

**The Question about Truth**  
life Together • Doug Olena  
Jan 12, 2025

The Question about Truth  
*“Sanctify them by the truth,  
your word is truth.”*

**Outline: Exploring  
Ephesians and Philippians**

- The Words of Scripture and Greek text
- The Persistence of Natural Law
- The Question About Truth
- The Search for Truth
- The Courage of Truth: Parrhesia
- What is required of us?

One must not stop short of the truth when searching for it,  
nor give the up search when it is found.

**Ephesians**

- Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the **truth**<sup>1</sup> in love, let us grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ.
- Ephesians 4:21 If indeed you have heard Him and were taught in Him, just as **truth**<sup>1</sup> is in Jesus.
- Ephesians 4:24 And to put on the new man, the one created according to God, in righteousness and holiness of the **truth**<sup>1</sup>.
- Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, speak **truth**<sup>1</sup> each one with his neighbor, because we are members of one another.
- Ephesians 5:9 For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and **truth**<sup>1</sup>.
- Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with **truth**<sup>1</sup> and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.
- Ephesians 6:19 And [pray] for me, that a word may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to **make known with boldness**<sup>2</sup> the mystery of the gospel.

**Philippians**

- Philippians 1:18 For what does it matter, except that in every way, whether in pretense or in **truth**<sup>1</sup>, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice; yes, and I will rejoice.

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<sup>1</sup> Alethia: Truth or uncovering

<sup>2</sup> Parrhesia: Fearless, bold speech, true speech

- Philippians 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will in no way be ashamed, but with all **boldness**<sup>2</sup>, as always, so also now, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

Notes on Alethia:

Here's how you spell "truth" and related forms in Greek, along with their transliteration:

1. Αλήθεια (Alítheia) – Truth (noun, feminine)
2. Αληθείς (Alithés) – True (adjective, neuter singular)
3. Αληθής (Alithís) – True (adjective, masculine/feminine singular)

Examples in use:

- Αλήθεια είναι σημαντική. (Alítheia éinai simantikí.) – "Truth is important."
- Αληθείς γεγονός. (Alithés gegonós.) – "True fact."
- Είναι αληθής άνθρωπος. (Éinai alithís ánthropos.) – "He/She is a true person."

Translations by ChatGPT:

Here are the literal translations of the Greek text into English:

Greek Text Ephesians 4:15:

ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα ὃς ἐστὶν ἡ κεφαλὴ Χριστός

Literal Translation:

But speaking the truth in love, let us grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ.

Breakdown:

1. ἀληθεύοντες – "speaking the truth" or "being truthful" (present participle, active voice)
2. δὲ – "but" or "however" (a mild contrast or continuation)
3. ἐν ἀγάπῃ – "in love" (locative sense, denoting the manner or context)
4. αὐξήσωμεν – "let us grow up" or "increase" (subjunctive mood, expressing a goal or exhortation)
5. εἰς αὐτὸν – "into Him" (directional sense, referring to Christ)
6. τὰ πάντα – "all things" or "in every way"
7. ὃς – "who" (relative pronoun referring to Christ)
8. ἐστὶν – "is" (present tense, verb of being)
9. ἡ κεφαλὴ – "the head" (metaphorically referring to authority or leadership)
10. Χριστός – "Christ"

This verse is from Ephesians 4:15 and emphasizes spiritual maturity and unity in Christ, achieved through truth and love.

Greek Text Ephesians 4:21:

εἴ γε αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ

Literal Translation:

If indeed you have heard Him and were taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus.

Breakdown:

1. εἴ γε – “if indeed” (conditional phrase, expressing a strong supposition)
2. αὐτὸν – “Him” (direct object, referring to Jesus)
3. ἠκούσατε – “you have heard” (aorist tense, active voice)
4. καὶ – “and”
5. ἐν αὐτῷ – “in Him” (locative sense, indicating being in Christ)
6. ἐδιδάχθητε – “you were taught” (aorist tense, passive voice)
7. καθὼς – “just as” or “in the same way as”
8. ἐστὶν – “is” (present tense, verb of being)
9. ἀλήθεια – “truth”
10. ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ – “in Jesus” (locative sense, emphasizing the embodiment of truth in Jesus)

This verse is from Ephesians 4:21, highlighting the truth and teaching found in Jesus Christ.

Greek Text Ephesians 4:24:

καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ Θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας

Literal Translation:

And to put on the new man, the one created according to God, in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Breakdown:

1. καὶ – “and”
2. ἐνδύσασθαι – “to put on” or “to clothe oneself with”
3. τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον – “the new man” (accusative case, referring to a new nature or being)
4. τὸν κατὰ Θεὸν – “the one according to God” or “in conformity with God”
5. κτισθέντα – “created” (past participle, passive voice)
6. ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ – “in righteousness”
7. καὶ ὁσιότητι – “and holiness”
8. τῆς ἀληθείας – “of the truth” (genitive case, specifying the kind of righteousness and holiness)

This verse is from Ephesians 4:24, emphasizing spiritual transformation and aligning with God's nature.

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Greek Text Ephesians 4:25:

Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη

Literal Translation:

Therefore, having put away falsehood, speak truth each one with his neighbor, because we are members of one another.

Breakdown:

1. Διὸ – “Therefore” or “For this reason” (indicating a conclusion or consequence)
2. ἀποθέμενοι – “having put away” or “having laid aside” (aorist participle, middle voice, describing a completed action)
3. τὸ ψεῦδος – “falsehood” or “lie” (accusative case, direct object of the participle)
4. λαλεῖτε – “speak” (present imperative, plural, a command)
5. ἀλήθειαν – “truth” (accusative case, direct object of the verb)
6. ἕκαστος – “each one” or “everyone” (nominative case, subject of the command)
7. μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ – “with his neighbor” (genitive case, indicating association)
8. ὅτι – “because” or “for” (introducing a causal clause)
9. ἐσμὲν – “we are” (present indicative, first person plural)
10. ἀλλήλων μέλη – “members of one another” (genitive case, emphasizing mutual belonging)

This verse is from Ephesians 4:25, where Paul exhorts believers to live truthfully with one another, grounded in their unity as members of the same body in Christ.

Greek Text Ephesians 5:9:

ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τοῦ φωτὸς ἐν πάσῃ ἀγαθωσύνῃ καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ

Literal Translation:

For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

Breakdown:

1. ὁ – “the” (definite article, nominative case, masculine singular)
2. γὰρ – “for” (a conjunction providing explanation or reason)
3. καρπὸς – “fruit” (nominative case, subject of the sentence)
4. τοῦ φωτὸς – “of the light” (genitive case, indicating possession or source)

5. ἐν πάσῃ – “in all” (locative sense, indicating where the fruit is manifest; “πάσῃ” is feminine singular, dative case)
6. ἀγαθωσύνη – “goodness” (dative case, abstract noun describing a moral quality)
7. καὶ – “and”
8. δικαιοσύνη – “righteousness” (dative case, another moral quality)
9. καὶ – “and”
10. ἀληθεία – “truth” (dative case, another attribute of the fruit of the light)

This verse is from Ephesians 5:9, highlighting the moral and spiritual qualities produced by living in the light of God.

Greek Text Ephesians 6:14:

στῆτε οὖν περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὀσφὺν ὑμῶν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν θώρακα τῆς δικαιοσύνης

Literal Translation:

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Breakdown:

1. στῆτε – “Stand” (imperative mood, plural, command to take a firm stance)
2. οὖν – “therefore” (indicating a conclusion or exhortation based on prior statements)
3. περιζωσάμενοι – “having girded” or “having fastened” (aorist participle, middle voice)
4. τὴν ὀσφὺν – “the waist” or “loins” (accusative case, direct object)
5. ὑμῶν – “of you” or “your” (genitive case, plural)
6. ἐν ἀληθείᾳ – “with truth” (instrumental or locative sense, describing the means or manner of girding)
7. καὶ – “and”
8. ἐνδυσάμενοι – “having put on” or “having clothed yourselves with” (aorist participle, middle voice)
9. τὸν θώρακα – “the breastplate” (accusative case, direct object)
10. τῆς δικαιοσύνης – “of righteousness” (genitive case, describing the quality or nature of the breastplate)

This verse is from Ephesians 6:14 and is part of the “Armor of God” passage, emphasizing spiritual readiness and protection through truth and righteousness.

Greek Text of Ephesians 6:19:

καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ ἵνα μοι δοθῇ λόγος ἐν ἀνοιξίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου ἐν παρρησίᾳ γνωρίσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

#### Literal Translation:

And [pray] for me, that a word may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.

#### Breakdown:

1. καὶ – “and” (connective particle)
2. ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ – “for me” (preposition with genitive, expressing intercession or benefit)
3. ἵνα – “that” or “in order that” (introducing a purpose clause)
4. μοι – “to me” (dative case, indirect object)
5. δοθῆ – “may be given” (aorist subjunctive, passive voice)
6. λόγος – “word” or “message” (nominative case, subject of the clause)
7. ἐν ἀνοίξει – “in the opening” (dative case, expressing the context or occasion)
8. τοῦ στόματός μου – “of my mouth” (genitive case, describing the opening)
9. ἐν παρρησίᾳ – “with boldness” or “in confidence” (instrumental or manner of speaking)
10. γνωρίσαι – “to make known” (aorist infinitive, expressing purpose)
11. τὸ μυστήριον – “the mystery” (accusative case, direct object)
12. τοῦ εὐαγγελίου – “of the gospel” (genitive case, describing the mystery)

This verse is from Ephesians 6:19, where Paul asks for prayer that he may boldly proclaim the hidden truths of the gospel.

#### Greek Text Philippians 1:18:

Τί γάρ πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι

#### Literal Translation:

For what does it matter, except that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice; yes, and I will rejoice.

#### Breakdown:

1. Τί γάρ – “For what” or “What indeed” (rhetorical introduction, asking what significance there is)
2. πλὴν ὅτι – “except that” or “only that” (limiting clause)
3. παντὶ τρόπῳ – “in every way” or “by every means” (dative case, expressing manner or method)
4. εἴτε προφάσει – “whether in pretense” or “whether from false motives” (dative case, expressing method)
5. εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ – “or in truth” (dative case, expressing method)
6. Χριστὸς – “Christ” (nominative case, subject of the sentence)

7. καταγγέλλεται – “is proclaimed” or “is announced” (present indicative, passive voice)
8. καὶ ἐν τούτῳ – “and in this” (referring to the proclamation of Christ)
9. χαίρω – “I rejoice” (present indicative, expressing Paul’s current joy)
10. ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι – “but also I will rejoice” (future indicative, expressing confidence in continued joy)

This verse is from Philippians 1:18, where Paul expresses joy that Christ is being proclaimed, regardless of the motives behind the proclamation. His focus is on the advancement of the gospel above all else.

Greek Text Philippians 1:20:

κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαταδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου ὅτι ἐν οὐδενὶ αἰσχυνθήσομαι ἀλλ’ ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστὸς ἐν τῷ σώματί μου εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου

Literal Translation:

According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will in no way be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so also now, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

Breakdown:

1. κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαταδοκίαν – “According to the earnest expectation” (accusative case, expressing the standard or measure)
2. καὶ ἐλπίδα μου – “and my hope” (accusative case, linked with “expectation”)
3. ὅτι – “that” (introducing a clause explaining the content of the expectation and hope)
4. ἐν οὐδενὶ – “in no way” or “by nothing” (dative case, expressing manner or cause)
5. αἰσχυνθήσομαι – “I will be ashamed” (future indicative, passive voice)
6. ἀλλ’ – “but” (contrasting the previous statement)
7. ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ – “with all boldness” or “with complete confidence” (dative case, manner)
8. ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν – “as always and now also” (comparison and emphasis on continuity)
9. μεγαλυνθήσεται – “will be magnified” or “will be exalted” (future indicative, passive voice)
10. Χριστὸς – “Christ” (nominative case, subject of the clause)
11. ἐν τῷ σώματί μου – “in my body” (locative sense, indicating the sphere of magnification)
12. εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς – “whether by life” (instrumental sense, indicating the means)
13. εἴτε διὰ θανάτου – “or by death” (instrumental sense, presenting the alternative)

This verse is from Philippians 1:20, where Paul expresses his hope that Christ will be glorified through his life or death, reflecting his deep commitment to Christ regardless of his circumstances.

## “Persistence of Natural Law”

One must not stop short of the truth when searching for it,  
nor give the up search when it is found.

### Persistent Laws

- First, the principle of sufficient reason implies that the rules under which the universe operates cannot be arbitrary.
- According to Lee Smolin\*, God would be bound to use a blueprint of a certain sort in order to ensure that the universe would operate as it does.
- The non-arbitrary nature of the laws guarantees that science is possible.
- Second, the principle of the identity of indiscernibles implies that the application of the second law of thermodynamics in which the tendency of any closed system is toward entropy is correct, but that the universe is not a closed system, nor is our solar system, our biological beings, or the planet earth.
- In *The Trouble with Physics*, Lee Smolin engages with fundamental principles that challenge the prevailing paradigms in theoretical physics, including the principle of the identity of indiscernibles. This principle originates in the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and posits that if two entities are indistinguishable by all their properties, then they are not two entities but one and the same.
- This view contradicts the argument stating that God created the world and that world is moving inevitably toward disorder, toward entropy.
- The Second Law of Thermodynamics, held widely by Christians as proof against evolution, is tantamount to deism, not the result they were expecting, nor an acceptable compromise to attain the credibility of being scientific.
- Third, the principle of driven self-organization, relying on the first and second, suggests that self organizing structures are inevitable.
- Those who privilege Scripture posit that the emergence of new species is the result of God’s special creation.
- Those who privilege science claim that the emergence of new species is purely the result of self-organized complexity through natural selection.

### The Question about Truth

“Sanctify them  
by the truth,  
your word is truth.”

### Greek Therapeutic Communities

- In these communities, the process of instruction started with Listening to the sage.
- Reading
- Then writing
- Finally, speaking the truth

## The Process and Product

- Disciplines in order
- Listening to the sage was required for at least one year. The student must become accustomed to hearing the truth.
- Reading the words of the sage and varieties of interpretation would acquaint students with particular locutions and formulas (with reasons) that stood the test of time.
- Writing the words of the sage and commentaries provided mnemonic reinforcement so that when students found themselves in an ethical difficulty, they could recall the words of the sage to guide them.
- Speaking the truth was a discipline that often required putting oneself at risk, and so was not suitable for a mere student.

## The Synagogue

- The purpose of the Synagogue was not worship, but instruction in the Scriptures.
- This included readings of the Hebrew Bible, accessing the Talmud, Midrash, and the varieties of comments on the scriptures passed down from previous generations.

## God's word alone?

- What was Jesus suggesting saying his Father's word was truth?
- The whole Bible (OT) not New Testament
- The meanings of the texts literally (incoherent)
- The meanings of the texts figuratively (mythologies)
- Meanings with commentaries, with a remainder of undecidable texts
- What God himself speaks to us by the Holy Spirit
- etc.
- Do we escape having to interact with God by having a logical textual theology that provides exact objective truth?
- Do we need the texts at all when we have God?
- 

The process of acquiring the truth is a complex of practices: learning, reading, memorizing, analyzing, but most of all doing what Christ has commanded.

## God's word alone?

- Understanding what Christ's word commands, though, is a complex of practices that doesn't leave out any of the disciplines required to acquire the knowledge of God.
- Does that mean the truth is unattainable,
- or that what we call truth is relative,
- or that the multiple answers to the same question preclude defining it?

- In other words, do the postmoderns leave us in the lurch?

### G o d ' s w o r d a l o n e ?

- There may be no single rationality, but Christianity is not primarily a rationality.
- It is a practice, the practice of following Christ in our context which we do to the best of our ability by the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### C h r i s t ' s w o r d a l o n e ?

- Am I avoiding the question here?
- No. The practice of becoming like Christ is experimental. One can't do it purely by a good or even a great theory. It has to be walked. It is a process of self construction.
- What is your will, Oh God? Remind me of the words of Christ that I may follow him. Instruct me in your truth that I may be presented to you holy and sanctified.

### Searching for the Truth

One must not stop short of the truth when searching for it, nor give the up search when it is found.

- Why must one not stop short of the truth when searching for it, nor give up the search when it is found?
- Because...

Stopping the search assumes that we know everything, that we have arrived at complete godlike objectivity.

This is one thing we are certain is false. Why must one not stop short of the truth when searching for it, nor give up the search when it is found?  
Because...

- What is puzzling is that mathematics provides such a remarkably accurate model of the world.
- Three Stages
  - 19th century materialistic monism, (described under the Materialism heading)
  - Static universes
  - Self-organizing structures
- A Static Universe (19th century)
  - Created at one time, or has always been there. (Our version of the big bang is mid-20th century.)
  - Closed thermodynamic system.
  - Running down like a wind-up clock.
  - Heat death at the end of entropy.

- A Self-Organizing Universe
- We don't know its origins.
- It is structured such that stars, planets, black holes, life and intelligence emerge as natural byproducts of its existence.
- We don't know its end.
- Mystery of cosmological constants
- 
- Theory and data no longer support a 19th century static thermodynamic universe.
- Theory and data are moving us toward a universe that is intelligent or living, though not necessarily self-conscious—a computing universe.
- 
- The End of Theory...
- “Scientists have always relied on hypothesis and experimentation. Now, in the era of massive data, there's a better way.”

Chris Anderson, Wired 7/08

- The discovery of structure, variation, and the limitations of our knowledge becomes clear when we collect enough data.
- Statistical evaluation of reality is becoming the predominant interpretative device for...
- Physics, Psychology, Ethics
- We implicitly trust our observations but not infrequently misinterpret them.
- When our data collection becomes thorough enough, the outlines of reality start to merge with and transform our perception of it.
- This forces the birth of mystery
- Requires the development of a new technique
- Fractal images
  - The universe is far more curious than it seems at first.
  - The following movie gives us evidence of something. What is it?
- This Fractal pattern is from the Mandelbrot set.
- The movie resulted from a calculation on a simple recursive mathematical phrase that leaves a data point and alters the variables in itself for the next calculation.
- The mystery is that such complexity could emerge from such simple programming.
- The word “fractal” is a contraction of “fractional topography.” It was coined by Benoit Mandelbrot.
- The exploration of fractals is the examination of fractional dimensions, dimensions between 1 and 2, 2 and 3, 3 and 4.
- I don't want to crack too many eggs here but classical logic is not up to the task of parsing reality.

- We need a new way of looking at reality that does not trap us in either non-scientific biblical cosmology or 19th century physics.
- We need a new technique of reason that can flexibly apprehend the rapid changes in our knowledge and perception.
- A technique: suspension of certainty
- Theory cannot encompass reality
- Data accumulates around what is probably true
- The moment of certainty is evidence of incomplete and problematic comprehension

### Alethia and Parrhesia

Outline: First Hour, Feb 1

- Epistemological structures and Alethurgic forms
- Genealogy of the study of parrhesia: practices of truth-telling about oneself
- The mastery of existence in the domain of the care of the self
- Its main defining feature: Parrhesia
- Reminder of the political origin of the notion.
- Double value of parrhesia
- Structural features: truth, commitment, and risk
- The parrhesiastic pact
- Parrhesia vs. rhetoric
- Parrhesia as a specific modality of truth-telling
- Differential study of two other kinds of truth-telling in ancient culture: prophecy and wisdom
- Heraclitus and Socrates

Epistemological structures and Alethurgic forms

- 2 Parrhesia (παρρησια) is a mode of truth-telling
- I introduce these themes from Foucault because of a probable easy recognition of the Christian ethos of truth telling and because of Evangel's motto: TRUTH
- Epistemology: definition
- 2 Analyzing the discourses of truth-telling would be an epistemology. (he does some of this in the book "Fearless Speech")
- 3 Rather, Foucault wishes to analyze the "act by which truth is manifested."

Epistemological structures and Alethurgic forms

- Alethurgic act: the act by which truth is manifested.
- from alethia (αλεθια): the river lethe in the underworld is the river of forgetfulness.
- alethia is then, un-forgetting or revealing.
- Platonic epistemology...

Genealogy of the study of parrhesia: practices of truth-telling about oneself

- The relations between the subject and truth are important.
- How does one tell the truth about oneself.

- In Greco-Roman society there are many examples of this...
- 4 The examination of conscience in Pythagoreans, Stoics, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and spiritual guidance in writings to each other, etc.

The mastery of existence in the domain of the care of the self

- 4 Care of the self (epimeleia heautou) is the general principle under which the knowledge of the self (gnothi seauton) has application.
- Socrates and the oracle at Delphi.
- To care for oneself, one must know oneself.

Its main defining feature: Parrhesia

- 5 The practice of the confession is already in place long before Christianity.
- Telling the truth about oneself required a listener.
- In Christian culture telling the truth about oneself is institutionalized.
- 6 The qualification of the listener in ancient Greco-Roman cultures of the self is that one speak freely, with parrhesia.
- The listener trains the one who confesses to speak with parrhesia.

Its main defining feature: Parrhesia

- 7 There are many instances where parrhesia is the central topic:
- Plutarch: "How to Distinguish the Flatterer from a Friend."
- Galen: the one qualified to be a parrhesiastes is capable of listening and moving the confessee toward free-speaking in themselves.
- One must be a free speaker to listen, to judge and require free spokenness in the speaker.

Its main defining feature: Parrhesia

- One form of parrhesia: "I Think You're Fat"
- Radical honesty: what it costs, how liberating it is. (language warning)
- <http://www.esquire.com/features/honesty0707>
- or <http://radicalhonesty.com>

Reminder of the political origin of the notion

- Parrhesia is not fundamentally a spiritual notion, but a political one.
- Statement of purpose:
- 8 "Connecting together modes of veridiction, techniques of governmentality, and practices of the self is basically what I have always been trying to do."
- Veridiction: True speech (break the word down to its parts: veri: truth; diction: speech.)
- You already know how to read these things.

Reminder of the political origin of the notion

- Foucault is trying to connect true speech with practices of government and techniques of self development.

Double value of parrhesia

- 9-10 The first value is the one who tells all the truth.
- Paul said that he was sharing the whole counsel of God.

- The second, negative, value is that of speaking all that is on one's mind, (which, according to proverbs, is what a fool does.)
- This is also the beginning of the radical honesty effort.

Structural features: truth, commitment, and risk

- The parrhesiastes (truth speaker) must be a person whose words agree with his life.
- But this is not the truth of a grammarian, but of one who lives a commitment to the truth they speak.
- That truth may be in conflict with the interest of the person spoken to, and there is therefore, some risk in speaking.
- Whistleblower...
- Plato with Dionysius...

The parrhesiastic pact

- 12 Foucault speaks of a parrhesiastic game.
- The rules consist:
  - of the plea by the parrhesiastes to not be held accountable by the interlocutor, and
  - the agreement by the interlocutor not to punish the parrhesiastes for speaking the truth.

Parrhesia vs. rhetoric

- I will speak of two senses of rhetoric, ancient, and modern.
- Rhetoric in the ancient world implies the ability to convince anyone of anything irrespective of its truth. (Plato Phaedrus)
- The Sophists, like Protagoras, were teachers who instructed their pupils to win an argument at any cost. (Plato Republic)
- 14 "A rhetorician is [...] an effective liar who constrains others.
- 

Parrhesia vs. rhetoric

- Modern rhetoric takes the sense of being a parrhesiastes into account by means of:
  - Ethos: The agreement of one's life with one's speech, a courageous character, speaking the truth, knowing the risk.
  - Pathos: The ability to make common cause with the listener, also empathetic.
  - Logos: The truth, however constituted, as part of a relationship with the listener.
- 14 Parrhesia is a "way of being which is akin to a virtue, a mode of action.

Parrhesia as a specific modality of truth-telling

- 14 "Parrhesia should be regarded as a modality of truth-telling, rather than [as a] technique [like] rhetoric."

Differential study of two other kinds of truth-telling in ancient culture: prophecy and wisdom

- 15 Prophets do not speak in their own name like a parrhesiastes does.
- They speak in the name of another, say, God.
- The posture, therefore, of a prophet is one of mediation between the people and God.
- Prophecy then, does not give a "univocal and clear prescription. It does not bluntly speak the pure, transparent truth." (Is this true?)

- It is true that the prophet is different from the parrhesiastes in that he does not speak for himself.

Differential study of two other kinds of truth-telling in ancient culture: prophecy and wisdom

- 16 The parrhesiastes does not foretell the future like the prophet does.
- ~But doesn't the prophet also speak what is true?
- There is a question of multiple roles and how one fulfills them.
- Can a prophet also be a parrhesiastes?
- The parrhesiastes does not speak in riddles like the prophet does.
- ~But does the prophet always speak in riddles?
- Still, try to distinguish the roles of prophet and parrhesiastes.

Differential study of two other kinds of truth-telling in ancient culture: prophecy and wisdom

- Wise persons, or sages, withhold, or restrain themselves.
- They do not engage the issue with the powers that be.
- They stand aloof, and only offer advice when queried.
- Like the parrhesiastes, the sage speaks in their own name, but makes no move to speak unasked for, and speaks in riddles.
- The sage speaks in general principles.
- Kongzi, mozi, Ptah-Hotep, Solomon...

Heraclitus and Socrates

- 17 Heraclitus is Foucault's example of a sage.
- He retreats to riddles instead of speaking fearlessly with courage.
- "One can't step into the same river twice."
- 18 Socrates, on the other hand speaks with plainness that people should take on the burden of caring for themselves, and not be overtaken by evil.
- Socrates dies at the hands of those he has offended.

The four modalities

- 19 "The third modality of truth-telling [...] contrasted with the parrhesiast's truth-telling is that of the professor, the technician, [the teacher]"
- The four modalities of veridiction:
  - The parrhesiastes
  - The prophet
  - The sage
  - the professor

Review of terms...

- Parrhesia
- Veridiction
- Alethia <—> Truth
- Care of the self :: Knowledge of the self
- Parrhesiastic game
- Rhetoric: ancient and modern: differences
- other Modes of veridiction: prophet, sage, teacher

- Relation between oneself and one's speech: integrity

### Lying by Sissela Bok

#### Intentional Deception

- 14 "Certain religious and moral traditions were rigorously opposed to all lying. Yet many adherents wanted to recognize at least a few circumstances when intentionally misleading statements could be allowed."
- Speaking falsely to thieves and those who don't deserve the truth.
- Speaking with a mental reservation.
- 14 "Such definitions serve the special purpose of allowing persons to subscribe to a strict tradition yet have the leeway in actual practice which they desire."
- 14 When the rules were the strictest, loopholes were sought out most often.
- 15 Bok suggests that it doesn't matter whether the definition of lying is strict or broad, as long as we retain the right to morally evaluate "the intentionally misleading statement."
- Bok reiterates her "definition of a lie: an intentionally deceptive message in the form of a statement."
- To add to the lie itself are the many ways information can be distorted and biased to suit any one individual or group.
- 16 "The many experiments on rumors show how information can be distorted, added to, partially lost when passed from one person to another, until it is almost unrecognizable even though no one may have intended to deceive."
- To avoid all these tangles, Bok will look only at clear-cut lies, where it is clear the speaker intended to mislead the hearer.
- "Therefore clear-cut lies will often be singled out and considered separately.
- What do such lies do to our perception and our choices? And when might they be justified?

#### The Shared Ethic

One must not stop short of the truth when searching for it, nor give the up search when ind.

- Lee Smolin in *The Trouble With Physics*:
- "Science has succeeded because scientists comprise a community that is defined and maintained by adherence to a shared ethic. It is adherence to an ethic, not adherence to any particular fact or theory, that I believe serves as the fundamental corrective within the scientific community."\*

#### The Shared Ethic

- "There are two tenets of this ethic:
- 1. If an issue can be decided by people of good faith, applying rational argument to publicly available evidence, then it must be regarded as so decided.
- 2. If, on the other hand, rational argument from the publicly available evidence does not succeed in bringing people of good faith to agreement on an issue, society must allow and even encourage people to draw diverse conclusions."\*

#### The Risk of Truth

- Deep-seated worry is often the reason for withdrawing commitment to truth.
- One's courage fails when a possible outcome promises contradiction of a core belief.
- But, if truth contradicts a core belief then that belief must be wrong, and should be abandoned even with attendant problematic consequences.

#### The Minimum Conception of Morality

- 14 The conscientious moral agent is someone who is concerned impartially with the interests of everyone affected by what he or she does;
- who carefully sifts facts and examines their implications;
- who accepts principles of conduct only after scrutinizing them to make sure they are sound;
- who is willing to 'listen to reason' even when it means that earlier convictions may have to be revised;
- who... is willing to act on the results of this deliberation.

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#### Morality w/o Hubris

- 191 "...the various theories are not consistent with one another, and most are vulnerable to crippling objections."
- Rachels will make an attempt in this final chapter to say what a satisfactory theory might be like.
- 191 A Modest Conception of Human Beings
- 191-192 "A satisfactory theory would... be sensitive to the facts about human nature, and it would be appropriately modest about the place of human beings in the scheme of things."
- One need not accept his view of human origins to require humility about our contributions to society.
- Arrogance about our persons or place in the scheme of things has never provided benefit to individuals or humanity.
- 192 How Reason Gives Rise to Ethics
- "Because we are rational, we are able to take some facts as reasons for behaving one way rather than another."
- 193 "The origin of our concept of 'ought' may be found in these facts."
- "We find ourselves impelled to act in certain ways... as a result of thinking about our behavior and its consequences."
- "We use the word 'ought' to mark this new element of the situation."
- 193 If we are to act according to good reasons, then reason requires that we act impartially to all humans.
- Psychological egoism is not reasonable because we are by nature social creatures.
- Self-centered behavior does not fit any recognizable reality.
- 193 "So there is a pleasing theoretical 'fit' between
  - a. what reason requires, namely impartiality;
  - b. the requirements of social living, namely adherence to a set of rules that, if fairly applied, would serve everyone's interests; and
  - c. our natural inclination to care about others, at least to a modest degree."
- "All three work together to make morality... natural for us."