoruz, ama bu kitap sorunsuz, Kerem Eksen'in çevirisi harika oldu. Kesinlikle okumanızı öneriyorum, sizi kitaptan seçtiğim birkaç alıntıyla baş başa bırakıyorum.

"..Hükümdarın kendisi parrhesiastes değildir, ama iyi yöneticinin özelliklerinden biri, parrhesia oyununu oynayabilmesidir."

"..Ve eleştiri hakkı olmazsa, bir hükümdar tarafından kullanılan iktidarın sınırı olmaz. Böylesi bir sınırsız iktidar, tokaste tarafından "delillerle deliliklerine bulumak" olarak nitelendirilir. Zira sınırsız iktidar delilikle doğrudan bağlantılıdır."

"..Ve amathia hakkında Platon şöyle der: "Cehalet insanlar için kötü olan her şeyin kök saldı, filizlendi ve koparanların aza na acı bir tat bırakan meyvelerin yettiği topraktır."

"..Kendi özel işleriyle ilgili tavsiye alman söz konusu olduysa zekaca senden üstün insanların peşine düşersen ama devlet işleri üzerine düşündüğün zaman bu tür insanlara karşı güvensiz ve hoşnutsuz bir tutum takarsın ve onlar yerine bu platformda önüne gelen hatiplerin en ahlaksızıyla arkadaş olursun; ve sarhoşlardan, akılsızların bilgelerden ve halkın parasını sağa sola dağıtanların kamusal hizmetlerini kendi cebinden karşılayanlardan daha iyi birer halk dostu olduğunu söylersin. Öyle ki bizler, bu tür akıllı hocalardan faydalanan bir devletin daha iyi mertebelere geleceğini düşünen insanlar bulunmasını pekala hayretle karşılayabiliriz.(Sokrates'ten alıntı)"

"..Zira cesur kişinin cesuru sevmesi bir anlamda doğaldır; oysa ötekiler cesurları üpheyle süzer ve düşmanlar gibi görüp onlardan nefret ederlerken, alçaklar hoş karşılayıp severler. Bu nedenle birinci gruba göre hakikat ve açıklıktan dünyadaki en güzel şeyken, diğer grup yaltaklanmayı ve düzenbazlığı yüceltir. İkinci gruptakiler girdikleri ilişkilerde karşısındakinin gönlünü hoş tumaya çabalayanlara büyük bir istekle kulak verirlerken, birinci gruptakiler hakikati önemseyenleri kaale alırlar. (Dion'dan alıntı)"

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**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.

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**Jerry Stackhouse says**

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

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**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.

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**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.

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