The Care of the Self in Foucault and Socrates:

Rescuing the Socratic Relation to Truth to Promote New Modes of Being

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> The political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for several centuries.[1]
>
> Michel Foucault

Introduction

The pervading theme of Michel Foucault's oeuvre is that the modern subject has been constructed not by the individual self but rather by competing, disembodied forces such as science and government. Within the modern paradigm, the individual finds out the truth about himself and the world by representing or uncovering it in its selfsameness to what dominant power structures tell him it is. Within this relation to truth, we pose the truth as something that exists objectively and independently of us; we grant others—those with scientific 'expertise'—access to the truth and assume we can only access the truth through them. The important thing to understand here is that truth is cast as an objective and pure entity that does not depend on the individual self. This model of truth grounds the modern paradigm of the subject and sets forth the relation of the self to truth that has dominated our understanding of ourselves and the world since the philosophy of Plato.[2]

An understanding of this relation need not be filled with philosophical jargon. The relation is the basis for our most unassuming assumptions, such as the idea that each of us has a true passion we need to discover within ourselves, or that each of us was born to perform a specific task, or alternatively, that each of us has a core self to which we should be true. All of these assumptions steer us into a mode of living in which we focus on uncovering the truth within ourselves rather than working to create ourselves. For

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[1] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 336.

[2] For background on this synopsis, cf. Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977,* ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 81, 93-94.

Foucault, this mode of subjectivity is harmful because it constrains us to previously defined 'truths' and norms. For example, if one is convinced there is a true form of sexuality within him, his behavior will correspond to the socially mandated rules for that sexuality. The idea is that, though one thinks one overcomes repression by affirming the 'truth' of one's sexuality, one actually reaffirms the powers that have defined this identity. This problem applies not only to sexuality, but to any concept that describes an identity. Within this model, the truth does not depend on the individual, and it follows that the individual (as far as his self-understanding and identity go) does not depend on himself. Within such a framework, all the subject can do is uncover or recollect knowledge that always has been and always will be true. In order to be truly free, Foucault believes, one must create the truth about oneself and one's world. This is done by abandoning the modern paradigm of subjectivity and promoting a new form of subjectivity which allows us to create new modes of being.[3]

Such a form of subjectivity, however, has not developed in the West due to the domination throughout the history of philosophy of the concept of truth which grounds modern subjectivity. From antiquity, this model of truth, the one we have been dealing with so far, has been classified under the Delphic oracle's precept, "know thyself." However, there is another ancient precept, which has not carried the same significance as the "know thyself." This precept states that one must "care for oneself." Foucault takes interest in this precept in his later work, and he has two competing interpretations of its significance. According to one line of Foucault's thought, the "care of the self" is an ethical imperative found in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy in which one performed practices on oneself in order to free oneself from desire and live a good life. Another line of interpretation reads the care of the self as a way to access the truth in contrast to the way we do so through the "know thyself." While the guiding assumption of the know thyself is that there is a pure, unchanging truth to be uncovered, the care of the self displays what we do in a world in which this kind of truth does not exist. As such, the care of the self demonstrates the relation of the self to truth that grounds Foucault's alternative form of subjectivity—the subjectivity which should allow us to create new modes of being. Basically, the activity of care as a non-teleological search for truth can be mapped onto the exploration required for us to create new modes of being. In order to begin to explore new modes of being, we need to understand and develop an alternative relation to truth. In this paper, I show how this alternative relation of the self to truth emerges from the model of the care of the self promoted in Plato's Socratic dialogues.

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[3] For background on this synopsis, cf. Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York, The New Press, 1997), 135-138, 163-164, 291.

Plato's work serves as an important reference point for understanding the interplay between the two concepts of truth we are dealing with—the "know thyself" and the "care of the self." We will see that his early dialogues, in which he provides accounts of Socrates' life, take the form of explorations of care in which it is suggested that the truth of the concepts Socrates discusses is not to be uncovered in objective certainty, but rather explored in a free and creative manner. Plato is unsatisfied with these explorations because they do not provide definitive answers, and I argue that he attempts to provide these answers in his middle dialogues. If this is true, then we can say that Plato misreads the Socratic dialogues as attempts at explanation rather than processes of exploration. As a result, the middle dialogues adopt the idea that truth is static, pure and objective. The middle dialogues of Plato are, therefore, particularly significant because they abandon the notion of care and the particular relation of the self to truth it sets forth.

Readers have generally understood Plato's middle dialogues as explanations of what Plato really meant in his early dialogues. If we instead look at them as attempts to understand the figure of Socrates—that is, if we assume that Plato did not completely understand the figure of Socrates he depicted in his early dialogues—then we can redo the work Plato did unsatisfactorily. We can attempt to understand the Socratic way of life and the idea of care propounded therein in order to rescue the significance of the relation of the self to truth we find within the structure of care. This interpretation of the Socratic way of life should provide us with a valuable framework for understanding Foucault's goal of developing a new form of subjectivity. At the same time, this reading of Socrates, done through the lens of Foucault, allows us to see that Socrates is not interested in uncovering the eternal truth of being, but rather exploring the process of becoming.

Overview

I will begin this project by giving some background about the notion of the care of the self and its relevance for our purposes by looking at Foucault's treatment of it (Section A). I argue that Foucault has an inconsistent notion of the care of the self when he deals with this precept in his later writings—that is, he forwards different views in different texts. There are times that he reads and presents the care of the self as a moral imperative, and times he reads it as a way to access the truth. The former reading, which

Foucault presents in his *Histories of Sexuality*, eliminates the creative power of the care of the self he wants to retrieve.

After showing how treating the care of the self as an ethical imperative prevents the very self-creativity that Foucault sought to recover from the Greeks and Romans (Section A.I), I will turn to an alternate interpretation of care present in Foucault's lectures, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (Section A.II). Here, he interprets the care of the self in relation to the "know thyself," and it is within this relationship that care is thought about as a way to access the truth. With the care of the self, we will see that, instead of having the truth imposed on us from dominant power structures, or uncovering the truth of ourselves through the influence of this power, we work to constitute our own relation to the truth. We no longer access the truth through an objectively disinterested discovery of knowledge. Now, we access it through a creatively self-devised exploration. It is through this creative process that Foucault thinks the modern subject can save itself from the constraint of discipline.

To understand how we can conceive of this salvation, I will turn to an analysis of the Platonic corpus, particularly Plato's early and middle dialogues (Section B). Within the division of the early and middle dialogues, I explain how we can find a corresponding division of the two concepts of truth Foucault depicts in his analysis of antiquity. The necessity of my interpretation arises from the fact that Plato's treatment of the Socratic care of the self ignores the idea that the individual can craft his own truth. The purpose is to recover such a notion of truth from the early Socratic dialogues and show how this notion is necessary for an alteration in our relation to truth, which grounds our ability to create new modes of being.

This last point will particularly be addressed with an analysis of the *Lysis* in the final section (Section C). Before getting there, however, I will go through an interpretative cycle of three dialogues, the *Apology* (Section B.I), the *Crito* (Section B.II) and the *Phaedo* (Section B.III) in order to explain the presence of the two models of truth—the care of the self and the know thyself—in Plato's work. These dialogues focus on the death of Socrates, and we will see that Socrates' attitude towards death in the *Apology* and *Crito* shows us that he really does not know what he claims not to know. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates acts as if there is a truth about death to uncover. I argue this is a function of Plato's misreading of the *Apology* and *Crito*.

In the *Lysis*, it emerges that Socrates believes the knowledge he claims not to know is impossible for anyone to know. This allows us to read dialogues like the *Lysis* as explorations of truth in the absence of a definitive truth. Socrates' pedagogical purpose in carrying out these explorations is to get his interlocutors to care for and reconstitute their relation to truth from one in which they assume the truth exists to be uncovered in its objective selfsameness to one in which they have an active role in exploring and creating different possibilities for truth. As such, these explorations are, in themselves, the activity of the care of the self. Reading the *Lysis*, we get a demonstration of what this exploration of truth looks like, and it is precisely this exploration (which does not progress towards a definite answer) upon which we can model the Foucauldian search for and creation of new modes of existence and truth. So the Socratic way of life will help us conceive of a new form of subjectivity that addresses Foucault's problematization of the modern form of subjectivity. At the same time, through Foucault, we will see that

Socrates is more interested in the relation one has to the truth than he is in discovering the pure, unchanging truth.

A. Foucault's Interpretation and Application of the "Care of the Self"

Foucault appears to have an inconsistent and confused notion of the care of the self when he deals with it in his later writings. There are times that he reads and presents the care of the self as a moral imperative and times he reads it as a way to access the truth. The former reading, which Foucault presents in Volumes Two and Three of the *History of Sexuality*, eliminates the creative power of the care of the self that he wants to retrieve. He perhaps realizes this in his last interview, where he notes his disillusionment with antiquity: "all of antiquity seems to me to have been a 'profound error.'"[4] The latter reading, which appears in his lectures entitled, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, saves the creative power of care.[5] I will presently try to elaborate on Foucault's inconsistency and explain why his project for promoting a new form of subjectivity requires that we hold onto the care of the self as a way to understand the individual's relation to truth and abandon its use as a moral imperative. Later in the paper, I will show that in Socrates, the care of the self emerges as a way to relate oneself to the truth, and I will propose that retrieving this from Socrates helps us conceptualize Foucault's project of developing a new form of subjectivity. I will presently show how Foucault missed this in his *Histories of Sexuality*.

I. The Care of the Self as an Ethical Imperative

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[4] Michel Foucault, "The Return of Morality," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988), 244.

[5] Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France, 1981-82*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 8. Subsequent references to this text will appear as in-text citations in the form (HS pg#).

Foucault's focus on the care of the self in Roman philosophy in Volumes Two and Three of the *History of Sexuality* casts the care of the self as a moral structure rather than a framework for thinking about the individual's relation to truth. Foucault values care within this framework because "it does not make direct and explicit moral judgments" concerning one's actions and therefore does not impose universal rules on the individual.[6] Thus, in a moral system of the care of the self, Foucault believes that austerity "takes the form, not of a tightening of the code that defined prohibited acts, but of an intensification of the relation to oneself by which one constituted oneself as the subject of one's acts" (CS 41). The idea here, which interests Foucault, is "that ethics can be a very strong structure of existence, without any relation with the juridical per se, with an authoritarian system, with a disciplinary structure" (Ethics 260).[7] So Foucault interprets care as a structure of existence and ethics, and he believes this dual structure allows one to have a free and unconstrained ethical life because one creates oneself and perfects one's behavior according to one's own will. We will shortly see that self-creation and ethical subjectivity are mutually exclusive. One cannot freely create oneself if this creation is incited and guided by ethical codes. The following analysis will focus on the nature of the self-examination we find in the ethics of care. While Foucault sees it as the source of self-creation and freedom, I will argue that the opposite is the case. Self-examination becomes a form of self-discipline which stifles one's ability to constitute and create oneself in an artistic, creative manner because one's self-examinations are informed and constrained by the moral standards of his community.

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[6] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 3: The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1988), 3. Subsequent references to this text will appear as in-text citations in the form (CS pg#).

[7] Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of a Work in Progress," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 260.

In Volume Three of the *History of Sexuality,* Foucault discusses Seneca's self-examinations, finding in them the presence of an ethical structure without universal codes. When Seneca talks about self-examination, he uses phrases such as 'appear before a judge' and 'plead my cause'. For Foucault, "These elements seem to indicate the division of the subject into a judging authority and an accused individual" (CS 61). He wants to avoid this division because it would align the care of the self with the moral systems of modernity which were organized into unified, coherent lists of prohibitions that were imposed on everyone in the same way. Thus Foucault posits that this judgmental authority is actually not present, that "As much as the role of a judge, it is the activity of an inspector that Seneca evokes, or that of a master of a household checking his accounts" (CS 61). So Seneca is not subjecting himself to an objectively true moral knowledge that applies universally; rather, "he intends to 'inspect'" his day, "to 'remeasure' the acts that were committed, the words that were spoken" (CS 61). Taking this perspective, Foucault concludes that

> The subject's relation to himself in this examination is not established so much in the form of a judicial relationship in which the accused faces the judge; it is more like an act of inspection in which the inspector aims to evaluate a piece of work, an accomplished task...Further, the examination practiced in this manner does not focus, as if in imitation of the judicial procedure, on 'infractions'; and it does not lead to a verdict of guilty or to decision of self-castigation (CS 62).

Here, Foucault casts the care of the self as a mode of morality in which the individual is not subjected to universal laws. There is still moral austerity in such a system, but it takes the form of attention one draws on oneself. Foucault seems intrigued by the fact that the purpose of this self-attention or self-examination is not to "discover one's guilt" (CS 62). One does not examine oneself "in order to determine a culpability or stimulate a feeling of remorse, but in order to strengthen, on the basis of the recapitulated and reconsidered verification of a failure, the rational equipment that ensures a wise behavior" (CS 62). One uses one's mistakes as a means of improvement rather than self-castigation. One transforms oneself into a good person by learning from his mistakes.

Foucault believes this self-transformation is a creative process, and as such, it "ensures our freedom while forcing us to take ourselves as the object of all our diligence" (CS 47). This diligence involves self-examination and self-tests where one establishes "a supremacy over oneself" (CS 58). Foucault's main claim is that the self-examination promoted by the care of the self in antiquity allowed for freedom and the self-tailoring of a unique and individual ethics. Hence, Foucault states, the Greeks "did not seek to justify interdictions, but to stylize a freedom—that freedom which the 'free' man exercised in his activity."[8] So the activity of care, in which one constitutes oneself as an ethical subject, is at the same time an act of freedom. One is not constrained by codes, but rather constitutes his notion of the good life as he sees fit. Foucault thinks that the ethic of care allows the individual to create himself as his own ethical subject.

The activity of care presented here may seem far removed from the moral systems of modernity, but upon further consideration it appears much closer. What Foucault fails to understand is that the creation of a subjectivity need not necessarily be at the same time the creation of an ethical subjectivity. In fact, such a 'free' creation seems impossible, and we see why in the very texts Foucault works with. The self-attention or self-inspection, which Foucault casts as innocuous, becomes a control or self-discipline that one constantly exercises over oneself. We see this even in Foucault's own explanation of self-examination, where he notes: "More than an exercise done at regular intervals, it [self-examination] is a constant attitude that one must take toward oneself"

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[8] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 97. Subsequent references to this text will appear as in-text citations in the form (UP pg #).

(CS 63). According to this logic, the task of the philosophical life is to establish "a supremacy over oneself" in which one controls one's desires and moderates one's pleasures (CS 58).

So we see that one constantly disciplines oneself and controls one's desires and actions according to moral standards. The self-examinations of Seneca and his contemporaries focus on curing bad habits and resisting faults (CS 61). These are not individual idiosyncrasies that one addresses for his own good. Rather, they are moral problems that the self-examiner must solve in order to become better in the eyes of his community. Thus the formulation: "What bad habit have you cured today? What fault have you resisted? In what respect are you better?" (CS 61). The standards one uses to 'better' oneself may not be in the form of law, but they are still present, guiding and determining what is possible for the subject, what is possible for his own 'creativity' and 'self-creation.' Basically, the self-constitution of an ethical subject necessarily poses a limit on the possibility of creativity one can exercise over oneself because one constantly checks oneself with regard to the moral standards of the community in which he lives.

We see here that Foucault does not view the care of the self as a way to think about the individual's relation to truth. Rather, he casts the care of the self as a moral imperative. We have seen how this prevents the very self-creativity that he sought to recover from the Greeks and Romans. If we create ourselves as moral subjects, we will necessarily be constrained by the moral attitudes of our community. The care of the self, which seems to get around these influences by promoting self-discipline, only exists because it feels the need to address such communal attitudes. The care of the self, in this view, is merely a function of contemporary moral attitudes.

II. The Care of the Self as a Way to Access the Truth

We have seen how Foucault interprets the care of the self as an ethical imperative in the *History of Sexuality* Volumes Two and Three. Later in his life, he takes a different perspective toward the care of the self. This alternate interpretation is particularly evident in his lectures at the College de France in 1981-1982, entitled *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. These lectures appear convoluted and without any clear trajectory, but they form a significant component of Foucault's oeuvre because they provide the theoretical groundwork for the ethical and political strategies he develops in the last phase of his life—namely, his goal of promoting a new form of subjectivity. In the lectures, he interprets the care of the self in relation to the "know thyself," and it is within this relationship that care is thought about as a way to access the truth. I will presently show how Foucault arrived at this conception of care.

We should begin by understanding the specific place this course has in Foucault's body of thought. In a 1983 interview, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: an Overview of Work in Progress," which occurred before the publication of Volumes Two and Three of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault alludes to another book he planned to write, but which was never published. In the interview, he calls this book "The Care of the Self," which, he says, will be "separate from the sex series." At the time of the interview, he was planning on publishing what we now know as Volumes Two and Three of the *History of Sexuality* as one volume (*The Uses of Pleasure),* publish the *Confessions of the Flesh* as the third volume and write a book separate from the 'sex series' entitled *The Care of the Self*. This separate book was to be "composed of different papers about the self—for instance, a commentary of Plato's *Alcibiades* in which you will find the first elaboration of the notion of *epimeleia heautou*, 'care of the self,' about the role of reading and writing in constituting the self," and so on.[9] Basically, Foucault found in reading the philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome "a very great number of problems or themes about the self, the ethics of the self, the technology of the self, and I had the idea of writing a book composed of a set of separate studies, papers about such and such aspects of ancient, pagan technologies of the self."[10] The *Hermeneutics of the Subject* lectures are the closest thing we have to this book in Foucault's work. The ancient practices of the self—the practices through which the individual cares for and transforms himself in order to access the truth—are the focus of these lectures. Already, in the way the care of the self is framed here, we get the sense that it is something other than an ethical imperative. Here, care is framed as a way to access the truth.

Foucault explains why it took him so long to uncover these 'ancient practices of the self,' which motivated his alternate reading of the care of the self, in his preface to the *History of Sexuality, Volume Two*. He states:

> the very important role played at the end of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries by the formation of domains of knowledge about sexuality from the points of view of biology, medicine, psychopathology, sociology, and ethnology; the determining role also played by the normative systems imposed on sexual behavior through the intermediary of education, medicine, and justice made it hard to distinguish the form and effects of the relation to the self as particular elements in the constitution of this experience.[11]

So the structures that led to the formation of the modern subject, in which one's identity is constituted according to the knowledge of 'professionals' in the objective sciences, conceals another kind of formation of identity—it conceals the subjective side of the relationship. In focusing on the power wrought on the subject from external sources, the idea of the modern subject ignores the relation that one has to oneself. In searching for this forgotten relationship, Foucault found himself delving further and further into the past “in order to address myself to periods when the effect of scientific knowledges and the complexity of normative systems were less, and in order eventually to make out forms of relation to the self different from those characterizing the experience of sexuality.”[12] The indication is that, while in modernity, the care of the self has been lost amid the predominance of the know thyself, both of these concepts of the individual’s relation to truth were significant in antiquity.

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[9] Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, 255.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Michel Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality*, Volume Two," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 204.

It is within this context that Foucault’s seminar, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject,* can be understood. What we find there is the framework for a way of thinking of the subject as self-constituting rather than being constituted by techniques of power and domains of objective knowledge. Instead of having the truth imposed on oneself from dominant power structures, or uncovering the truth of oneself through the influence of this power, one works to develop one’s own relation to the truth and create the truth about oneself. Thus, a guiding theme of the interpretation of these lectures is the idea that, in antiquity, the subject can access the truth (or claim to know the truth) through a self-transformative process, whereas in modernity, the dominant view is that there is a truth about oneself that one must uncover, in which no transformation is possible.

It is this distinction that Foucault characterizes under the headings of the “care of the self” and the “know thyself.” The care of the self is the mode of subjectivation where one relates oneself to oneself and transforms one’s being; the know thyself is the mode of subjection in which one identifies oneself along pre-determined classifications. The

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[12] Ibid.

Hermeneutics of the Subject is a historical study of the interplay between the care of the self and the know thyself in antiquity. Foucault argues that, though we have come to believe that the Delphic precept to "know yourself" was "the founding expression of the question of the relations between the subject and truth"—that it was "the question of knowledge of the subject, of the subject's knowledge"—this is not the case (HS 3). The "know thyself" did not have the significance for the ancients that we grant it. In antiquity, Foucault claims, when the "know thyself" appears in philosophical texts, it is coupled with the notion that one must "take care of oneself." In fact, Foucault wants to posit that the know thyself appears "within the more general framework of the care of oneself" and that there is "a kind of subordination of the expression of the rule 'know yourself' to the precept of care of the self" in various ancient texts (HS 4).

What exactly does this (the subordination of the know thyself to the care for the self) mean? Foucault's distinction of spirituality from philosophy in antiquity helps to answer this question. He defines philosophy as "the form of thought that asks what it is that enables the subject to have access to the truth and which attempts to determine the conditions and limits of the subject's access to truth" (HS 15). If this is our definition of philosophy, then Foucault thinks "we could call 'spirituality' the search, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth" (HS 15). So spirituality is the set of practices, the exercise, the transformation, or "the price to be paid for access to the truth" (HS 15). Hence spirituality posits that truth does not exist without a transformation of the subject.

The subordination of a theoretical philosophy (know thyself) to a spiritual philosophy (care) in antiquity is significant because it casts the care of the self as an alternate way for the self to relate to truth. If we understand the care of the self as a way to access truth that is different from the know thyself—remember, this stresses memory and recollection—and that it actually dominates some ancient texts, then we have the schema for a completely different reading of truth in the ancient canon (and this is the schema I will apply to Socrates). In some cases, truth was created through practice, not uncovered in form through memory. So by virtue of the interplay between caring and knowing, care emerges as a way to access the truth in which the truth is created by us instead of uncovered in its objective nature. In this sense, spiritual truth is accessed through practice while philosophical truth is accessed through knowledge.

Thus, in modernity, Foucault believes, "it is assumed that what gives access to the truth, the condition for the subject's access to the truth, is knowledge and knowledge alone" (HS 17). This assumption was also held in antiquity, but it became predominant in modernity. In fact this is the assumption held by the "know thyself," and understanding it will help us distinguish the kind of truth promoted by the care of the self from that of the know thyself. To say that the condition for access to truth is knowledge seems to indicate that anyone can access the truth, but Foucault stresses this is not the case. Although the subject does not have to change anything about himself, "this does not mean that the truth is obtained without conditions." There are many conditions that determine what counts as knowledge, but these are different from the conditions of spirituality (HS 18). An act of knowledge must obey formal rules of method; the one who claims to know must have an education "and operate within a certain scientific consensus"; knowledge claims must be objective and reached through disinterested research (HS 18). So philosophical truth is accessed through knowledge, and Foucault wants us to see that the conditions for knowing "do not concern the subject in his being; they only concern the individual in his concrete existence, and not the structure of the subject as such" (HS 18). So 'knowledge' does not depend on the individual self. It can only be uncovered through disinterested research and objective rationality, and it is uncovered through formal rules rather than self-devised practices. We see that the knowledge that leads us to truth is completely independent of our subjectivity; we have no control over this knowledge, and the truth it upholds is eternal and objective.

Spirituality provides us with another way to think about the truth. In contrast to the philosophical notion of truth in which the subject is disconnected from the truth, Foucault argues that there is

> a whole set of techniques whose purpose is to link together the truth and the subject. But it should be clearly understood that it is not a matter of discovering a truth in the subject or of making the soul the place where truth dwells through an essential kinship or original law; nor is it a matter of making the soul the object of a true discourse…On the contrary, it is a question of arming the subject with a truth that he did not know and that did not dwell within him" (HS 501).

Foucault clearly distinguishes spiritual truth from philosophical truth. With spirituality, the subject is not treated as an object to be known as it is in philosophy. For Foucault, this means that "we do not find, through recollection, a hidden truth deep within us; we internalize accepted truths through an increasingly thorough appropriation" (HS 500). Thus we see that truth is treated as something that is not innate, static or eternal. The truth is not something that dwells within us, but rather something that we 'arm' ourselves with, or that we 'appropriate.' And this appropriation becomes increasingly thorough as we engage in practices of the self such as reading, writing, listening to advice, examining ourselves, and meditating. The goal of these practices is to reach a level of self-control that will allow us to manage the flow of truths that we experience. The idea is to free ourselves from the truths which seek to define us through knowledge and rather link ourselves to truth by deciding for ourselves what is true. In caring for ourselves through spiritual practice, we create the truth about ourselves rather than having this truth imposed on us from structures of knowledge beyond our control.

So we have clarified the distinction between the concept of truth in caring for and in knowing oneself. As we have seen, under the philosophical model of truth, the subject merely uncovers the eternal, static truth. We should conclude by noting Foucault's argument that this model of truth which strives for objective certainty has no purpose other than initiating an indefinite trend of progress and accuracy. Surely, then, this process does not improve one's spiritual well-being. In accessing the truth this way, one is not transformed or enlightened, and one merely contributes to "the institutional accumulation of bodies of knowledge" (HS 19). Within such a framework, Foucault claims, "the truth cannot save the subject." In the culture of care, however, he believes "the truth can transfigure and save the subject" insofar as it improves one's spiritual well-being (HS 19). Foucault does not explain exactly how this is possible. How can the truth save the subject? I will proceed to argue that a nuanced description about truth would be that it is the recognition of the lack and impossibility of access to an eternal and static truth in the spiritual process of trying to access this truth that can save the subject. I believe this view is an extension of Foucault's work, something Foucault might have said if he carried his ideas further. I also believe that we see this process occur in the Socratic dialogues. Through this Socratic process, we constitute our own relation to the truth. This self-constituted relation enables the modern subject to save himself insofar as it allows him to explore and create new modes of being.

In my analysis of the care of the self in Socrates, I will emphasize the notion that one does not uncover knowledge within the structure of care—one can never know for sure; the best one can do is care for the truth. This image of care allows us to understand the creativity required to promote a new form of subjectivity which should enable us to create new modes of being. It is only when we admit that objective, absolute knowledge is impossible that we give ourselves the opportunity to explore and create different knowledges, different ways of experiencing the truth, different modes of existence. And these, after all, are the ways Foucault believes the modern subject can save himself.

B. The "Care of the Self" and the "Know Thyself" in Plato

We examined Foucault's two interpretations of care and concluded that treating care as a spiritual means for accessing the truth may help us fulfill Foucault's project of 'promoting new subjectivities.' For this project, it is essential that truth not be static, innate or eternal. One must be able to constitute his own relation to the truth if he is to create a new mode of subjectivity for himself. We see this kind of truth manifested in the care of the self propounded and practiced by Socrates in the early Socratic dialogues. While the care of the self is clearly present in the Socratic dialogues, it becomes deemphasized in Plato's middle dialogues. Here, where Plato tries to explain and understand the life of the figure he had recorded in his early dialogues, we see the emergence and the privileging of the 'know thyself.'

In my analysis, I read the Socratic dialogues as fiction, but as a fiction written by Plato, who was trying to give an account of the life of Socrates. I assume that Plato himself does not completely understand the Socratic way of life and the figure of

Socrates. In fact, I will attempt to show that we can read his middle dialogues (such as the *Phaedo*) as attempts to rationalize and understand the figure of Socrates we find in the Socratic dialogues. Insofar as Plato tries to provide definitive answers to the question Socrates left open during his life, I argue that Plato misses the message Socrates tried to convey—that these kind of truths are inaccessible. The middle dialogues, therefore, yield an incorrect view of the Socrates of the early dialogues. Thus, in the context of the previous section, what I hope to show is the presence of two concepts of truth in the Platonic corpus (the two concepts of truth Foucault has depicted).

In order to do this, I will look at the *Apology, Crito* and *Phaedo*. The *Apology* is where Socrates truly made himself a paradox: why does he seem so indifferent to death? Why is he willing to die? Socrates starts to explain this in the *Apology* and does so more in the *Crito*. We will see that he is indifferent to death because his 'human wisdom' precludes him from knowing whether death is good or bad. Socrates' attitude towards death shows us that he really does not know what he claims not to know in his other dialogues and therefore that these other dialogues are explorations of truth in the consequence of this impossibility of absolute, objective knowledge.

I read the *Phaedo* as Plato's attempt to understand Socrates' attitude toward death. Insofar as his attempt fails, Plato is the first philosopher to take up Socrates in the wrong way—to misunderstand him and his way of life. Plato's misinterpretation and appropriation of Socrates under the umbrella of the 'know thyself' is part of the reason the philosophical canon has lost touch with the idea of truth as a self-creative process. The reason we forget about the significance and meaning of the care of the self and the concept of truth in the Socratic dialogues is because Plato, in his middle dialogues, appropriates it as a process to get to pure truth. The point of the present exploration of the Platonic dialogues is to rescue this oft-ignored practice of care from the figure of Socrates.

I. Death, Care and Knowledge in the *Apology*

We shall start the exploration with the *Apology*, where we find Socrates facing charges for corrupting the youth of Athens and not believing in the gods. The *Apology* stands out from other Socratic dialogues because it presents itself as a close record of Socrates' actual defense in court in which Socrates explains the practices and questioning he engages in elsewhere. Socrates begins his defense by explaining why he has gotten an ill reputation. He argues that it is not because he goes around charging fees in exchange for teaching virtue. This is what the sophists do, and, though he admires the knowledge they must have in order to be able to teach virtue, he does not claim to have it.[13] Socrates admits that he would "pride and preen" himself if he had this knowledge, but, he states, "I do not have it, gentlemen" (20b-c).[14] So if Socrates has not acquired his reputation for charging fees in exchange for teaching virtue, then what exactly has he done to earn such a reputation? His answer is that it is not the divine wisdom which is required of the teacher of virtue that has caused him to be slandered, but rather, his 'human wisdom.' Thus Socrates states:

> What has caused my reputation is none other than a certain kind of wisdom. What kind of wisdom? Human wisdom, perhaps. It may be that I really possess this, while those whom I mentioned just now [sophists—those who teach wisdom] are wise with a wisdom more than human; else I cannot explain it, for I certainly do not possess it, and whoever says I do is lying and speaks to slander me (20d-e).

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[13] My ultimate thesis about Socrates is that he does not think such knowledge exists. We cannot prove this here, but it emerges in the *Lysis*. For now, all we can say is that Socrates does not think he has this kind of Knowledge (divine wisdom).

[14] This citation and all subsequent citations of the *Apology* are from: Plato, *Apology*, in *Five Dialogues*, 2nd Ed, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002).

What is this ‘human wisdom’ Socrates speaks of? Human wisdom is what guides Socrates’ decisions and opinions. This wisdom is obviously not the wisdom of the gods. It is not divine wisdom.

To begin to understand human wisdom, recall the story of Socrates’ friend Chaerephon, who asked the god at Delphi if any man was wiser than Socrates. The god replied that no man was wiser than Socrates. Upon hearing this, Socrates was surprised. After all, he states, “I am very conscious that I am not wise at all” (21b). He immediately sought to understand what the god meant and to test the oracle. He did so by going around and questioning people who were reputed to be wise in order to show the god that they were wiser than he. However, when he engages them in dialogue, he finds that each wise man “appeared wise to many people and especially to himself, but he was not” (21c). Socrates then “tried to show him [the ‘wise’ man] that he thought himself wise, but that he was not” (21d). This is what caused his ill reputation.

Reflecting upon these encounters, Socrates thought to himself: “I am wiser than this man; it is likely that neither of us knows anything worthwhile, but he thinks he knows something when he does not, whereas when I do not know, neither do I think I know; so I am likely to be wiser than he to this small extent, that I do not think I know what I do not know” (21d). This, for Socrates, is human wisdom. It is the awareness that one does not have absolute, objective knowledge—only the gods can have this. Without absolute, objective knowledge, one can never be sure his thoughts are true.

Socrates elaborates further on human wisdom. He explains that in each of his encounters with “wise” men,

> the bystanders thought that I myself possessed the wisdom that I proved that my interlocutor did not have. What is probable, gentlemen, is that in fact the god is wise and that his oracular response [to Chaerephon’s question] meant that human wisdom is worth little or nothing, and that when he says

> this man, Socrates, he is using my name as an example, as if he said: 'This man among you, mortals, is wisest who, like Socrates, understands that his wisdom is worthless' (23a-b).

Again, Socrates stresses that he has human wisdom, which is not the wisdom of the gods. Furthermore, Socrates interprets the god's message to mean that the wisdom of humans in general 'is worthless.' That it, it is unlikely that any man has a wisdom that gives him access to divine truth. Thus, though Socrates' followers think he is wise, Socrates does not think he has the divine wisdom they grant him. Rather, it is 'probable' that 'the god is wise.' Human wisdom pales in comparison to divine wisdom. A wise human realizes his wisdom is 'worthless' and Socrates believes he is only an example among many humans who possess or may acquire human wisdom. So human wisdom is a deference to absolute knowledge—one can never have it, or else one would be a god.

Now that we have a preliminary sense of how Socrates spent his life in Athens, how he went around questioning people and how he claimed not to actually know anything, his surprisingly indifferent attitude towards his impending death—the attitude that has made Socrates such a paradox for many readers—becomes clear. To be indifferent to death is merely to act consistently with the principles that guide his life. It is almost as if Socrates' entire life leads up to the ultimate question of death and because he claims to know nothing for sure (other than the fact that he does not know), he must be indifferent to death because he cannot claim to know for sure whether it is good or bad. To take a side in the issue would be tantamount to claiming knowledge that only the gods can have.

From the beginning of his defense, we see a malaise in Socrates towards the juridical proceedings, even though he knows his life may be on the line. He acknowledges that it will be very hard for him to change the negative opinions of the jurors, and it appears that the only reason he makes a defense is in dedication to the law. If he had it his way, he would not even try to defend himself. He states:

> Very well then, men of Athens. I must surely defend myself and attempt to uproot from your minds in so short a time the slander that has resided there so long. I wish this may happen, if it is in any way better for you and me, and that my defense may be successful, but I think this is very difficult and I am fully aware of how difficult it is. Even so, let the matter proceed as the god may wish, but I must obey the law and make my defense (19a).

Socrates tells us that he ‘must obey the law’ and defend himself, implying that if it were not for the law, he would not defend himself. Socrates makes sure we know that he only hopes his defense is successful (that he is acquitted) if ‘it is in any way better for you and me.’ He would rather die than go on living if it would be better for Athens. Socrates firmly believes that a man who is any good at all should not take into account the risk of life or death when choosing a course of action (28b). One should go through life only with a concern for what is good, and one should disregard whether this may lead to death. Thus, Socrates “will not yield to any man contrary to what is right, for fear of death, even if [he] should die at once for not yielding” (32a).

Throughout his life, Socrates has not given thought to death and has only done what he deemed good and just. Now, however, in the *Apology*, he comes face to face with his own death and must consider it philosophically. We see that, both ethically (practically) and theoretically, Socrates is indifferent towards death. According to what he says elsewhere about knowledge (that he knows he does not have it), he cannot claim to know whether death is good or bad, and if he does not know this, he cannot fear death (if it were bad), nor desire it (if it were good).

In his defense, he nicely ties together the ideas that guide his life with his attitude toward death:

> To fear death, gentlemen, is no other than to think oneself wise when one is not, to think one knows what one does not know. No one knows whether death may not be the greatest of all blessings for a

> man, yet men fear it as if they knew that it is the greatest of evils. And surely it is the most blameworthy ignorance to believe that one knows what one does not know. It is perhaps on this point and in this respect, gentlemen, that I differ from the majority of men, and if I were to claim that I am wiser than anyone in anything, it would be in this, that, as I have no adequate knowledge of things in the underworld, so I do not think I have (29a-b).

When Socrates is faced with death, his theory of knowledge is forced out of him most explicitly. Based on the principles he has lived by, he is forced to say that he cannot fear death; he must be indifferent to it because to pick a side would be to claim that he knows whether death is good or bad, which only the gods can know. We return here to 'human wisdom,' which occurs in he who realizes that only the gods have absolute, objective knowledge and that human knowledge is inadequate and incomplete. A human is wise who realizes his knowledge is not objectively and eternally true. It may be a leap, but I think this 'human wisdom' resists what will come to be the theory of the Forms and the theory that knowledge exists through recollection of those Forms. For Socrates, knowledge is not innate (as it is for the theorizer of the Forms). It is almost as if Socrates is saying throughout the *Apology* that the only knowledge we have is the knowledge we know we lack. There is no innate knowledge within us about death; the only knowledge we can have is that we do not know its (death's) nature.

II. Death, Care and Knowledge in the *Crito*

In the *Crito*, we get a similar image of Socrates vis-à-vis death. Upon visiting Socrates' cell, Crito finds him "so peacefully asleep" (43b).[15] Once Socrates awakens, Crito admits that he has always admired Socrates' way of life, and especially so now that he bears his "present misfortune so easily and lightly" (43b). Why does Socrates appear so calm? Why is he willing to die? In the *Apology*, Socrates' defense failed and he was sentenced to death. He could have proposed a different punishment, but he decided that he would rather die than stop caring for the souls of others (by questioning them). Once he was sentenced to death, he could not propose a different punishment because anything else would prevent him from doing good. Further, he would be acting with an eye to death rather than the good (which he says a wise man should never do). Since he thinks the care of the self, which he urges others to practice, provides the greatest good for humans, he thinks he should be rewarded rather than punished for his behavior. Now (in the *Crito*) that Socrates has received and accepted the death penalty, we get a further explanation for his continued willingness to die, for his decision to await death rather than escape. Through this explanation, we see that not only is knowledge of death impossible, but so too is a priori knowledge of what to do in any given situation. Just as we cannot know for sure whether death is good or bad, neither can we know if the decisions we make in the face of it are right or wrong. This explanation reaffirms the idea in the *Apology* that divine truth is out of the reach of humans.

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[15] This citation and all subsequent citations of the *Crito* are from: Plato, *Crito*, in *Five Dialogues*, 2nd Ed, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002).

Socrates decides to examine his course of action together with Crito, who has voiced opposition to Socrates' unwillingness to accept his help to escape. Socrates is, of course, more than willing to question himself about his decision to await his death instead of escaping because he does not know for sure whether he is doing the right thing. He, along with Crito, "must therefore examine whether we should act in this way or not, as not only now but at all times I am the kind of man who listens to nothing within me but the argument that on reflection seems best to me" (46b). Socrates does not know within himself whether his decision is right, and he never will. In order make the best decision, he must reflect, listen to others and question himself. There is no secret within Socrates' soul that allows him to make the best decision. He does not have innate knowledge of the Forms, whose logic necessitates the immortality of the soul. His knowledge of the good does not come from knowing himself—from knowing anything that was and is always present in him. In determining the good, he ‘listens to nothing within’ himself, but rather the argument that makes the most sense. Reflecting on various arguments and questioning oneself is the manifestation of the care for the self.

Socrates’ reflection in the *Crito* is guided by the idea that “the most important thing is not life, but the good life” (48b). Remember Socrates’ claim from the *Apology*: “I will not yield to any man contrary to what is right, for fear of death, even if I should die at once for not yielding” (*Apology* 32a). In the case of the *Crito*, it is in fact in the direct face of death that he thinks he does good. By not escaping, he upholds the sanctity of the law. Although condemned wrongly by his fellow citizens, Socrates cannot respond with a wrong. Here, he is only thinking of the good. Given the fact that he accepted his death sentence in court, it would be wrong to undermine the laws that imposed the penalty.

So when Socrates imagines confronting the laws that he has made an agreement to live by, he can only maintain this agreement if he wants to live the good life. If he escaped, he would undermine the laws, not only for himself, but for the entire city of Athens. To demonstrate the harm Socrates would cause Athens if he escapes, he asks himself, in the voice and from the perspective of the laws: “Do you think you have this right to retaliation against your country and its laws?” (51a). The laws give him two alternatives: “either to persuade us or to do what we say,” they say (52a). Socrates decided not to persuade the laws in court, and if he tries to escape, nor will he do what the laws say. Hence, if Socrates tried to escape now, the laws would have this to say to him:

> at your trial you could have assessed your penalty at exile if you wished, and you are now attempting to do against the city's wishes what you could then have done with her consent. Then you prided yourself that you did not resent death, but you chose, as you said, death in preference to exile. Now however, those words do not make you ashamed, and you pay no heed to us, the laws, as you plan to destroy us (52c).

So Socrates will be "a destroyer of the laws" if he chooses to escape (53b). Even worse, "anyone who destroys the laws could easily be thought to corrupt the young and the ignorant" (53c).

We get the sense that Socrates is willing to die because he must. He does not make the decision out of knowledge he carries in his soul. He does not merely accept his death yet remain indifferent because he expects to be rewarded in the afterlife. He knows that, given his previous claims and actions, death is the only option in this situation. He can either die or be a destroyer of the laws. And if he is a destroyer of the laws, then he proves that he does, in fact deserve to be punished. After all, anyone who destroys the laws could be considered a corrupter of youths, which is just what Socrates was brought to trial for.

So it is death that Socrates chooses in favor of escape, and he wishes to "act in this way, since this is the way the god is leading us" (54e). This god possesses complete wisdom, which no human can attain. This god is 'leading' Socrates and Crito towards the realization that death is the best option, but it remains an open question. We have no definite answer to the problem. Socrates will never know for sure whether he has made the right decision. After all, death might turn out to be suffering. It is because one cannot know whether death is good or bad that one must act without focusing on death. It is only once Socrates is sentenced to death that he actually thinks about death on its own terms, and even then, he claims that neither he nor any other human can know whether it is good or bad. He does not even know whether the route he decides to take with respect to his impending death is good. The important thing to take away from the *Crito* is not the nature of the route Socrates takes with respect to death, but the fact that he acknowledges that he cannot be completely sure his route is the right one.

So we have seen that, in the *Apology* and the *Crito,* truth is cast not as a pure, eternally static entity, but as something humans can only approach through reasoned exploration. Here, the truth does not exist for us to uncover. Rather, we explore possibilities for truth and create the truth about ourselves in the process. Within this framework, the truth is related to the individual as a product of his care rather than an object of his knowledge. These two dialogues suggest that one does not know the absolute, objective truth about death or virtue, nor about the hidden nature of his soul. One cannot even be sure if such knowledge exists, and if it does exist, one would have to be a god to comprehend it. The best we can do then, in our pursuit of knowledge, is try to make sense of our lives through clear and reasoned self-reflection, questioning and argumentation. While this kind of access to the truth gives us a direct role in the development of truth, the trouble with this method, which Plato was unwilling to accept, is that it does not give definite answers. In the *Phaedo,* Plato tries to answer some of the questions Socrates left open during his life. Plato thinks there must be some pure, everlasting truth buried within the soul of Socrates, the man who lived such an exemplary life, the man who, if anyone knew the truth, would be the one to know. Through Plato’s attempt to comprehend these unanswered questions, the notion of caring for the truth and the self is superseded by the notion of knowing the truth and the self. In the *Phaedo,* Plato portrays Socrates on a mission to uncover the truth of death and the soul. This will allow Socrates to give a definitive explanation to his friends about why he is indifferent to death.

III. The Emergence of the "Know Thyself" in the *Phaedo*

The *Phaedo* is the third and final dialogue in this cycle. What we have gotten so far in the *Apology* and the *Crito* are explanations by Socrates regarding his chosen course of action and his attitude towards death. As Socratic dialogues, the *Apology* and the *Crito* are considered to be realistic accounts of Socrates' life. They do not reflect Plato's philosophical views, but rather convey the Socratic way of life in itself. The *Phaedo* is one of Plato's "middle" dialogues, and it recounts Socrates' last day. Though this suggests that, like the *Apology*, Plato is transcribing an actual event in Socrates' life, Plato gives multiple hints that this is not the case. For one, it is not Socrates who is narrating, but rather, Phaedo, one of Socrates' friends who was at the prison with him on his last day. Additionally, Phaedo notes that Plato was not there (he was ill) (59b).[16] Furthermore, the style of the dialogue is noticeably different from the Socratic dialogues. Whereas in the latter, Socrates engages his interlocutors in the famous elenchus, questioning them and trying to understand what they claim to know, here Socrates proposes hypotheses, makes positive arguments, and sounds more like a teacher than a learner (as he presents himself in the Socratic dialogues). As in the *Apology* and the *Crito*, Socrates gives an account to his followers of his attitude towards death. But here in the *Phaedo*, based on its style (as described above), it seems that the account we get is

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[16] This citation and all subsequent citations of the *Phaedo* are from: Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Five Dialogues*, 2nd Ed, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002).

Plato's attempt to rationalize Socrates' life, or at least to understand it better. Thus, the *Phaedo* is not an exploration of truth in the absence of a definitive truth. Rather, it does everything it can to show that such a definitive truth exists. This does not mean that Socrates claims to have such knowledge, but only that he acts as if there is some pure, eternal truth to be known.

As in the *Apology* and *Crito*, Socrates is calm in the face of his impending death—Phaedo recalls that he "appeared happy in both manner and words as he died nobly and without fear" (58e)—and the goal of the dialogue is to explain why he can feel so. The explanation is initiated by Socrates, who tells his friends that "every man who partakes worthily of philosophy" will follow the path that leads to death willingly (61c). How is this the case? How can Socrates make such a claim? That is the subject of the dialogue which follows. And it is this subject that Socrates claims he will try to make to his friends "more convincing than it was to the jury" (63b). This is a reference to the jury Socrates faced in the *Apology*. It may be that Plato is indicating that Socrates' arguments about death were not clear in his defense; or maybe that Socrates simply did not make sense at that time. Either way, we get the sense that in the *Phaedo*, Plato is trying to give a better answer as to why one can be calm in the face of death.

Schematically, that answer or explanation, coming from the mouth of Socrates, is as follows:

> I should be wrong not to resent dying if I did not believe that I should go first to other wise and good gods, and then to men who have died and are better than men are here. Be assured that, as it is, I expect to join the company of good men. This last I would not altogether insist on,[17] but if I insist on anything at all in these matters, it is that I shall come to gods who are very good masters. That is why I am not so resentful, because I have good hope that some future awaits men after death, as we have been told for years, a much better future for the good than for the wicked (63b-c).

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[17] cf. 108d-e: Socrates cannot be totally sure that his views about the physical world are true.

This explanation conflicts with what Socrates said in the *Apology*, where he said he was indifferent to death because he did not know whether it was good or bad (cf. *Apology* 29a, 37b, 42a). To take a side and either fear death or be positively happy about dying would be equivalent to claiming knowledge one way or the other (death as bad or good). Here he posits that he does not 'resent' death because he thinks it leads to an afterlife wherein the one who has lived a good, philosophical life comes in direct contact with the gods. The rest of the dialogue, in fact, is an attempt to explain the theoretical underpinning of the immortality of the soul and the necessity of an afterlife.

It is in fact the nature of the Forms that convinces Plato the soul is immortal. These forms, such as the Beautiful, the Good, the Equal, etc., exist for eternity and underlie all of our experiences. They are, in fact, what makes our experience of, say, 'equal' things appear to be similar. Without an a priori notion of the Equal, we would not be able to see things as equivalent. Thus, Socrates states, we must "possess knowledge of the Equal before that time when we first saw the equal objects" (74e). And also: "Then before we began to see or hear or otherwise perceive, we must have possessed knowledge of the Equal itself if we were about to refer our sense perceptions of equal objects to it" (75b). For Socrates, we learn about these Forms through "the recovery of our own knowledge, and we are right to call this recollection" (75e). We all have knowledge of the Forms within us even before birth. It is our soul that has this knowledge and comes into contact with the Forms, and just like the purity of the Forms, the philosophical soul is also pure. Since the pure cannot admit of the impure, and since death is impure, it follows for Plato that the soul must persist in purity for eternity (just like the Forms). It is thus that Socrates posits the soul is immortal. While in the *Apology*, Socrates possessed ‘human wisdom,’ here he is granted what he would call divine wisdom—at least to the extent that he thinks there is some divine knowledge that he can eventually know. Socrates’ attempt to explain and understand divine phenomena is something we did not see in either the *Apology* or the *Crito*.

Now that Socrates believes the soul is immortal, the purpose of care becomes oriented toward death and not life. Thus, Socrates states, “the one aim of those who practice philosophy in the proper manner is to practice for dying and death” (64a). It is in order to purify one’s soul so it easily escapes the physical, material world that one cares for oneself. So Plato redirects Socrates’ outlook away from life and towards death. For Plato, it must be that Socrates propounded the care of the self because he knew it would benefit one’s soul after death. It is for this reason that Plato attempts to rationalize the care of the self as a practice that will lead to rewards in the afterlife. That is, one cares for his soul in order to reap benefits after his death. Now that an element of the soul is fixed and immortal, we can think about how to preserve it as such. It is no longer a human self that we have to care for, but a divine soul.

Plato believes that the person “who has not practiced philosophy and is not completely pure when he departs from life” will not join the company of the gods (82b-c). Since bodily desires and pleasures taint the soul, “those who practice philosophy in the right way keep away from all bodily passions, master them and do not surrender themselves to them” (82c). Only the souls of those who avoid bodily passions will enjoy an afterlife. Plato claims that it is those “who care for their own soul and do not live for the service of their body” that will enjoy an afterlife (82d).

So the care for the self (soul) is in service not of this life, but of the afterlife: “if the soul is immortal, it requires our care not only for the time we call our life, but for the sake of all time” and “one is in terrible danger if one does not give it that care” (107c). One’s constant concern, or care, is to avoid every pain and pleasure, to avoid bodily sensation and physical perception, because the worst thing that can happen is that the soul “believes that truth is what the body says it is” (83d). If one is distracted too much by the physical, material world, he begins to believe that world is true and forgets about the pure truth of rationality and the pureness of the Forms. His soul becomes heavy, corporeal and attached to the physical world, and therefore, it has trouble leaving this world upon death.

We have seen that Plato has rationalized the Socratic care of the self under the rubric of the afterlife. This move requires that we believe the soul is immortal and believe that knowledge is pure and unchanging. For Plato, it is only through knowing the pure truth that one can care for oneself. In other words, it is only by knowing oneself (one’s true nature) that one can care for oneself. For the Socrates of the Socratic dialogues, the very nature of care involved the realization that one does not know the truth. It is only when one is willing to acknowledge this that one can begin to care for himself. This care of the self which makes up the Socratic way of life is lost by the Plato of the middle dialogues. We no longer open ourselves to questioning, nor do we accept the possibility of thinking of ourselves differently than we do presently. Rather, we search inside ourselves in order to uncover the hidden knowledge that eternally belongs to us. We attempt to know ourselves because in doing so, we will know the truth, and if we know the truth, our souls will experience an enjoyable afterlife in the presence of the gods. For a further elaboration of the model of truth present in the *Phaedo*, we should continue our analysis of Plato's ideas about death and the nature of the soul.

As we have seen, Plato understands death as the separation of the soul from the body. The person who has lived his life free of bodily desires and concerns about the material world will have the purest soul. It is for this reason that Plato associates the body with confusion and the soul with truth. True philosophers, he believes, would think:

> 'There is likely to be something such as a path to guide us out of our confusion, because so long as we have a body and our soul is fused with such an evil we shall never adequately attain what we desire, which we affirm to be the truth. The body keeps us busy in a thousand ways because of its need for nurture…It fills us with wants, desires, fears, and all sorts of illusions and much nonsense, so that, as it is said, in truth and in fact, no thought of any kind ever comes to us from the body' (66b-d).

The fact that we cannot acquire truth in bodily life convinces Plato that there must be a pure truth underlying physical appearances. Plato's claim, then, is that there is an underlying reality to the world of experience that we know is there, but that we cannot perceive correctly because we are embodied. It seems that the only way for there to be pure, unadulterated 'truth' is if the soul can think independently of the body.

So Plato imbues truth with a sense of purity. "While we live, we shall be closest to knowledge if we refrain as much as possible from association with the body" (67a). It is by escaping "the contamination of the body's folly" that we shall, by our own efforts, "know all that is pure, which is presumably the truth, for it is not permitted to the impure to attain the pure" (67a). Plato proves the necessity of such a truth purely through rational argumentation, and it is only through pure rationality that such 'pure' truth can be attained. This pure truth is that which underlies all of our confusing experience. If we think hard enough and detach ourselves from our bodies, we may access the pure truth, which is unchanging, which precedes us and defines us, and which exists innately within us.

From the idea that there is a pure truth follows the notion that the truth is a thing in itself, apart from our immediate experience and independent of our practice. Thus, Plato has Socrates state: “It really has been shown to us that, if we are ever to have pure knowledge, we must escape from the body and observe things in themselves with the soul by itself” (66d-e). So with Plato, there arises the feeling of alienation and estrangement from the sensible world, from this world. What we see is not all there is. Rather, there is something that exists in itself, apart from our immediate, bodily experience of it. This ‘thing in itself’ is observable only by the soul itself. The soul, which is the divine component of humans, which precedes and outlasts our bodily life, is our only point of access to the truth. Inevitably, the truth becomes only that which exists for eternity and in an unchanging state. The truth does not depend on us; rather, it precedes us and defines us, before we have a chance to question it. The search for and creation of truth is no longer an exercise in thought (as it was for Socrates), but an uncovering of knowledge that defines us and our experiences even before birth.

Thus, wisdom is no longer of the ‘human’ type that it was in the *Apology*. Rather, wisdom is only such to the extent that it is divine. Since the soul is the part of us that is divine and immortal, it is the soul by itself that can be wise and access the truth. Hence:

> when the soul investigates by itself [apart from the body] it passes into the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging, and being akin to this, it always stays with it whenever it is by itself and can do so; it ceases to stray and remains in the same state as it is in touch with things of the same kind, and its experience then is what is called wisdom (79d).

Here it is affirmed that the truth is ever existing, unchanging and pure. It takes asceticism to reach this pure truth; one must ignore all the sensations of the body. This is not, however, the same asceticism we should capture from Socrates (through Foucault). Plato's asceticism is an exercise in thought that allows us to know ourselves as we are (innately), rather than the Socratic exercise, which allows us to know ourselves differently, through care. One is able to change his perception of himself as wise or unwise, virtuous or evil, if he cares about whether he actually appears as such (both to himself and to others). The truth one searches for through caring is different than the knowledge one acquires through Plato's asceticism (knowing oneself, recollecting the innate knowledge within oneself). For Socrates, the knowledge that one may not be as wise as one thinks transforms the individual. One develops a new relation to truth and becomes a different person than one was before. However, for Plato, knowledge acquired through recollection of the Forms, which exist in our immortal souls, serves to define us and our experiences. We do not become something different than we were before we recollected, but rather, our recollection serves to define us in our self-sameness to what we were before, in our innate and unchanging nature.

The difference between these two kinds of truth corresponds to the two models of truth Foucault depicts. Aligning with the Socratic model is the care of the self; aligning with the Platonic model is the know thyself. In order to elaborate on the presence and character of the care of the self in Socrates, I will embark on an analysis of the *Lysis*. While in the *Phaedo*, Plato overtly tries to prove the existence of a pure, unchanging, immortal truth, Socrates insinuates in the *Lysis* that such a truth does not exist. Ultimately, we will see how the Socratic relation to truth apparent in the *Lysis* grounds the possibility for exploring and creating new modes of being.

C. Care as the Exploration and Creation of Truth and Being

With the interpretative cycle of the *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*, we have seen how the theme of death is important for understanding Socrates' way of life (and the care of the self). It is Socrates' indifference to death that opens up a window for us to explore the individual's relation to truth in the Socratic dialogues. That Socrates claims not to know anything about death, and that he lives by this claim, reveals his underlying beliefs about the individual's relation to truth and the possibility for knowledge. It is from this point of departure that we can read other Socratic dialogues as exercises in the consequence of the impossibility of (representational, objective) knowledge. In short, Socrates' attitude towards death shows us that he really does not know what he claims not to know and that his other dialogues are explorations of truth in the absence of a definitive truth.

Let us take, for example, Socrates' discussion of the nature of piety with Euthyphro. While he appears to be trying to come to a definitive conclusion, a true definition of piety, he actually just toys with Euthyphro throughout the interlocution. Euthyphro claims to know what piety is, and Socrates wants to find out what Euthyphro claims to know, but Euthyphro cannot seem to be able to fulfill his promise. So when Euthyphro says, "I have no way of telling you [Socrates] what I have in mind, for whatever proposition we put forward goes around and refuses to stay put where we establish it" (11b),[18] it is not only the case that Socrates proves to us that Euthyphro does not know what he claims to know. More significantly, he shows us that no one can really know, and that all attempts to do so necessarily go around in circles. These attempts, or explorations of truth, therefore, do not get any closer to the truth.

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[18] This citation and all subsequent citations of the *Euthyphro* are from: Plato, *Euthyphro*, in *Five Dialogues*, 2nd Ed, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002).

This does not mean that the interlocutor knows from the beginning that he is engaging in a futile attempt to uncover objective knowledge or come up with a definitive truth statement. It is only once Socrates takes him around in circles that he can come to this realization. That is, neither the reader nor the interlocutor actually cares for himself in the midst of the dialogue—rather, Socrates is caring for us/his interlocutors in the hope that, by the end, we will be able to care for ourselves. So at the end of the *Euthyphro*, when we find that "we must investigate from the beginning what piety is" because our failed attempts at defining it have led us back to the argument we began with (15c), Socrates hopes not that a clear definition of piety will eventually come to fruition, but that we will eventually become conscious of the fact that such a solution, such knowledge, is impossible to attain (and for our purposes, does not exist).

The *Euthyphro* is only one instance of this process by which Socrates explores different possibilities for truth. In many of his dialogues, he discusses a term or concept with his interlocutors and demonstrates that there is no clear way to pin down its meaning. Particularly interesting and significant for its practical applications is his exploration of the cause and meaning of friendship in the *Lysis*. Socrates is prompted to explore such an issue because two adolescents, Lysis and Menexenus, make the truth claim that they are the best of friends (207c).[19] Of course, Socrates wants to test this truth claim. How can one know for sure if he is in a friendship with another? If one is to prove this truth claim, he must understand exactly what friendship is.

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[19] This citation and all subsequent citations of the *Lysis* are from: Plato, *Lysis*, in *Complete Works*, trans. Stanley Lombardo, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

It is the topic of friendship that Socrates explores with Lysis and Menexenus. As usual, Socrates takes Lysis and Menexenus around in circles. To begin, he admits that he wishes to have a true friend, and he thinks it ‘wonderful’ that Lysis and Menexenus have been able to “acquire this possession so quickly and easily” at a young age (212a). Socrates admits that he is “so far from having this possession that I don’t even know how one person becomes the friend of another,” and this is what he wants to question Menexenus about, because Menexenus claims to “have experience of it” (212a). Once again, Socrates claims to lack knowledge. What I have been suggesting is that he actually does lack this knowledge, but our interpretation should not stop there. It is not as simple as saying that Socrates does not know, yet he thinks he is wiser than his interlocutors, so that he intends to show they do not know either. Our understanding of Socrates’ lack of knowledge should be complemented with an analysis of the exploration he undertakes after claiming to lack such knowledge.

In the *Lysis*, just as in the *Euthyphro*, though Socrates ostensibly aims to uncover an immortal, pure truth, we never arrive at such truth. In fact, by the end of our exploration, we are no closer to the truth than when we started. Whenever we think we have found the truth, the truth escapes us, and our opinions constantly change in response to these failures. Socrates starts out the exploration in the *Lysis* by wondering whether there is a difference between the friend who loves and the one who is loved (212b). If one person loves another, then is he friends with the person he loves? Menexenus thinks so. But he goes on to admit that it is possible for the lover not to be loved in return, which implies that when both people do not love each other, then neither is friend with the other (212b-c). So, Socrates points out, “our opinion now is different from what it was before. First we thought that if one person loved another, they were both friends. But now, unless they both love each other, neither is a friend" (212c).

And what, Socrates asks, of someone who loves wisdom? Can one be a lover of wisdom without wisdom loving him back? If so, we find that our previous understanding of friendship was wrong (212e). Sometimes, however, it still seems that our initial statement was correct, that the lover is the friend of the loved. For example, babies, Socrates says, are too young to love, but not too young to hate. The baby can be angry at his loving parents for disciplining him, even though we would usually consider parents to be the dearest friends of their children (213a). Unfortunately, this example forces us to revert to our previous statement, which we proved wrong, that one can be a friend of a non-friend. To complicate things further, our original statement implies that one can be a friend of an enemy, which does not make any sense. So basically, our exploration has thus far shown us that "friends are not those who love, nor those who are loved, nor those who love and are loved" (213c). It is therefore possible, Socrates thinks, that "we may have been going about our inquiry in entirely the wrong way" (213d). We must search elsewhere for an understanding of friendship.

Maybe we should not be talking about those who love; maybe those who are like each other become friends. According to this understanding, those who are wicked would become friends to each other. However, the wicked are 'unstable' and 'out of kilter' and so are inconsistent with themselves. It would be unlikely that the wicked could be consistent in nature with someone else if they are not even consistent with themselves (214a-d). If bad people cannot be friendly, then maybe good people are friends with each other. So when we say that like are friends to like, it actually means that the good are friends to the good. At first, Socrates and Lysis are pleased with this understanding. “So now we’ve got it,” Socrates states, “We know what friends are.” However, it does not take long for Socrates to feel “a little uneasy with it” (214e). It does not seem that the like can be friend to the like because, being similar, each would have no use for the other, and therefore could not benefit each other, and friendship is not worth anything if we get no benefit from it.

Socrates next proves that the argument that opposites become friends is nonsensical as well (215e). So we have seen that “like is not friend to like, nor is opposite friend to opposite” and therefore decide to search elsewhere. Maybe it is the beautiful that becomes our friend (216a-b). Since the beautiful is good, our previous arguments (that neither like nor opposite are friends) force us to say that “only what is neither good nor bad is friend to the good, and only to the good” (217a).

With this statement, Socrates thinks he, Lysis and Menexenus have found the truth of friendship, especially because it is consistent with Socrates’ way of life. This statement maps onto Socrates’ views about wisdom. After all, he considers himself a lover of wisdom, and this formulation of friendship helps us understand what he means. From this statement about friendship, we can infer that

> those who are already wise no longer love wisdom, whether they are gods or men. Nor do those love it who are so ignorant that they are bad, for no bad and stupid man loves wisdom. There remain only those who have this bad thing, ignorance, but have not yet been made ignorant and stupid by it. They are conscious of not knowing what they don’t know. The upshot is that those who are as yet neither good nor bad love wisdom, while all the those who are bad do not, and neither do those who are good (218a).

One is only a friend of wisdom (the good) if he is neither wise nor ignorant (good nor bad). In other words, one who thinks he is wise does not seek to become wise, nor does one who fails to realize he is not wise. The only one who seeks wisdom is he who realizes he lacks it.

This understanding of knowledge pervades the Socratic dialogues. Socrates counts himself as one of those who knows he does not know—one of those with human wisdom. He has made the move to caring for himself because he realizes he lacks knowledge. The essential question for our purpose is whether he thinks it possible to acquire the pure truth in the future. We should realize that the above quote occurs at a crucial point in the dialogue. Socrates has just claimed to have found the unchanging, definitive truth about friendship, and he thinks that this truth is consistent with his way of life (the care of the self). If one can uncover such a truth through care, it seems that the purpose of care, the purpose of acknowledging your ignorance, is to begin to progress towards the truth. And indeed, Socrates thinks both his statement about wisdom (above) and his statement about friendship are true. For a minute, we think he is leading us towards the truth. Regarding friendship, he states, "Lysis and Menexenus, we have discovered for sure what is a friend and what it is friend to" (218b-c). This certainty about wisdom and friendship is short-lived, however.

A turning point follows in which Socrates realizes that the statement about friendship is not universally and permanently true. Socrates thinks, "Maybe what we had all agreed to wasn't true after all. What an awful thought." "Oh, no!" he screams out, "Lysis and Menexenus, our wealth has all been a dream!...I'm afraid we've fallen in with arguments about friendship that are no better than con artists" (218c-d). He goes on to explore the problems with this view. This realization of failure suggests that Socrates' confidence in the care of the self does not lie in its ability to lead us toward the truth, but rather in its ability to make us realize that our wisdom is not nor will ever be divine. His realization that the truth of friendship escaped him does not concomitantly falsify his statement about wisdom. Instead, it elucidates the fact that love of wisdom does not lead us to divine wisdom, but rather it causes us to respect wisdom, which leads us to question our own knowledge. Once we realize our wisdom will never be divine, we cannot be sure that our knowledge is eternally and absolutely true. Perhaps Socrates can know that he does not know, but any knowledge beyond that is guesswork. His 'human wisdom' precludes him from claiming that we are headed toward the truth. It also, however, precludes him from claiming that there is no definitive truth towards which we are headed.

I suggest, however, that the message we should take away from the *Lysis* is that the latter is true. We have seen Socrates and his interlocutors going about in circles around the theme of friendship. They do not make any progress towards understanding it. We see that when they think they have acquired the answer, it escapes them. Already, we have seen that this happens multiple times, and there are even more instances.

Near the end of the dialogue, we find that "We have fallen into the same arguments about friendship that we rejected at first" (222d). We find that we are back where we started; that we have made no progress towards an understanding of the true nature of friendship. "So," Socrates asks,

> what can we still do with our argument? Or is it clear that there is nothing left? I do ask, like the able speakers in the law courts, that you think over everything that has been said. If neither the loved nor the loving, nor the like nor the unlike, nor the good, nor the belonging, nor any of the others we have gone through—well, there have been so many *I* certainly don't remember them all any more, but if none of these is a friend, then I have nothing left to say (222e).

Socrates goes through all of the possibilities we have explored and finds there is nothing left to do. If none of the things we have explored has led us any closer to an understanding of friendship, then, Socrates says, he has ‘nothing left to say.’ All he wants to say is just what he has demonstrated, that there is no eternal truth of friendship to uncover. There is no true reason that people become friends. Here, the Socratic relation to truth emerges clearly. When Socrates indicates ‘there is nothing left’ to do, he dashes our hopes of attaining objective knowledge (or a definitive understanding of friendship). He has nothing left to do because he has done all he can do. He wants us to see that the exploration we have just engaged in was a demonstration intended to show us that eternal, unchanging truth is impossible to attain. The exploration was an exercise in thought intended to push us towards a new relation to truth—a relation in which we cease to uncover truths about the world and rather take responsibility for our own truth-creations.

Care, then, is the process by which we explore different possibilities for truth—it is an exploration of truth in the absence of a definitive truth. We have seen that we get no closer to the truth in this exploration. We therefore cannot argue that Socrates’ main purpose is to get Lysis and Menexenus to realize they do not know what they thought they knew so they can readjust their lives in accordance with the knowledge they acquire from caring. Socrates is not simply urging us to reflect on our truth claims and make them match up with our actions. Care is not intended to lead towards a pure truth that would make such harmony possible. Socrates is trying to show us that this harmonizing approach inevitably fails because we can never pin down exactly what it is we claim to be or what it is we claim to know.

Thus, the Socratic dialogues are attempts to get reader and interlocutor to adopt a new (spiritual) relation to truth. Through these Socratic conversations, we redevelop our relation to the truth. The hope is that we no longer view the truth as something that is static and eternal, but rather as something that we are responsible for; something that our thoughts and actions constitute; something that is a product of our care. Unfortunately, since Socrates spends all his time trying to get others to adopt this relation—i.e., he always cares for others—he has no time to show us what caring for oneself looks like. That is, Socrates never tells us what we can do with this new relation to truth. It seems, then, that we are left empty-handed. What exactly is this Socratic way of life good for? How can we benefit from adopting the Socratic relation to truth? Socrates seems to leave this question unanswered.

However, after reading or listening to Socrates, the first thing we should think of doing is exploring this question together. In doing so, we come inevitably back to Socrates. We realize that his genius lies in the fact that, through reading him and attempting to understand him, we become like him. He does not need to tell us to transform ourselves, nor does he need to give any ethical orders because he designed his life to intrigue us. Underneath all of his irony, humor and paradox was the attempt to get us to care about him, and caring about what he says leads us to care for ourselves. So when it seems that he abandons us just at the climax of our journey, we find that the solution lies in doing what we have been doing the whole time—questioning ourselves and exploring different possibilities for truth. Just when we realize that Socrates is telling us that definite and divine knowledge are impossible, and ask what we should do next (this is the climax, which occurs at the end of the *Lysis*), Socrates seems to abandon us—"I have nothing left to say," he says—he does not tell us what to do. However, the first thing we think of should be the care for the self and the elenchus. What do we do? We care for ourselves; we explore together to try to find the best solution for our problems. And the critical point is that these explorations have no definite solutions, but rather, it is us who create them—we devise the route they take.

What we should take away from the *Lysis* is not that each possible explanation of, say, friendship on this route may be correct, nor that each explanation is wrong and we are missing the true explanation, but rather the fact that we cannot understand the truth of friendship means there is no truth of friendship. While in the process of searching for the truth, we think there is one truth, but after a while, we should get the idea that this is not the case. Again, this does not mean that there are multiple answers for the truth of friendship. Rather, there are multiple possible paths our understanding of friendship can take. As we have learned from Socrates, the possibility for this exploration is predicated on a particular relation to truth. Within this framework, the truth is not something that exists in a pure, unchanging state that is objective and independent of us. Rather, this kind of truth is ignored, and a view takes over which places the individual at the locus of the creative process of truth.

It is true that this new relation to truth abandons the idea that truth is unchanging, immortal and objective, but this should not lead to fatalism. The realization that there is no objectively pure truth to uncover should not be stifling, but rather liberating. One does not have to worry about uncovering the pure truth and living his life according to this truth. Instead, as Socrates tells us in the *Laches*, since we are “all in the same difficulty” with respect to understanding the truth (of courage, in this case), then why “should anybody choose one of us in preference to another” to come up with a definitive understanding of courage? (200e-201a).[20] That is to say, since the dialogue has demonstrated that no one knows the pure truth, each of us can take authority over developing our own version of the truth. And this is the reason why we should care for truth. The absence of a definite, eternal and unchanging truth does not make our lives meaningless, but rather gives us the opportunity to create meaning ourselves.

Returning to Foucault, we can clarify the significance of this self-creation of truth in our modern context. The relation to truth Socrates wants us to adopt provides a framework for us to create the truth about ourselves rather than having it imposed by dominant structures of knowledge. With this Socratic relation to truth, the relation that Foucault calls 'spiritual,' we do not access the truth through objective or scientific knowledge. Instead, it is our own thought and action that gives us access to the truth. It is through our own thought that we constitute ourselves rather than through the thoughts others have established as 'true' for all time.

Conclusion

The main focus of this project has been to make the connection between the notion of spiritual truth Foucault depicts in his lectures on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* and the model of truth we can glean from the early Socratic dialogues. Foucault believes the model of spiritual truth can ground an alternative to the modern paradigm of subjectivity. The modern paradigm is based on a model of truth in which the truth is posed as something pure, unchanging and objective. A subject who finds himself with this relation to the truth is not free to constitute himself. Thinking that there is a pure truth to uncover about the world or oneself limits one's possibilities of action. The precept to know ourselves implies that there is an innate, static truth within our souls. Believing this is the case, we find ourselves trying to live up to what we think that truth is. This can take the form of anything from trying to uncover a true passion to trying to live as a true American, homosexual, friend, spouse, etc. In doing so, we think there is an eternal, static, objective truth that defines the behavior that should manifest each of these identities. Subjecting ourselves to this knowledge that does not depend on us is precisely the form of subjectivity that dominates modernity. Taking a look at the epigraph, it is this form of subjectivity, this form of individualization, which Foucault thinks we should move away from. We should not consider ourselves free individuals if our individuality consists in affirming truths about ourselves that we had no part in creating. To become truly free, self-constituted individuals, we have to develop a different kind of subjectivity that allows us to create the truth about ourselves.[21]

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[20] This citation and all subsequent citations of the *Laches* are from: Plato, *Laches*, in *Complete Works*, trans. Rosamond Kent Sprague, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

This new kind of subjectivity arises from the model of truth we find in Plato's early Socratic dialogues. Here we see that Socrates does not place himself as a subject of objective truth, but rather, he lives his life as if there were no objective or pure truth. In living this way and attempting to convince others to live this way, he believes he is caring for himself and for others. Here, care emerges as a way to relate to the truth that is different from the way the philosophical canon has generally thought of this relation. Even in Plato's other work, we see the domination of a view that poses the truth as an objective and pure entity to be uncovered in its selfsameness.

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[21] This is not a moral principle, and the goal of this paper has not been to promote a moral way of living, but rather to think about an alternate way of living.

There are, therefore two different kinds of relations of the self to truth in the work of Plato. Foucault's discussion of two models of truth (the care of the self and the know thyself), correspond to the two relationships of the self to truth in Plato. The relation of the self to truth presented in the Socratic care of the self provides the basis for a model of subjectivity that allows the subject to constitute the truth about himself. The Socratic way of life elucidates the possibilities that exist in a world in which there is no pure, static truth. These possibilities are explored when one 'cares' for the truth, and it is through this activity of care that we explore and create truths about ourselves and the world. Thus, through our interpretation of Socrates, we get a detailed understanding of the relation to truth that grounds Foucault's alternate mode of subjectivity. At the same time, realizing that the activity of care involves differentiation, creation and innovation, and noticing Socrates' warning at the end of the *Laches*—"What I don't advise," he states, "is that we remain as we are" (201a)—we find that Socrates is more interested in the process of becoming than the uncovering of the eternal truth of being.

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*Influenced the project, but not cited in the paper.