

The hermeneutics of the subject : lectures at the  
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one

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First hour

*Reminder of the general problematic: subjectivity and truth. ~ New theoretical point of departure: the care of the self. ~ Interpretations of the Delphic precept "know yourself." ~ Socrates as man of care of the self: analysis of three extracts from The Apology. ~ Care of the self as precept of ancient philosophical and moral life. ~ Care of the self in the first Christian texts. ~ Care of the self as general standpoint, relationship to the self and set of practices. ~ Reasons for the modern elimination of care of the self in favor of self-knowledge: modern morality; the Cartesian moment. ~ The Gnostic exception. ~ Philosophy and spirituality.*

THIS YEAR I THOUGHT of trying the following arrangements<sup>1</sup>: I will lecture for two hours, from 9:15 until 11:15, with a short break of a few minutes after an hour to allow you to rest, or to leave if you are bored, and also to give me a bit of a rest. As far as possible I will try nevertheless to vary the two hours. That is to say, in the first hour, or at any rate in one of the two hours, I will give a somewhat more, let's say, theoretical and general exposition, and then, in the other hour, I will present something more like a textual analysis with, of course, all the obstacles and drawbacks of this kind of approach due to the fact that we cannot supply you with the texts and do not know how many of you there will be, etcetera. Still, we can always try. If it does not work we will try to find another

method next year, or even this year. Does it bother you much to come at 9:15? No? It's okay? You are more fortunate than me, then.

Last year I tried to get a historical reflection underway on the theme of the relations between subjectivity and truth.<sup>2</sup> To study this problem I took as a privileged example, as a refracting surface if you like, the question of the regimen of sexual behavior and pleasures in Antiquity, the regimen of the *aphrodisia* you recall, as it appeared and was defined in the first two centuries A.D.<sup>3</sup> It seemed to me that one of the interesting dimensions of this regimen was that the basic framework of modern European sexual morality was to be found in this regimen of the *aphrodisia*, rather than in so-called Christian morality, or worse, in so-called Judeo-Christian morality.<sup>4</sup> This year I would like to step back a bit from this precise example, and from the sexual material concerning the *aphrodisia* and sexual behavior, and extract from it the more general terms of the problem of "the subject and truth." More precisely, while I do not want in any way to eliminate or nullify the historical dimension in which I tried to situate this problem of subjectivity/truth relations, I would, however, like to present it in a much more general form. The question I would like to take up this year is this: In what historical form do the relations between the "subject" and "truth," elements that do not usually fall within the historian's practice or analysis, take shape in the West?

So, to start with I would like to take up a notion about which I think I said a few words last year.<sup>5</sup> This is the notion of "care of oneself." This is the best translation I can offer for a very complex, rich, and frequently employed Greek notion which had a long life throughout Greek culture: the notion of *epimeleia heautou*, translated into Latin with, of course, all the flattening of meaning which has so often been denounced or, at any rate, pointed out,<sup>6</sup> as *cura sui*.<sup>7</sup> *Epimeleia heautou* is care of oneself, attending to oneself, being concerned about oneself, etcetera. You will no doubt say that in order to study the relations between the subject and truth it is a bit paradoxical and rather artificial to select this notion of *epimeleia heautou*, to which the historiography of philosophy has not attached much importance hitherto. It is somewhat paradoxical and artificial to select this notion when everyone knows, says, and repeats, and has done

so for a long time, that the question of the subject (the question of knowledge of the subject, of the subject's knowledge of himself) was originally posed in a very different expression and a very different precept: the famous Delphic prescription of *gnōthi seauton* ("know yourself").<sup>8</sup> So, when everything in the history of philosophy—and more broadly in the history of Western thought—tells us that the *gnōthi seauton* is undoubtedly the founding expression of the question of the relations between the subject and truth, why choose this apparently rather marginal notion—that of the care of oneself, of *epimeleia heautou*—which is certainly current in Greek thought, but which seems not to have been given any special status? So, in this first hour I would like to spend some time on this question of the relations between the *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) and the *gnōthi seauton* ("know yourself").

Relying on the work of historians and archeologists, I would like to make this very simple preliminary remark with regard to the "know yourself." We should keep the following in mind: In the glorious and spectacular form in which it was formulated and engraved on the temple stone, the *gnōthi seauton* originally did not have the value it later acquired. You know (and we will have to come back to this) the famous text in which Epictetus says that the precept "*gnōthi seauton*" was inscribed at the center of the human community.<sup>9</sup> In fact it undoubtedly was inscribed in this place, which was a center of Greek life, and later of the human community,<sup>10</sup> but it certainly did not mean "know yourself" in the philosophical sense of the phrase. The phrase did not prescribe self-knowledge, neither as the basis of morality, nor as part of a relationship with the gods. A number of interpretations have been suggested. There is Roscher's old interpretation, put forward in 1901 in an article in *Philologus*,<sup>11</sup> in which he recalled that the Delphic precepts were after all addressed to those who came to consult the god and should be read as kinds of ritual rules and recommendations connected with the act of consultation itself. You know the three precepts. According to Roscher, the precept *mēden agan* ("not too much") certainly does not designate or express a general ethical principle and measure for human conduct. *Mēden agan* ("not too much") means: You who have come to consult, do not ask too many questions, ask only useful questions and

those that are necessary. The second precept concerning the *eggūē* (the pledges)<sup>12</sup> would mean precisely this: When you consult the gods, do not make vows and commitments that you will not be able to honor. As for the *gnōthi seauton*, according to Roscher it would mean: When you question the oracle, examine yourself closely and the questions you are going to ask, those you wish to ask, and, since you must restrict yourself to the fewest questions and not ask too many, carefully consider yourself and what you need know. Defradas gives a much more recent interpretation, in 1954, in his book on *Les Thèmes de la propagande delphique*.<sup>13</sup> Defradas proposes a different interpretation, but which also shows, or suggests, that the *gnōthi seauton* is definitely not a principle of self-knowledge. According to Defradas, the three Delphic precepts were general demands for prudence: “not too much” in your requests and hopes and no excess in how you conduct yourself. The “pledges” was a precept warning those consulting against excessive generosity. As for the “know yourself,” this was the principle [that] you should always remember that you are only a mortal after all, not a god, and that you should neither presume too much on your strength nor oppose the powers of the deity.

Let us skip this quickly. I want to stress something else which has much more to do with the subject with which I am concerned. Whatever meaning was actually given and attached to the Delphic precept “know yourself” in the cult of Apollo, it seems to me to be a fact that when this Delphic precept, this *gnōthi seauton*, appears in philosophy, in philosophical thought, it is, as we know, around the character of Socrates. Xenophon attests to this in the *Memorabilia*,<sup>14</sup> as does Plato in a number of texts to which we will have to return. Now not always, but often, and in a highly significant way, when this Delphic precept (this *gnōthi seauton*) appears, it is coupled or twinned with the principle of “take care of yourself” (*epimeleia heautou*). I say “coupled,” “twinned.” In actual fact, it is not entirely a matter of coupling. In some texts, to which we will have to return, there is, rather, a kind of subordination of the expression of the rule “know yourself” to the precept of care of the self. The *gnōthi seauton* (“know yourself”) appears, quite clearly and again in a number of significant texts, within the more general framework of the *epimeleia*

*heautou* (care of oneself) as one of the forms, one of the consequences, as a sort of concrete, precise, and particular application of the general rule: You must attend to yourself, you must not forget yourself, you must take care of yourself. The rule “know yourself” appears and is formulated within and at the forefront of this care. Anyway, we should not forget that in Plato’s too well-known but still fundamental text, the *Apology*, Socrates appears as the person whose essential, fundamental, and original function, job, and position is to encourage others to attend to themselves, take care of themselves, and not neglect themselves. There are in fact three texts, three passages in the *Apology* that are completely clear and explicit about this.

The first passage is found in 29d of the *Apology*.<sup>15</sup> In this passage, Socrates, defending himself, making a kind of imaginary defense plea before his accusers and judges, answers the following objection. He is reproached with having ended up in a situation of which “he should be ashamed.” The accusation, if you like, consists in saying: I am not really sure what evil you have done, but I avow all the same that it is shameful to have led the kind a life that results in you now finding yourself accused before the courts and in danger of being condemned, perhaps condemned to death. Isn’t this, in the end, what is shameful, that someone has led a certain life, which while we do not know what it is, is such that he is in danger of being condemned to death by such a judgment? In this passage, Socrates replies that, on the contrary, he is very proud of having led this life and that if ever he was asked to lead a different life he would refuse. So: I am so proud of the life I have led that I would not change it even if you offered to acquit me. Here are Socrates’ words: “Athenians, I am grateful to you and love you, but I shall obey God rather than you, and be sure that I will not stop practicing philosophy so long as I have breath and am able to, [exhorting] you and telling whoever I meet what they should do.”<sup>16</sup> And what advice would he give if he is not condemned, since he had already given it before he was accused? To those he meets he will say, as he is accustomed to saying: “Dear friend, you are an Athenian, citizen of the greatest city, more famous than any other for its knowledge and might, yet are you not ashamed for devoting all your care (*epimeleisthai*) to increasing your

wealth, reputation and honors while not caring for or even considering (*epimēlē, phrontizeis*) your reason, truth and the constant improvement of your soul?" Thus Socrates recalls what he has always said and is quite determined to continue to say to those he will meet and stop to question: You care for a whole range of things, for your wealth and your reputation. You do not take care of yourself. He goes on: "And if anyone argues and claims that he does care [for his soul, for truth, for reason; M.F.], don't think that I shall let him go and go on my way. No, I shall question him, examine him and argue with him at length . . .<sup>17</sup> Whoever I may meet, young or old, stranger or fellow citizen, this is how I shall act, and especially with you my fellow citizens, since you are my kin. For you should understand that this is what the god demands, and I believe that nothing better has befallen this city than my zeal in executing this command."<sup>18</sup> This "command," then, is the command by which the gods have entrusted Socrates with the task of stopping people, young and old, citizens or strangers, and saying to them: Attend to yourselves. This is Socrates' task.

In the second passage, Socrates returns to this theme of the care of the self and says that if the Athenians do in fact condemn him to death then he, Socrates, will not lose a great deal. The Athenians, however, will suffer a very heavy and severe loss.<sup>19</sup> For, he says, there will no longer be anyone to encourage them to care for themselves and their own virtue unless the gods care enough about them to send someone to replace him, someone who will constantly remind them that they must be concerned about themselves.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, in 36b-c, there is the third passage, which concerns the penalty incurred. According to the traditional legal forms,<sup>21</sup> Socrates himself proposes the penalty he will accept if condemned. Here is the text: "What treatment do I deserve, what amends must I make for thinking I had to relinquish a peaceful life and neglect what most people have at heart—wealth, private interest, military office, success in the assembly, magistracies, alliances and political factions; for being convinced that with my scruples I would be lost if I followed such a course; for not wanting to do what was of no advantage either to you or myself; for preferring to do for each particular individual what I declare

to be the greatest service, trying to persuade him to care (*epimēletheiē*) less about his property than about himself so as to make himself as excellent and reasonable as possible, to consider less the things of the city than the city itself, in short, to apply these same principles to everything? What have I deserved, I ask, for having conducted myself in this way [and for having encouraged you to attend to yourselves? Not punishment, to be sure, not chastisement, but; M.F.] something good, Athenians, if you want to be just."<sup>22</sup>

I will stop there for the moment. I just wanted to draw your attention to these passages, in which Socrates basically appears as the person who encourages others to care for themselves, and I would like you to note three or four important things. First, this activity of encouraging others to care for themselves is Socrates' activity, but it is an activity entrusted to him by the gods. In acting in this way Socrates does no more than carry out an order, perform a function or occupy a post (he uses the term *taxis*<sup>23</sup>) determined for him by the gods. In this passage you will also have been able to see that it is because the gods care for the Athenians that they sent Socrates, and may possibly send someone else, to encourage them to care for themselves.

Second, you see as well, and this is very clear in the last passage I read to you, that if Socrates cares for others, then this obviously means that he will not care for himself, or at any rate, that in caring for others he will neglect a range of other activities that are generally thought to be self-interested, profitable, and advantageous. So as to be able to care for others, Socrates has neglected his wealth and a number of civic advantages, he has renounced any political career, and he has not sought any office or magistracy. Thus the problem arises of the relation between the "caring for oneself" encouraged by the philosopher, and what caring for himself, or maybe sacrificing himself, must represent for the philosopher, that is to say, the problem, consequently, of the position occupied by the master in this matter of "caring for oneself."

Third, I have not quoted this passage at great length, but it doesn't matter, you can look it up: in this activity of encouraging others to attend to themselves Socrates says that with regard to his fellow citizens his role is that of someone who awakens them.<sup>24</sup> The care of the self will

thus be looked upon as the moment of the first awakening. It is situated precisely at the moment the eyes open, when one wakes up and has access to the first light of day. This is the third interesting point in this question of "caring for oneself."

Finally, again at the end of a passage I did not read to you, there is the famous comparison of Socrates and the horsefly, the insect that chases and bites animals, making them restless and run about.<sup>25</sup> The care of oneself is a sort of thorn which must be stuck in men's flesh, driven into their existence, and which is a principle of restlessness and movement, of continuous concern throughout life. So I think this question of the *epimeleia heautou* should be rescued from the prestige of the *gnōthi seauton* that has somewhat overshadowed its importance. In a text, then, which I will try to explain to you a bit more precisely in a moment (the whole of the second part of the famous *Alcibiades*), you will see how the *epimeleia heautou* (the care of the self) is indeed the justificatory framework, ground, and foundation for the imperative "know yourself." So, this notion of *epimeleia heautou* is important in the figure of Socrates, with whom one usually associates, if not exclusively then at least in a privileged fashion, the *gnōthi seauton*. Socrates is, and always will be, the person associated with care of the self. In a series of late texts, in the Stoics, in the Cynics, and especially in Epictetus,<sup>26</sup> you will see that Socrates is always, essentially and fundamentally, the person who stops young men in the street and tells them: "You must care about yourselves."

The third point concerning this notion of *epimeleia heautou* and its connections with the *gnōthi seauton* is that the notion of *epimeleia heautou* did not just accompany, frame, and found the necessity of knowing oneself, and not solely when this necessity appeared in the thought, life, and figure of Socrates. It seems to me that the *epimeleia heautou* (the care of the self and the rule associated with it) remained a fundamental principle for describing the philosophical attitude throughout Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman culture. This notion of the care of the self was, of course, important in Plato. It was important for the Epicureans, since in Epicurus you find the frequently repeated expression: Every man should take care of his soul day and night and throughout his life.<sup>27</sup> For "take care of" Epicurus employs the verb *therapeuein*,<sup>28</sup>

which has several meanings: *therapeuein* refers to medical care (a kind of therapy for the soul which we know was important for the Epicureans),<sup>29</sup> but *therapeuein* is also the service provided by a servant to his master. You know also that *therapeuein* is related to the duties of worship, to the statutory regular worship rendered to a deity or divine power. The care of the self is crucially important in the Cynics. I refer, for example, to the text cited by Seneca in the first paragraphs of book seven of *De Beneficiis*, in which the Cynic Demetrius, on the basis of a number of principles to which we will have to return because this is very important, explains how it is pointless to concern oneself with speculations about certain natural phenomena (like, for example, the origin of earthquakes, the causes of storms, the reason for twins), and that one should look instead to immediate things concerning oneself and to a number of rules by which one conducts oneself and controls what one does.<sup>30</sup> I don't need to tell you that the *epimeleia heautou* is important in the Stoics; it is central in Seneca with the notion of *cura sui*, and it permeates the *Discourses* of Epictetus. Having to care about oneself is not just a condition for gaining access to the philosophical life, in the strict and full sense of the term. You will see, I will try to show you, how generally speaking the principle that one must take care of oneself became the principle of all rational conduct in all forms of active life that would truly conform to the principle of moral rationality. Throughout the long summer of Hellenistic and Roman thought, the exhortation to care for oneself became so widespread that it became, I think, a truly general cultural phenomenon.<sup>31</sup> What I would like to show you, what I would like to speak about this year, is this history that made this general cultural phenomenon (this exhortation, this general acceptance of the principle that one should take care of oneself) both a general cultural phenomenon peculiar to Hellenistic and Roman society (anyway, to its elite), and at the same time an event in thought.<sup>32</sup> It seems to me that the stake, the challenge for any history of thought, is precisely that of grasping when a cultural phenomenon of a determinate scale actually constitutes within the history of thought a decisive moment that is still significant for our modern mode of being subjects.

One word more: If this notion of the care of oneself, which we see emerging quite explicitly and clearly in the figure of Socrates, traversed and permeated ancient philosophy up to the threshold of Christianity, well, you will find this notion of *epimeleia* (of care) again in Christianity, or in what, to a certain extent, constituted its environment and preparation: Alexandrian spirituality. At any rate, you find this notion of *epimeleia* given a particular meaning in Philo (*De Vita contemplative*).<sup>33</sup> You find it in Plotinus, in *Ennead*, II.<sup>34</sup> You find this notion of *epimeleia* also and especially in Christian asceticism: in Methodius of Olympus<sup>35</sup> and Basil of Caesarea.<sup>36</sup> It appears in Gregory of Nyssa: in *The Life of Moses*,<sup>37</sup> in the text on *The Song of Songs*,<sup>38</sup> and in the *Beatitudes*.<sup>39</sup> The notion of care of the self is found especially in Book XIII of *On Virginity*,<sup>40</sup> the title of which is, precisely, "That the care of oneself begins with freedom from marriage."<sup>41</sup> Given that, for Gregory of Nyssa, freedom from marriage (celibacy) is actually the first form, the initial inflection of the ascetic life, the assimilation of the first form of the care of oneself and freedom from marriage reveals the extent to which the care of the self had become a kind of matrix of Christian asceticism. You can see that the notion of *epimeleia heautou* (care of oneself) has a long history extending from the figure of Socrates stopping young people to tell them to take care of themselves up to Christian asceticism making the ascetic life begin with the care of oneself.

It is clear that in the course of this history the notion becomes broader and its meanings are both multiplied and modified. Since the purpose of this year's course will be to elucidate all this (what I am saying now being only a pure schema, a preliminary overview), let's say that within this notion of *epimeleia heautou* we should bear in mind that there is:

- First, the theme of a general standpoint, of a certain way of considering things, of behaving in the world, undertaking actions, and having relations with other people. The *epimeleia heautou* is an attitude towards the self, others, and the world;
- Second, the *epimeleia heautou* is also a certain form of attention, of looking. Being concerned about oneself implies that we look

away from the outside to . . . I was going to say "inside." Let's leave to one side this word, which you can well imagine raises a host of problems, and just say that we must convert our looking from the outside, from others and the world etc., towards "one-self." The care of the self implies a certain way of attending to what we think and what takes place in our thought. The word *epimeleia* is related to *meletē*, which means both exercise and meditation.<sup>42</sup> Again, all this will have to be elucidated;

- Third, the notion of *epimeleia* does not merely designate this general attitude or this form of attention turned on the self. The *epimeleia* also always designates a number of actions exercised on the self by the self, actions by which one takes responsibility for oneself and by which one changes, purifies, transforms, and transfigures oneself. It involves a series of practices, most of which are exercises that will have a very long destiny in the history of Western culture, philosophy, morality, and spirituality. These are, for example, techniques of meditation,<sup>43</sup> of memorization of the past, of examination of conscience,<sup>44</sup> of checking representations which appear in the mind,<sup>45</sup> and so on.

With this theme of the care of the self, we have then, if you like, an early philosophical formulation, appearing clearly in the fifth century B.C., of a notion which permeates all Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman philosophy, as well as Christian spirituality, up to the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. In short, with this notion of *epimeleia heautou* we have a body of work defining a way of being, a standpoint, forms of reflection, and practices which make it an extremely important phenomenon not just in the history of representations, notions, or theories, but in the history of subjectivity itself or, if you like, in the history of practices of subjectivity. Anyway, as a working hypothesis at least, this one-thousand-year development from the appearance of the first forms of the philosophical attitude in the Greeks to the first forms of Christian asceticism—from the fifth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D.—can be taken up starting from this notion of *epimeleia heautou*. Between the philosophical exercise and Christian asceticism there are a thousand

However, I think there is a reason that is much more fundamental than these paradoxes of the history of morality. This pertains to the problem of truth and the history of truth. It seems to me that the more serious reason why this precept of the care of the self has been forgotten, the reason why the place occupied by this principle in ancient culture for nigh on one thousand years has been obliterated, is what I will call—with what I know is a bad, purely conventional phrase—the “Cartesian moment.” It seems to me that the “Cartesian moment,” again within a lot of inverted commas, functioned in two ways. It came into play in two ways: by philosophically requalifying the *gnōthi seauton* (know yourself), and by discrediting the *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self).

First, the Cartesian moment philosophically requalified the *gnōthi seauton* (know yourself). Actually, and here things are very simple, the Cartesian approach, which can be read quite explicitly in the *Meditations*,<sup>48</sup> placed self-evidence (*l'évidence*) at the origin, the point of departure of the philosophical approach—self-evidence as it appears, that is to say as it is given, as it is actually given to consciousness without any possible doubt [...]\*. The Cartesian approach [therefore] refers to knowledge of the self, as a form of consciousness at least. What's more, by putting the self-evidence of the subject's own existence at the very source of access to being, this knowledge of oneself (no longer in the form of the test of self-evidence, but in the form of the impossibility of doubting my existence as subject) made the “know yourself” into a fundamental means of access to truth. Of course, there is a vast distance between the Socratic *gnōthi seauton* and the Cartesian approach. However, you can see why, from the seventeenth century, starting from this step, the principle of *gnōthi seauton* as founding moment of the philosophical method was acceptable for a number of philosophical approaches or practices. But if the Cartesian approach thus requalified the *gnōthi seauton*, for reasons that are fairly easy to isolate, at the same time—and I want to stress this—it played a major part in discrediting the principle of care of the self and in excluding it from the field of modern philosophical thought.

\*Only “whatever the effort . . .” is audible.

Let's stand back a little to consider this. We will call, if you like, “philosophy” the form of thought that asks, not of course what is true and what is false, but what determines that there is and can be truth and falsehood and whether or not we can separate the true and the false. We will call “philosophy” 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 the truth. If we call this “philosophy,” then I think 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. We will call “spirituality” then the set of these researches, practices, and experiences, which may be purifications, ascetic exercises, renunciations, conversions of looking, modifications of existence, etc., which are, not for knowledge but for the subject, for the subject's very being, the price to be paid for access to the truth. Let's say that spirituality, as it appears in the West at least, has three characteristics.

Spirituality postulates that the truth is never given to the subject by right. Spirituality postulates that the subject as such does not have right of access to the truth and is not capable of having access to the truth. It postulates that the truth is not given to the subject by a simple act of knowledge (*connaissance*), which would be founded and justified simply by the fact that he is the subject and because he possesses this or that structure of subjectivity. It postulates that for the subject to have right of access to the truth he must be changed, transformed, shifted, and become, to some extent and up to a certain point, other than himself. The truth is only given to the subject at a price that brings the subject's being into play. For as he is, the subject is not capable of truth. I think that this is the simplest but most fundamental formula by which spirituality can be defined. It follows that from this point of view there can be no truth without a conversion or a transformation of the subject. This conversion, this transformation of the subject—and this will be the second major aspect of spirituality—may take place in different forms. Very roughly we can say (and this is again a very schematic survey) that this conversion may take place in the form of a movement that removes the subject from his current status and condition (either an ascending movement of the

subject himself, or else a movement by which the truth comes to him and enlightens him). Again, quite conventionally, let us call this movement, in either of its directions, the movement of *erōs* (love). Another major form through which the subject can and must transform himself in order to have access to the truth is a kind of work. This is a work of the self on the self, an elaboration of the self by the self, a progressive transformation of the self by the self for which one takes responsibility in a long labor of *ascesis* (*askēsis*). *Erōs* and *askēsis* are, I think, the two major forms in Western spirituality for conceptualizing the modalities by which the subject must be transformed in order finally to become capable of truth. This is the second characteristic of spirituality.

Finally, spirituality postulates that once access to the truth has really been opened up, it produces effects that are, of course, the consequence of the spiritual approach taken in order to achieve this, but which at the same time are something quite different and much more: effects which I will call "rebound" ("*de retour*"), effects of the truth on the subject. For spirituality, the truth is not just what is given to the subject, as reward for the act of knowledge as it were, and to fulfill the act of knowledge. The truth enlightens the subject; the truth gives beatitude to the subject; the truth gives the subject tranquility of the soul. In short, in the truth and in access to the truth, there is something that fulfills the subject himself, which fulfills or transfigures his very being. In short, I think we can say that in and of itself an act of knowledge could never give access to the truth unless it was prepared, accompanied, doubled, and completed by a certain transformation of the subject; not of the individual, but of the subject himself in his being as subject.

There is no doubt an enormous objection to everything I have been saying, an objection to which it will be necessary to return, and which is, of course, the gnosis.<sup>49</sup> However, the gnosis, and the whole Gnostic movement, is precisely a movement that overloads the act of knowledge (*connaissance*), to [which] sovereignty is indeed granted in access to the truth. This act of knowledge is overloaded with all the conditions and structure of a spiritual act. The gnosis is, in short, that which tends to transfer, to transpose, the forms and effects of spiritual experience into the act of knowledge itself. Schematically, let's say that throughout the

period we call Antiquity, and in quite different modalities, the philosophical question of "how to have access to the truth" and the practice of spirituality (of the necessary transformations in the very being of the subject which will allow access to the truth), these two questions, these two themes, were never separate. It is clear they were not separate for the Pythagoreans. Neither were they separate for Socrates and Plato: the *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) designates precisely the set of conditions of spirituality, the set of transformations of the self, that are the necessary conditions for having access to the truth. So, throughout Antiquity (in the Pythagoreans, Plato, the Stoics, Cynics, Epicureans, and Neo-Platonists), the philosophical theme (how to have access to the truth?) and the question of spirituality (what transformations in the being of the subject are necessary for access to the truth?) were never separate. There is, of course, the exception, the major and fundamental exception: that of the one who is called "the" philosopher,<sup>50</sup> because he was no doubt the only philosopher in Antiquity for whom the question of spirituality was least important; the philosopher whom we have recognized as the founder of philosophy in the modern sense of the term: Aristotle. But as everyone knows, Aristotle is not the pinnacle of Antiquity but its exception.

Now, leaping over several centuries, we can say that we enter the modern age (I mean, the history of truth enters its modern period) when it is assumed that what gives access to the truth, the condition for the subject's access to the truth, is knowledge (*connaissance*) and knowledge alone. It seems to me that what I have called the "Cartesian moment" takes on its position and meaning at this point, without in any way my wanting to say that it is a question of Descartes, that he was its inventor or that he was the first to do this. I think the modern age of the history of truth begins when knowledge itself and knowledge alone gives access to the truth. That is to say, it is when the philosopher (or the scientist, or simply someone who seeks the truth) can recognize the truth and have access to it in himself and solely through his activity of knowing, without anything else being demanded of him and without him having to change or alter his being as subject. Of course, this does not mean that the truth is obtained without conditions. But these



conditions are of two orders, neither of which fall under the conditions of spirituality. On the one hand, there are the *internal conditions of the act of knowledge* and of the rules it must obey to have access to the truth: formal conditions, objective conditions, formal rules of method, the structure of the object to be known.<sup>51</sup> However, in any case, the conditions of the subject's access to the truth are defined within knowledge. The other conditions are extrinsic. These are conditions such as: "In order to know the truth one must not be mad" (this is an important moment in *Descartes*).<sup>52</sup> They are also cultural conditions: to have access to the truth we must have studied, have an education, and operate within a certain scientific consensus. And there are moral conditions: to know the truth we must make an effort, we must not seek to deceive our world, and the interests of financial reward, career, and status must be combined in a way that is fully compatible with the norms of disinterested research, etcetera. As you can see, these are all conditions that are either intrinsic to knowledge or extrinsic to the act of knowledge, but which 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. At this point (that is, when we can say: "As such the subject is, anyway, capable of truth"—with the two reservations of conditions intrinsic to knowledge and conditions extrinsic to the individual\*), when the subject's being is not put in question by the necessity of having access to the truth, I think we have entered a different age of the history of relations between subjectivity and truth. And the consequence—or, if you like, the other aspect of this—is that access to truth, whose sole condition is henceforth knowledge, will find reward and fulfillment in nothing else but the indefinite development of knowledge. The point of enlightenment and fulfillment, the moment of the subject's transfiguration by the "rebound effect" on himself of the truth he knows, and which passes through, permeates, and transfigures his being, can no longer exist. We can no longer think that access to the

truth will complete in the subject, like a crowning or a reward, the work or the sacrifice, the price paid to arrive at it. Knowledge will simply open out onto the indefinite dimension of progress, the end of which is unknown and the advantage of which will only ever be realized in the course of history by the institutional accumulation of bodies of knowledge, or the psychological or social benefits to be had from having discovered the truth after having taken such pains to do so. As such, henceforth the truth cannot save the subject. If we define spirituality as *being the form of practices which postulate that, such as he is, the subject is not capable of the truth, but that, such as it is, the truth can transfigure and save the subject*, then we can say that the modern age of the relations between the subject and truth begin when it is postulated that, such as he is, the subject is capable of truth, but that, such as it is, the truth cannot save the subject. Okay, a short rest if you like. Five minutes and then we will begin again.

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\*The manuscript (by which we designate the written notes Foucault used to support the delivery of this course at the Collège de France) allows this last point to be understood as extrinsic, that is to say individual, conditions of knowledge.

1. From 1982, Foucault, who previously had both lectured and held a seminar, decided to give up the seminar and just lecture, but for two hours.
2. See the summary of the 1980-1981 course at the Collège de France in M. Foucault, *Dits et écrits, 1954-1988*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), vol. 4, pp. 213-18; English translation by Robert Hurley "Subjectivity and Truth" in Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, vol. 1: Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, translations by Robert Hurley et al (New York: The New Press, 1997), pp. 87-92.
3. For the first elaboration of this theme, see the lecture of 28 January 1981, but more especially M. Foucault, *L'Usage des plaisirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), pp. 47-62; English translation by Robert Hurley, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), pp. 38-52. By *aphrodisia* Foucault understands an *experience*, which is a *historical* experience: the Greek experience of pleasures as opposed to the Christian experience of the *flesh* and the modern experience of *sexuality*. The *aphrodisia* are identified as the "ethical substance" of ancient morality.
4. In the first lecture of the 1981 course ("Subjectivité et vérité," 7 January 1981) Foucault states that what is at stake in his research is whether it was not precisely paganism that developed the strictness and sense of decency of our moral code (which, furthermore, would problematize the break between Christianity and paganism in the field of a history of morality).
5. In the 1981 lectures there are no analyses explicitly concerned with the care of the self, but there are lengthy analyses dealing with the arts of existence and processes of subjectivation (the lectures of 13 January, 25 March, and 1 April). However, generally speaking, the 1981 course continues to focus exclusively on the status of the *aphrodisia* in pagan ethics of the first two centuries A.D. while maintaining that we cannot speak of subjectivity in the Greek world, the ethical element being determined as *bios* (mode of life).
6. All the important texts of Cicero, Lucretius, and Seneca on these problems of translation have been brought together by Carlos Lévy in his article, "Du grec au latin," in *Le Discours philosophique* (Paris: PUF, 1998), pp. 1145-54.
7. "If I do everything in my own interest, it is because the interest I have in myself comes before everything else (*Si omnia propter curam mei facio, ante omnia est mei cura.*)" Seneca, *Letters*, CXXI.17.
8. See P. Courcelle, *Connais-toi même, de Socrate à saint Bernard* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1974), 3 volumes.
9. Epictetus, *Discourses*, III.i.18-19.
10. For the Greeks, Delphi was the geographical center of the world (*omphalos*: the world's circumference came together. Delphi became an important religious center at the end of the eighth century B.C. (the sanctuary of Apollo from which Python delivered oracles) and continued to be so until the end of the fourth century A.D., extending its audience to the entire Roman world.
11. W. H. Roscher, "Weiteres über die Bedeutung des [Egga] zu Delphi und die übrigen grammata Delphika," *Philologus* 60, 1901, pp. 81-101.
12. The second maxim is: *eggua, para d'afē*. See Plutarch's statement in *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, 164b: "Until I have learned it from these gentlemen, I won't be able to explain to you the meaning of the precepts *Not too much* and *Know yourself*, and the famous maxim which has stopped so many from getting married, has made so many others mistrustful and others silent: *Commitment brings misfortune* (*eggua para d'ata*)."
13. J. Defradas, *Les Thèmes de la propagande delphique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1954), ch. 3, "La sagesse delphique," pp. 268-83.
14. "Then Socrates demanded: 'Tell me, Euthydemus, have you ever been to Delphi?' 'Yes, by Zeus,' Euthydemus answered. 'I have even been twice.' 'Then did you notice somewhere on the temple the inscription: Know yourself?'

'Yes.'

- 'Did you just idly glance at it, or did you pay attention to it and try to examine who you are?'" Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, IV.II.24.
15. For his lectures Foucault usually uses the Belles Lettres edition (otherwise called the Budé edition) that enables him to have the original Greek or Latin facing the translation. This is why for the important terms and passages he accompanies his reading with references to the text in the original language. Moreover, when Foucault reads French translations in this way, he does not always follow them to the letter, but adapts them to the demands of oral style, multiplying logical connectors ("and," "or," "that is to say," "well," etc.) or giving reminders of the preceding arguments. Usually we restore the original French translation while indicating, in the text, significant additions (followed by "M.F.") in brackets.
  16. Plato, *Apology*, 29d.
  17. Foucault here cuts a sentence from 30a: "If it seems clear that, despite what he says, he does not possess virtue, I shall reproach him for attaching less value to what has the most value and more value to what has the least." Ibid.
  18. Ibid., 30a.
  19. "I tell you, being what I am, it is not to me that you do the most wrong if you condemn me to death, but to yourselves." Ibid., 30c.
  20. Foucault refers here to a development of the exposition from 31a to 31c.
  21. In 35e-37a, on being told of his condemnation to death, Socrates proposes an alternative penalty. Actually, in the kind of trial Socrates undergoes, there is no penalty fixed by law: it is up to the judges to determine the penalty. The penalty demanded by the accusers (and indicated in the charge) was death, and the judges acknowledge that Socrates is guilty of the misdeeds of which he is accused and therefore liable to incur this penalty. However, at this moment of the trial, Socrates, recognized as guilty, must propose an alternative penalty. It is only after this that the judges must fix a punishment for the accused on the basis of the penal proposals of the two parties. For further details see C. Mossé, *Le Procès de Socrate* (Brussels: Éd. Complexe, 1996) as well as the lengthy introduction by L. Brisson to his edition of the *Apologie de Socrate* (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1997).
  22. *Apology*, 36b-d.
  23. This alludes to the famous passage of 28d: "The true principle, Athenians, is this. Someone who occupies a post (*taxē*), whether chosen by himself as most honorable or placed there by a commander, has to my mind the duty to remain firmly in place whatever the risk, without thought of death or danger, rather than sacrifice honor." Epictetus praises steadfastness in one's post as the philosophical attitude par excellence. See, for example, *Discourses*, I.ix.24, and III.xxiv.36 and 95, in which Epictetus alternates between the terms *taxis* and *khōra*. See also the end of Seneca's *On the Firmness of the Wise Man*, XIX.4: "Defend the post (*locum*) that nature has assigned you. You ask what post? That of a man."
  24. Socrates warns the Athenians of what will happen if they condemn him to death: "You will spend the rest of your life asleep." *Apology*, 31a.
  25. "If you put me to death you will not easily find another man . . . attached to you by the will of the gods in order to stimulate you like a horsefly stimulates a horse." *Apology*, 30e.
  26. "Did Socrates manage to persuade all those who came to him to take care of themselves (*epimeleisthai heautōn*)?" Epictetus, *Discourses*, III.i.19.
  27. It is found in the *Letter to Menoecus*, 122. More exactly the text says: "For no one is it ever too early or too late for ensuring the soul's health . . . So young and old should practice philosophy." This quotation is taken up by Foucault in Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, vol. 3, *Le Souci de soi* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p. 60; English translation by Robert Hurley, *The Care of the Self* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), p. 46.
  28. Actually, the Greek text has "to kata psukhēn hugiainon." The verb *therapeuein* appears only once in Epicurus, in *Vatican Sayings*, 55: "We should treat (the *therapeuteon*) misfortunes with the grateful memory of what we have lost and with the knowledge that what has come about cannot be undone."
  29. The center of gravity for the whole of this theme is Epicurus's phrase: "The discourse of the philosopher who does not treat any human affection is empty. Just as a doctor who does

- not get rid of bodily illnesses is useless, so also is a philosophy if it does not get rid of the affection of the soul (221 Us.)." Translated by A. J. Voelke in his *La Philosophie comme thérapie de l'âme* (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1993), p. 36. In the same work, see the articles: "Santé de l'âme et bonheur de la raison. La fonction thérapeutique de la philosophie dans l'épicurisme" and "Opinions vides et troubles de l'âme: la médication épicurienne."
30. Seneca, *On Benefits*, VII.1.3-7. This text is analyzed at length in the lecture of 10 February, second hour.
  31. For a conceptualization of the notion of culture of the self, see the lecture of 6 January, first hour.
  32. On the concept of the event in Foucault, see "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire" (1971) in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 2, p. 136, for the Nietzschean roots of the concept; and "Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu" in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 2, p. 260 on the polemical value of the event in thought against a Derridean metaphysics of the originary (English translations by Robert Hurley and others, as "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" and "My Body, This Paper, This Fire," in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, vol. 2: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, ed., J.D. Faubion, translations by Robert Hurley et al [New York: New Press, 2000]), "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978" for the program of an "événementialisation" of historical knowledge, *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 4, p. 23; and, in particular, "Polémique, politique, et problématisations" in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 4, concerning the distinctiveness of the history of thought (translated by Lydia Davis as "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations: An Interview with Michel Foucault" in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*).
  33. "Considering the seventh day to be very holy and a great festival, they accord it a special honor: on this day, after caring for the soul (*tēs psukhēs epimeleian*), they anoint their bodies with oil." Philo of Alexandria, *On the Contemplative Life*, 477M, IV.36.
  34. "Then we will contemplate the same objects as [the soul of the universe], because we also will be well prepared thanks to our nature and our effort (*epimeleias*)." Plotinus, *The Enneads*, II.9.18.
  35. "The law eliminates fate by teaching that virtue is taught and develops if one applies oneself to it (*ex epimeleias prosginomenēn*)." Methodius of Olympus, *The Banquet*, 172c.
  36. "Hote toimun hē agan hautē tou sōmatos epimeleia autō te alusitētes to sōmati, kai pros tēn psukhēn empodion estī; to ge hupoepitōkenai toutō kai therapeuein mania saphēs" ("When excessive care for the body becomes useless for the body and harmful to the soul, submitting to it and attaching oneself to it seems an obvious madness"). Basil of Caesarea, *Sermo de legendis libris gentiliūm*, 584d, in J. P. Migne, ed. *Patrologie grecque* (SEU Petit Montrouge, 1857), vol. 31.
  37. "Now that [Moses] had raised himself to the highest level in the virtues of the soul, both by lengthy application (*makras epimeleias*) and by knowledge from on high, it is, rather, a happy and peaceful encounter that he has with his brother . . . The help given by God to our nature . . . only appears . . . when we are sufficiently familiarized with the life from on high through progress and application (*epimeleias*)." Grégoire de Nyssa [Gregory of Nyssa], *La Vie de Moïse, ou Traité de la perfection en matière de la vertu*, translations by J. Daniélou (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1965), 337c d, 43-44, pp. 130-131; see also 55 in 341b, setting out the requirement of a "long and serious study (*toiautēs kai tosautes epimeleias*)," p. 138.
  38. "But now I have returned here to this same grace, joined by love to my master; also strengthen in me what is ordered and stable in this grace, you the friends of my fiancé, who, by your cares (*epimeleias*) and attention, preserve the impulse in me towards the divine." Grégoire de Nyssa, *Le Cantique des cantiques*, translations by C. Bouchet (Paris: Migne, 1990), p. 106.
  39. "Ei oun apokluseias palin di'epimeleias biou ton epiplasthenta tē kardia sou rupon, analampsei soi to theoudēs kallos (If, on the other hand, you purify the dregs spread out in your heart by taking care of your life, the divine beauty will shine within you)." Gregory of Nyssa, *De Beattitudinibus*, Oratio VI, in *Patrologie grecque*, vol. 44, p. 1272a.
  40. Gregory of Nyssa, *Treatise on Virginity*. See in the same book the parable of the lost drachma (300c-301c, XII), often cited by Foucault to illustrate the care of the self. See the lecture ("Technologies of the Self" in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, p. 227); "Les techniques de soi" in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 4, p. 78: "By filth, we should understand, I think, the taint of the flesh: when one has 'swept it away' and cleared it by the 'care' (*epimeleia*) that one takes of one's life, the object appears in broad daylight." 301c XII, 3.

41. In an interview in January 1984, Foucault notes that in this text by Gregory of Nyssa (303c-305c, XII) the care of the self is essentially defined as "the renunciation of all earthly attachments. It is the renunciation of all that may be love of self, of attachment to an earthly self" ("L'éthique du souci de soi comme pratique de la liberté," in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 4, p. 716; English translation by P. Aranov and D. McGrawth, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom" in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, p. 288).
42. On the meaning of *melele*, see the lecture of 3 March, second hour, and 17 March, first hour.
43. On the techniques of meditation, and the meditation on death in particular, see the lectures of 27 February, second hour, 3 March, first hour, and 24 March, second hour.
44. On examination of conscience see the lecture of 24 March, second hour.
45. On the technique of screening representations, in Marcus Aurelius in particular, and in comparison with the examination of ideas in Cassian, see the lecture of 24 February, first hour.
46. In "moral dandyism" we can see a reference to Baudelaire (see Foucault's pages on "the attitude of modernity" and the Baudelairean *ethos* in "What is Enlightenment?" in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, pp. 310-12 [French version "Qu'est ce que les Lumières?" in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 4, pp. 568-71) and in the "aesthetic stage" there is a clear allusion to Kierkegaard's existential triptych (aesthetic, ethical, and religious stages), the aesthetic sphere (embodied by the Wandering Jew, Faust, and Don Juan) being that of the individual who exhausts the moments of an indefinite quest as so many fragile atoms of pleasure (it is irony that allows transition to the ethical). Foucault was a great reader of Kierkegaard, although he hardly ever mentions this author, who nonetheless had for him an importance as secret as it was decisive.
47. This thesis of the Hellenistic and Roman philosopher no longer finding the basis for the free use of his moral and political action in the new sociopolitical conditions (as if the Greek city state had always been its natural element), and finding in the self a last resort into which to withdraw, became a *topos*, if not unchallenged self evidence of the history of philosophy (shared by Bréhier, Festugière and others). During the second half of the century, the articles on epigraphy and the teaching of a famous scientist with an international audience, Louis Robert ("Opera minora selecta", *Epigraphie et antiquités grecques* [Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1989], vol. 6, p. 715) made this vision of the Greek lost in a world which was too big and in which he was deprived of his city state outmoded (I owe all this information to Paul Veyne). This thesis of the obliteration of the city-state in the Hellenistic period is thus strongly challenged by, among others, Foucault in *Le Souci de soi* (*The Care of the Self*, part three, ch. 2, "The Political Game", pp. 81-95, and see also pp. 41-43). For Foucault it is primarily a question of challenging the thesis of a breakup of the political framework of the city state in the Hellenistic monarchies (pp. 81-83) and then of showing (and again in this course) that the care of the self is basically defined as a mode of living rather than as an individualistic resort ("The care of the self . . . appears then as an intensification of social relations," p. 53). P. Hadot, in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), pp. 146-47, traces this prejudice of a disappearance of the Greek city state back to a work by G. Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912).
48. Descartes, *Méditations sur la philosophie première* (1641), in *Œuvres* (Paris: Gallimard/Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1952); English translation by John Cottingham, in Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
49. Gnosticism represents an esoteric philosophico religious movement that developed in the first centuries A.D. This extremely widespread movement, which is difficult to delimit and define, was rejected both by the Church Fathers and by philosophy inspired by Platonism. The "gnosis" (from the Greek *gnōsis*: knowledge) designates an esoteric knowledge that offers salvation to whomever has access to it, and for the initiated it represents knowledge of his origin and destination as well as the secrets and mysteries of the higher world (bringing the promise of a heavenly voyage), uncovered on the basis of secret exegetical traditions. In this sense of a salvationalist, initiatory, and symbolic knowledge, the "gnosis" covers a vast set of Judeo-Christian speculations based on the Bible. The "Gnostic" movement, through the

revelation of a supernatural knowledge, thus promises liberation of the soul and victory over the evil cosmic power. For a literary reference see Michel Foucault, "La prose d'Actéon" in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 1, p. 326. It is likely, as A. I. Davidson has suggested to me, that Foucault was familiar with the studies of H. C. Puech on this subject (See *Sur le manichéisme et Autres Essais* [Paris: Flammarion, 1979]).

50. "The" philosopher is how Aquinas designates Aristotle in his commentaries.
51. In the classification of the conditions of knowledge that follow we find, like a muffled echo, what Foucault called "procedures of limitation of discourse" in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, *L'Ordre du discours* (Paris, Gallimard, 1971). However, in 1970 the fundamental element was discourse, as an anonymous and blank sheet, whereas everything here is structured around the articulation of the "subject" and "truth."
52. We can recognize here an echo of the famous analysis devoted to the *Meditations* in Foucault's *Histoire de la folie* (Paris: Gallimard/Tel, 1972). In the exercise of doubt, Descartes encounters the vertigo of madness as a reason for doubting, and he excludes it *a priori*, refuses to countenance it, preferring the gentle ambiguities of the dream: "madness is excluded by the doubting subject" (p. 7). Derrida immediately challenged this thesis in "Cogito et Histoire de la folie" (in *L'Écriture et la Différence*, Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1967; English translation by A. Bass, "Cogito and the History of Madness," in *Writing and Difference*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), which takes up a lecture delivered on 4 March 1963 at the Collège philosophique, showing that the peculiarity of the Cartesian Cogito is precisely to take on the risk of a "total madness" by resorting to the hypothesis of the evil genius (pp. 81-82; English translation pp. 52-53). We know that Foucault, openly stung by this criticism, some years later published a masterly response, raising a specialist quarrel to the level of an ontological debate through a rigorous textual explanation ("My Body, This Paper, This Fire," and "Réponse à Derrida," in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 2). Thus was born what is called the "Foucault/Derrida polemic" about Descartes' *Meditations*.

two

6 JANUARY 1982

Second hour

*Presence of conflicting requirements of spirituality: science and theology before Descartes; classical and modern philosophy; Marxism and psychoanalysis. ~ Analysis of a Lacedaemonian maxim: the care of the self as statutory privilege. ~ First analysis of Plato's Alcibiades. ~ Alcibiades' political expectations and Socrates' intervention. ~ The education of Alcibiades compared with that of young Spartans and Persian Princes. ~ Contextualization of the first appearance of the requirement of care of the self in Alcibiades: political expectation and pedagogical deficiency; critical age; absence of political knowledge (savoir). ~ The indeterminate nature of the self and its political implications.*

I WOULD LIKE TO say two or three more words because, despite my good intentions and a well-structured use of time, I have not entirely kept within the hour as I hoped. So I will say a few more words on this general theme of the relations between philosophy and spirituality and the reasons for the gradual elimination of the notion of care of the self from philosophical thought and concern. I was saying that it seemed to me that at a certain moment (and when I say "moment," there is absolutely no question of giving it a date and localizing or individualizing it around just one person) the link was broken, definitively I think, between access to the truth, which becomes the autonomous development

of knowledge (*connaissance*), and the requirement of the subject's transformation of himself and of his being.\* When I say "I think it was definitively broken," I don't need to tell you that I don't believe any such thing, and that what is interesting is precisely that the links were not broken abruptly as if by the slice of a knife.

Let's consider things upstream first of all. The break does not occur just like that. It does not take place on the day Descartes laid down the rule of self-evidence or discovered the *Cogito*, etc. The work of disconnecting, on the one hand, the principle of an access to truth accomplished in terms of the knowing subject alone from, on the other, the spiritual necessity of the subject's work on himself, of his self-transformation and expectation of enlightenment and transfiguration from the truth, was underway long before. The dissociation had begun to take place long before and a certain wedge had been inserted between these two components. And of course, we should look for this wedge . . . in science? Not at all. We should look for it in theology (the theology which, precisely, with Aquinas, the scholastics, etc., was able to be founded on Aristotle—remember what I was just saying—and which will occupy the place we know it to have in Western reflection). This theology, by claiming, on the basis of Christianity of course, to be rational reflection founding a faith with a universal vocation, founded at the same time the principle of a knowing subject in general, of a knowing subject who finds both his point of absolute fulfillment and highest degree of perfection in God, who is also his Creator and so his model. The correspondence between an omniscient God and subjects capable of knowledge, conditional on faith of course, is undoubtedly one of the main elements that led Western thought—or its principal forms of reflection—and philosophical thought in particular, to extricate itself, to free itself, and separate itself from the conditions of spirituality that had previously accompanied it and for which the *epimeleia heautou* was the

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\*More precisely, the manuscript states that the link was broken "when Descartes said: philosophy by itself is sufficient for knowledge, and Kant completed this by saying: if knowledge has limits, these limits exist entirely within the structure of the knowing subject, that is to say in precisely what makes knowledge possible."

most general expression. I think we should be clear in our minds about the major conflict running through Christianity from the end of the fifth century—St. Augustine obviously—up to the seventeenth century. During these twelve centuries the conflict was not between spirituality and science, but between spirituality and theology. The best proof that it was not between spirituality and science is the blossoming of practices of spiritual knowledge, the development of esoteric knowledge, the whole idea—and it would be interesting to reinterpret the theme of Faust along these lines<sup>1</sup>—that there cannot be knowledge without a profound modification in the subject's being. That alchemy, for example, and a whole stratum of knowledge, was at this time thought to be obtainable only at the cost of a modification in the subject's being clearly proves that there was no constitutive or structural opposition between science and spirituality. The opposition was between theological thought and the requirement of spirituality. Thus the disengagement did not take place abruptly with the appearance of modern science. The disengagement, the separation, was a slow process whose origin and development should be located, rather, in theology.

Neither should we think that the break was made, and made definitively, at the moment I have called, completely arbitrarily, the "Cartesian moment." Rather, it is very interesting to see how the question of the relation between the conditions of spirituality and the problem of the development of truth and the method for arriving at it was posed in the seventeenth century. Take, for example, the very interesting notion that is typical of the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century: the notion of "reform of the understanding." Take, precisely, the first nine paragraphs of Spinoza's *Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding*.<sup>2</sup> You can see quite clearly there—and for well-known reasons that we don't need to emphasize—how in formulating the problem of access to the truth Spinoza linked the problem to a series of requirements concerning the subject's very being: In what aspects and how must I transform my being as subject? What conditions must I impose on my being as subject so as to have access to the truth, and to what extent will this access to the truth give me what I seek, that is to say the highest good, the sovereign good? This is a

properly spiritual question, and the theme of the reform of the understanding in the seventeenth century is, I think, entirely typical of the still very strict, close, and tight links between, let's say, a philosophy of knowledge and a spirituality of the subject's transformation of his own being.

If we now consider things downstream, if we cross over to the other side, starting with Kant, then here again we see that the structures of spirituality have not disappeared either from philosophical reflection or even, perhaps, from knowledge (*savoir*). There would be . . . but then I do not really want to outline it now, I just want to point out a few things. Read again all of nineteenth century philosophy—well, almost all: Hegel anyway, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, the Husserl of the *Krisis*,<sup>3</sup> and Heidegger as well<sup>4</sup>—and you see precisely here also that knowledge (*connaissance*), the activity of knowing, whether [it] is discredited, devalued, considered critically, or rather, as in Hegel, exalted, is nonetheless still linked to the requirements of spirituality. In all these philosophies, a certain structure of spirituality tries to link knowledge, the activity of knowing, and the conditions and effects of this activity, to a transformation in the subject's being. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, after all, has no other meaning.<sup>5</sup> The entire history of nineteenth-century philosophy can, I think, be thought of as a kind of pressure to try to rethink the structures of spirituality within a philosophy that, since Cartesianism, or at any rate since seventeenth-century philosophy, tried to get free from these self-same structures. Hence the hostility, and what's more the profound hostility, of all the "classical" type of philosophers—all those who invoke the tradition of Descartes, Leibniz, etcetera—towards the philosophy of the nineteenth century that poses, at least implicitly, the very old question of spirituality and which, without saying so, rediscovers the care of the self.

However, I would say that this pressure, this resurgence, this reappearance of the structures of spirituality is nonetheless quite noticeable even within the field of knowledge (*savoir*) strictly speaking. If it is true, as all scientists say, that we can recognize a false science by the fact that access to it requires the subject's conversion and that it promises enlightenment for the subject at the end of its development; if we can recognize a false science by its structure of spirituality (which is

self-evident; every scientist knows this), we should not forget that in those forms of knowledge (*savoir*) that are not exactly sciences, and which we should not seek to assimilate to the structure of science, there is again the strong and clear presence of at least certain elements, certain requirements of spirituality. Obviously, I don't need to draw you a picture: you will have immediately identified forms of knowledge like Marxism or psychoanalysis. It goes without saying that it would be completely wrong to identify these with religion. This is meaningless and contributes nothing. However, if you take each of them, you know that in both Marxism and psychoanalysis, for completely different reasons but with relatively homologous effects, the problem of what is at stake in the subject's being (of what the subject's being must be for the subject to have access to the truth) and, in return, the question of what aspects of the subject may be transformed by virtue of his access to the truth, well, these two questions, which are once again absolutely typical of spirituality, are found again at the very heart of, or anyway, at the source and outcome of both of these knowledges. I am not at all saying that these are forms of spirituality. What I mean is that, taking a historical view over some, or at least one or two millennia, you find again in these forms of knowledge the questions, interrogations, and requirements which, it seems to me, are the very old and fundamental questions of the *epimeleia heautou*, and so of spirituality as a condition of access to the truth. What has happened, of course, is that neither of these two forms of knowledge has openly considered this point of view clearly and willingly. There has been an attempt to conceal the conditions of spirituality specific to these forms of knowledge within a number of social forms. The idea of the effect of a class position or of the party, of allegiance to a group or membership of a school, of initiation or of the analyst's training, etc., all refer back to these questions of the condition of the subject's preparation for access to the truth, but conceived of in social terms, in terms of organization. They have not been thought of in terms of the historical thrust of the existence of spirituality and its requirements. Moreover, at the same time the price paid for transposing or reducing these questions of "truth and the subject" to problems of membership (of a group, a school, a party, a class, etc.), has been, of

course, that the question of the relations between truth and the subject has been forgotten.\* The interest and force of Lacan's analyses seems to me to be due precisely to this: It seems to me that Lacan has been the only one since Freud who has sought to refocus the question of psychoanalysis on precisely this question of the relations between the subject and truth.<sup>6</sup> That is to say, in terms which are of course absolutely foreign to the historical tradition of this spirituality, whether of Socrates or Gregory of Nyssa and everyone in between, in terms of psychoanalytic knowledge itself, Lacan tried to pose what historically is the specifically spiritual question: that of the price the subject must pay for saying the truth, and of the effect on the subject of the fact that he has said, that he can and has said the truth about himself. By restoring this question I think Lacan actually reintroduced into psychoanalysis the oldest tradition, the oldest questioning, and the oldest disquiet of the *epimeleia heautou*, which was the most general form of spirituality. Of course, a question arises, which I will not answer, of whether psychoanalysis itself can, in its own terms, that is to say in terms of the effects of knowledge (*connaissance*), pose the question of the relations of the subject to truth, which by definition—from the point of view of spirituality, and anyway of the *epimeleia heautou*—cannot be posed in terms of knowledge (*connaissance*).

That is what I wanted to say about this. Now let's go on to a more simple exercise. Let's return to the texts. So, there is obviously no question of me rewriting the entire history of the notion, practice, and rules of the care of the self I have been referring to. This year, and once again subject to my sloppy timekeeping and inability to keep to a timetable, I will try to isolate three moments which seem to me to be interesting: the Socratic-Platonic moment, the appearance of the *epimeleia heautou* in philosophical reflection; second, the period of the golden age of the culture of the self, of the cultivation of oneself, of the care of oneself, which we can place in the first two centuries A.D.; and then, roughly, the transition from pagan philosophical ascesis to Christian asceticism in the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>7</sup>

\*The manuscript notes that the fact that for psychoanalysis this has "never been thought theoretically" has entailed "a positivism, a psychologism" with regard to this truth subject relation.

The first moment: Socratic Platonic. Basically, then, the text I would like to refer to is the analysis, the theory itself of the care of the self; the extended theory developed in the second part, the conclusion, of the dialogue called *Alcibiades*. Before reading some of this text, I would like to recall two things. First, if it is true that the care of the self emerges in philosophical reflection with Socrates, and in the *Alcibiades* in particular, even so we should not forget that from its origin and throughout Greek culture the principle of "taking care of oneself"—as a rule and positive requirement from which a great deal is expected—was not an instruction for philosophers, a philosopher's interpellation of young people passing in the street. It is not an intellectual attitude; it is not advice given by wise old men to overeager young people. No, the assertion, the principle "one ought to take care of oneself," was an old maxim of Greek culture. In particular it was a Lacedaemonian maxim. In a text which, since it is from Plutarch, is fairly late, but which refers to what is clearly an ancestral and centuries-old saying, Plutarch reports a comment supposedly made by Anaxandridas, a Lacedaemonian, a Spartan, who is asked one day: You Spartans really are a bit strange. You have a lot of land and your territory is huge, or anyway substantial. Why don't you cultivate it yourselves, why do you entrust it to helots? And Anaxandridas is supposed to have answered: Well, quite simply, so that we can take care of ourselves.<sup>8</sup> Of course, when the Spartan says here: we have to take care of ourselves and so we do not have to cultivate our lands, it is quite clear that this has nothing to do [with philosophy]. In these people, for whom philosophy, intellectualism, etcetera, had no great positive value, taking care of themselves was the affirmation of a form of existence linked to a privilege, and to a political privilege: If we have helots, if we do not cultivate our lands ourselves, if we delegate all these material cares to others, it is so that we can take care of ourselves. The social, economic and political privilege of this close-knit group of Spartan aristocrats was displayed in the form of: We have to look after ourselves, and to be able to do that we have entrusted our work to others. You can see then that "taking care of oneself" is not at all philosophical but doubtless a fairly common principle linked, however, and we will find this again and again in the history of the *epimeleia heautou*, to a privilege, which in this case is political, economic, and social.

So when Socrates takes up and formulates the question of the *epimeleia heautou*, he does so on the basis of a tradition. Moreover, Sparta is referred to in the first major theory of the care of the self in the *Alcibiades*. So, let's move on now to this text, *Alcibiades*. Today, or next week, I will come back to the problems, not of its authenticity, which are more or less settled, but of its dating, which are very complicated.<sup>9</sup> But it is no doubt better to study the text itself and see the questions as they arise. I pass very quickly over the beginning of the dialogue of *Alcibiades*. I note only that right at the start we see Socrates accosting Alcibiades and remarking to him that until now he, Socrates, in contrast to Alcibiades' other lovers, has never approached Alcibiades, and that he has only decided to do so today. He has made up his mind to do so because he is aware that Alcibiades has something in mind.<sup>10</sup> He has something in mind, and Alcibiades is asked the old, classic question of Greek education, which goes back to Homer, etcetera:<sup>11</sup> Suppose you were offered the following choice, either to die today or to continue leading a life in which you will have no glory; which would you prefer? Well, [Alcibiades replies]: I would rather die today than lead a life that will bring me no more than what I have already. This is why Socrates approaches Alcibiades. What is it that Alcibiades has already and in comparison with which he wants something else? The particulars of Alcibiades' family, his status in the city, and his ancestral privileges place him above others. He has, the text says, "one of the most enterprising families of the city."<sup>12</sup> On his father's side—his father was a Eupatrid—he has connections, friends, and wealthy and powerful relatives. The same is true on the side of his mother, who was an Alcmaeonid.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, although he had lost both of his parents, his tutor was no nonentity, but Pericles. Pericles rules the roost in the city, even in Greece, and even in some barbarian countries.<sup>14</sup> Added to which, Alcibiades has a huge fortune. On the other hand, as everyone knows, Alcibiades is beautiful. He is pursued by numerous lovers and has so many and is so proud of his beauty and so arrogant that he has rejected all of them, Socrates being the only one who continues to pursue him. Why is he the only one? He is the only one precisely because Alcibiades, by dint of having rejected all his lovers, has come of age. This is the

famous critical age of boys I spoke about last year,<sup>15</sup> after which one can no longer really love them. However, Socrates continues to take an interest in Alcibiades. He continues to be interested in Alcibiades and even decides to speak to him for the first time. Why? Because, as I said to you a moment ago, he has clearly understood that Alcibiades has in mind something more than just benefiting from his connections, family, and wealth for the rest of his life, and as for his beauty, this is fading. Alcibiades does not want to be satisfied with this. He wants to turn to the people and take the city's destiny in hand: he wants to govern the others. In short, [he] is someone who wants to transform his statutory privilege and preeminence into political action, into his effective government of others. It is inasmuch as this intention is taking shape, at the point when Alcibiades—having taken advantage or refused to take advantage of others with his beauty—is turning to the government of others (after *erōs*, the *polis*, the city-state), that Socrates hears the voice of the god who inspires him to speak to Alcibiades. He has something to do: to transform statutory privilege and preeminence into the government of others. It is clear in the *Alcibiades* that the question of the care of the self arises at this point. The same thing can be found in what Xenophon says about Socrates. For example, in book III of the *Memorabilia*, Xenophon cites a dialogue, a meeting between Socrates and the young Charmides.<sup>16</sup> Charmides is also a young man on the threshold of politics, no doubt a little older than the Alcibiades of Plato's text since he is already mature enough to participate in the Assembly and give his views. Except that the Charmides who is heard in the Assembly, who gives his views and whose views are listened to because they are wise, is shy. He is shy, and although he is listened to and knows that everyone listens to him when considering things in a small group, he shrinks from speaking in public. And it is about this that Socrates says to him: Even so, you should pay heed to yourself; apply your mind to yourself, be aware of your qualities and in this way you will be able to participate in political life. He does not use the expression *epimeleia heautou* or *epimelei sautou*, but the expression "apply your mind." *Noūn prosekhei*:<sup>17</sup> apply your mind to yourself. But the situation is the same. It is the same, but reversed: Charmides, who despite his wisdom dares not



enter political activity, must be encouraged, whereas with Alcibiades we are dealing with a young man champing at the bit, who only asks to enter politics and to transform his statutory advantages into real political action.

Now, asks Socrates, and this is where the part of the dialogue I want to study more closely begins, if you govern the city, if you are to be able to govern it, you must confront two sorts of rivals.<sup>18</sup> On the one hand there are the internal rivals you will come up against in the city, because you are not the only one who wants to govern. And then, when you are governing them, you will come up against the city's enemies. You will come up against Sparta and the Persian Empire. Now, says Socrates, you know very well how it is with both the Lacedaemonians and the Persians: they outmatch Athens and you. In wealth first of all: However wealthy you may be, can you compare your wealth to that of the Persian King? As for education, can you really compare your education with that of the Lacedaemonians and Persians? There is a brief description of Spartan education, which is not put forward as a model but as a mark of quality at least; an education that ensures firmness, greatness of soul, courage, endurance, the taste for victory and honor, etcetera. Persian education, and the passage here is interesting, also has great advantages. In the education given to the King, from the earliest age—in short, from when he is old enough to understand—the young prince is surrounded by four teachers: one is the teacher of wisdom (*sophia*), another of justice (*dikaionē*), the third a master of temperance (*sōphrosunē*), and the fourth a master of courage (*andreia*). With regard to the date of the text, the first problem to reckon with is the following: on the one hand, as you know, fascination and interest in Sparta is constant in Plato's dialogues, starting with the Socratic dialogues; however, the interest in and fascination with Persia is something which is thought to appear late in Plato and the Platonists [...\*]. How then has Alcibiades been trained in comparison with this education, whether Spartan or Persian? Well, says Socrates, consider what has happened. After the death of your parents you were entrusted to Pericles. For sure, Pericles "may lord it over his

city, Greece and some barbarian States." However, in the event, he could not educate his sons. He had two of them, both good for nothing. Consequently you have come out badly. But one should not count on a serious training from this direction. And then again, your tutor Pericles entrusted you to an old slave (Zopyrus the Thracian) who was a monument to ignorance and so had nothing to teach you. Under these conditions, Socrates says to Alcibiades, you should make a little comparison: you want to enter political life, to take the destiny of the city in hand, and you do not have the wealth of your rivals, and above all you do not have their education. You should take a bit of a look at yourself, you should know yourself. And we see appearing here, in fact, the notion or principle of *gnōthi seauton* (an explicit reference to the Delphic principle).<sup>19</sup> However, it is interesting to see that this *gnōthi seauton*, appearing before any notion of care of the self, is given in a weak form. It is simply a counsel of prudence. It does not appear with the strong meaning it will have later. Socrates asks Alcibiades to reflect on himself a little, to review his life and compare himself with his rivals. A counsel of prudence: Think a bit about who you are in comparison with those you want to confront and you will discover your inferiority.

His inferiority consists in this: You are not only not wealthy and have not received any education, but also you cannot compensate for these defects (of wealth and education) by the only thing which would enable you to confront them without too much inferiority—a know-how (*savoir*), a *tekhnē*.<sup>20</sup> You do not have the *tekhnē* that would enable you to compensate for these initial inferiorities. Here Socrates demonstrates to Alcibiades that he does not have the *tekhnē* to enable him to govern the city-state well and be at least on an equal footing with his rivals. Socrates demonstrates this to him through a process which is absolutely classical in all the Socratic dialogues: What is it to govern the city well; in what does good government of the city consist; how do we recognize it? There is a long series of questions. We end up with this definition advanced by Alcibiades: The city is well governed when harmony reigns amongst its citizens.<sup>21</sup> Alcibiades is asked: What is this harmony; in what does it consist? Alcibiades cannot answer. The poor boy cannot answer and then despairs. He says: "I no longer know what I am saying.

\*Only "... that we hear in late Platonism, in the second half of Platonism at any rate" is audible.

Truly, it may well be that I have lived for a long time in a state of shameful ignorance without even being aware of it."<sup>22</sup> To this Socrates responds: Don't worry; if you were to discover your shameful ignorance and that you do not even know what you are saying when you are fifty, it really would be difficult for you to remedy it, because it would be very difficult to take care of yourself (to take pains with oneself: *epimelēthēnai sautou*). However, "here you are at the time of life when one ought to be aware of it."<sup>23</sup> I would like to stop for a moment on this first appearance in philosophical discourse—subject once again to the dating of the *Alcibiades*—of this formula "taking caring of oneself," "taking pains with oneself."

First, as you can see, the need to be concerned about the self is linked to the exercise of power. We have already come across this in the Lacedaemonian or Spartan maxim of *Anaxandridas*. Except, however, that in the apparently traditional formula—"We entrust our lands to our helots so that we can take care of ourselves"—"taking care of oneself" was the consequence of a statutory situation of power. Here, rather, you see that the question of the care of oneself, the theme of the care of oneself, does not appear as an aspect of statutory privilege. It appears rather as a condition for Alcibiades to pass from his position of statutory privilege (grand, rich, traditional family, etcetera) to definite political action, to actual government of the city-state. However, you can see that "taking care of oneself" is entailed by and inferred from the individual's will to exercise political power over others. One cannot govern others, one cannot govern others well, one cannot transform one's privileges into political action on others, into rational action, if one is not concerned about oneself. Care of the self: the point at which the notion emerges is here, between privilege and political action.

Second, you can see that this notion of care of the self, this need to be concerned about oneself, is linked to the inadequacy of Alcibiades' education. But the target here is, of course, Athenian education itself, which is wholly inadequate in two respects. It is inadequate in its specifically pedagogical aspect (Alcibiades' master was worthless, a slave, and an ignorant slave, and the education of a young aristocrat destined for a political career is too important to be handed over to a family slave).

There is also criticism of the other aspect, which is less immediately clear but lurks throughout the beginning of the dialogue: the criticism of love, of the *erōs* of boys, which has not had the function for Alcibiades it should have had, since Alcibiades has been pursued by men who really only want his body, who do not want to take care of him—the theme reappears a bit later—and who therefore do not encourage Alcibiades to take care of himself. Furthermore, the best proof of their lack of interest in Alcibiades himself, of their lack of concern that he should be concerned about himself, is that they abandon him to do what he wants as soon as he loses his desirable youth. The need for the care of the self is thus inscribed not only within the political project, but also within the pedagogical lack.

Third, something as important as and immediately connected to the former feature is the idea that it would be too late to rectify matters if Alcibiades were fifty. This was not the age for taking care of oneself. One must learn to take care of oneself at the critical age when one leaves the hands of the pedagogues and enters political activity. To a certain extent, this text contradicts or raises a problem with regard to another text I read to you a short while ago, the *Apology*, in which Socrates, defending himself in front of his judges, says: But the job I have followed in Athens was an important one. It was entrusted to me by the gods and consisted in placing myself in the street and stopping everyone, young and old, citizens and noncitizens, to tell them to take care of themselves.<sup>24</sup> Here, the *epimeleia heautou* appears as a general function of the whole of life, whereas in the *Alcibiades* it appears as a necessary moment of the young man's training. A very important question, a major debate and a turning point in the care of the self, arises when the care of the self in Epicurean and Stoic philosophy becomes a permanent obligation for every individual throughout his life. But in this, if you like, early Socratic-Platonic form, the care of the self is, rather, an activity, a necessity for young people, within a relationship between them and their master, or them and their lover, or them and their master and lover. This is the third point, the third characteristic of the care of the self.

Fourth, and finally, the need to take care of the self does not appear to be urgent when Alcibiades formulates his political projects, but only

when he sees that he is unaware of . . . what? Well, that he is unaware of the object itself, of the nature of the object he has to take care of. He knows that he wants to take care of the city-state. His status justifies him doing this. But he does not know how to take care of the city-state; he does not know in what the purpose and end of his political activity will consist (the well-being of the citizens, their mutual harmony). He does not know the object of good government, and that is why he must pay attention to himself.

So, two questions arise at this point, two questions to be resolved that are directly linked to each other. We must take care of the self. But this raises the question: What, then, is this self with which we must be concerned when we are told that we must care about the self? I refer you to the passage that I will comment upon at greater length next time, but which is very important. The dialogue of *Alcibiades* has a subtitle, but one which was added much later, in the Alexandrian period I think, but I am not sure and will have to check for next time. This subtitle is “of human nature.”<sup>25</sup> Now when you consider the development of the whole last part of the text—which begins at the passage I pointed out to you—you see that the question Socrates poses and attempts to resolve is not: You must take care of yourself now you are a man, and so I ask, what is a man? Socrates asks a much more precise, interesting, and difficult question, which is: You must take care of yourself; but what is this “oneself” (*auto to auto*),<sup>26</sup> since it is your self you must take care of? Consequently the question does not concern the nature of man but what we—that is us today, since the word is not in the Greek text—will call the question of the subject. What is this subject, what is this point towards which this reflexive activity, this reflected activity, which turns the individual back to himself, must be directed? The first question, then, is what is this self?

The second question to be resolved is: If we develop this care of the self properly, if we take it seriously, how will it be able to lead us, and how will it lead Alcibiades to what he wants, that is to say to knowledge of the *tekhnē* he needs to be able to govern others, the art that will enable him to govern well? In short, what is at stake in the whole of the second part, of the end of the dialogue, is this: “oneself,” in the expression

“caring about oneself,” must be given a definition which entails, opens up, or gives access to a knowledge necessary for good government. What is at stake in the dialogue, then, is this: What is this self I must take care of in order to be able to take care of the others I must govern properly? This circle, [which goes] from the self as an object of care to knowledge of government as the government of others, is, I think, at the heart of the end of this dialogue. Anyway, the question of “caring about oneself” first emerges in ancient philosophy on the back of this question. So, thank you, and next week we will begin again at 9:15. I will try to conclude this reading of the dialogue.

1. Foucault examines the Faust myth at greater length in the lecture of 24 February, second hour.
2. B. Spinoza, *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, in *Benedicti de Spinoza Opera quotquot reperta sunt*, ed. J. Van Vloten and J. P. N. Land (The Hague, 1882-1884); English translation by R. H. M. Elwes, "On the Improvement of the Understanding," in *Works of Spinoza*, vol. 2 (New York: Dover, 1955).
3. E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie* (Belgrade: Philosophia, 1936); English translation by D. Carr, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970).
4. In this period Foucault identified himself as an heir to this tradition that he recognized as that of "modern" philosophy. See Michel Foucault "Qu'est ce que les Lumières?" in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 4, pp. 687-88; English translation by Colin Gordon, "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution" in *Economy and Society*, vol. 15, no.1 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 403-04; and "The political technology of individuals" in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, vol. 3: Power* ed. J.D. Faubion (New York: New Press, 2000) pp. 403-04; French translation by P. E. Dauzat, "La technologie politique des individus" in *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 4, pp. 813-14.
5. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Wurtzbourg: Anton Goebhardt, 1807; French translation by J. Hyppolite, *Phénoménologie de l'Esprit* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1941); English translation by A.V. Miller, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979).
6. On Lacan's reopening of the question of the subject, see *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 3, p. 590; IV, pp. 204-05, and p. 435. For Lacan's texts going in this direction, see: "Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse" (1953), "Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir dans l'inconscient freudien" (1960), "La Science et la vérité" (1965), and "Du sujet enfin la question" (1966), all in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, Paris: Le Seuil, 1966 (English translations by Alan Sheridan in *Écrits. A Selection*, [London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1989]); *Le Séminaire I: Les Écrits techniques de Freud (1953-1954)* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1975), pp. 287-99; *Le Séminaire II: Le Moi dans la théorie de Freud et dans la technique de la psychanalyse (1954-1955)*, (Paris: Le Seuil, 1978); *Les Quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse (1964)* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1973), pp. 31-41, pp. 125-35; English translation by Alan Sheridan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977), pp. 29-41 and pp. 136-49; "Réponse à des étudiants en philosophie sur l'objet de la psychanalyse," *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 3, 1966, pp. 5-13; "La Méprise du sujet supposé savoir," *Scilicet* 1 (Paris: Le Seuil, 1968), pp. 31-41; *Le Séminaire XX: Encore* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1975), pp. 83-91; "Le Symptôme," *Scilicet* 6/7 (Paris: Le Seuil, 1976), pp. 42-52. (I am indebted to J. Lagrange and to M. Bertani for this note).
7. This third moment will not be developed in this year's course, or in the following year.
8. "As someone asked why they entrusted work in the fields to the helots, instead of taking care of them themselves (*kai ouk autoi epimelountai*). 'Because,' he answered, 'it was not in order to take care of them that we acquired them, but to take care of ourselves (*ou toutōn epimelomenoi all'hautōn*).'" Plutarch, *Sayings of Spartans*, 217a. See the summary of this example in *Le Souci de soi*, p. 58; *The Care of the Self*, p. 44.
9. They are examined in the second hour of the lecture of 13 January.
10. All of this takes place in the beginning of the text, *Alcibiades I*, from 103a to 105e.
11. Foucault is thinking here of Achilles' double destiny: "For my mother Thetis the goddess of the silver feet tells me/I carry two sorts of destiny toward the day of my death. Either,/if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans,/ my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting;/but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers,/the excellence of my glory is gone, but there will be a long life/left for me, and my end in death will not come to me quickly." Homer, *The Iliad*, translation by Richmond Lattimore (Chicago:

- 1961) Book IX, 410-16, p. 209; French translation by P. Mazon, *Iliade* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1937) p. 67.
12. *Alcibiades*, 103a.
13. Through his father Clinias, Alcibiades was a member of the *genos* of the "Eupatrids" (i.e., "those of good fathers"), a family of aristocrats and big landowners who dominated Athens politically from the archaic period. His mother (daughter of Megacles, a victim of ostracism) belongs to the family of Alcmaeonids, who undoubtedly played the most decisive role in the political history of classical Athens.
14. *Alcibiades*, 104b.
15. The problem of the critical age of boys was broached by Foucault in the lecture of 28 January 1981 in particular, which was devoted to the structuring of the ethical perception of *aphrodisia* (principle of socio-sexual isomorphism and principle of activity) and the problem raised within this framework by the love of young boys from good families.
16. Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, III.vii.
17. More precisely, the Greek text has: "*alla diateinou mallon pros to seautō prosekhein*." Ibid.
18. This passage is found in *Alcibiades*, 119a-124b.
19. "Ah, naive child, believe me and the words inscribed at Delphi: 'Know yourself'." *Alcibiades*, 124b.
20. Ibid. 125d.
21. Ibid. 126c.
22. Ibid. 127d.
23. Ibid. 127e.
24. Plato, *Apology*, 30a.
25. According to Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, III.57-62, the catalogue of Thrasyllus (astrologer of Tiberius and philosopher at Nero's court in the first century A.D.) adopts the division of Plato's dialogues into tetralogies and for each dialogue fixes a title, which usually corresponds to the name of Socrates' principal interlocutor— but it may be that this way of designating the dialogues goes back to Plato himself—and a second title indicating the main subject matter.
26. The expression is found in *Alcibiades*, 129b.