

# Archival research and the problematizing gesture in Foucault

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**ABSTRACT.** Michel Foucault employed several analytical tools in his research, but an investigative gesture was present throughout his “archeogenealogical” journey: problematization. Considering this notion, this text aims to archive some problematizing gestures by Michel Foucault in the work *The hermeneutics of the subject* (2010a), which collects his classes taught at the *Collège de France* in the 1981–1982 period. The archiving was grounded on the systematic reading of the classes of that course, in order to identify all the problems posed by Michel Foucault. The problems were raised as statements, as elements of the archive, and it was possible to observe their functioning throughout the classes. Each problem was pinpointed in the work with the use of the following markers: book page, time (1A or 2A), class date (day/month/year). The problems addressed by Foucault along the course and traced throughout the work were archived into four categories: a) problem that triggers the investigation; b) problems of a historical-procedural order; c) problems that address the present; d) problems that address the archive. Michel Foucault’s investigative-problematizing gesture, associated with archival research, can be considered as a means of investigating how the form of the problem comes into play throughout the entire thought process. The Foucauldian problematization is not caused only by a triggering problem, which changes throughout the investigation, but also by finding problems in the archive itself. This text can work as an archive of the problematizations of *The hermeneutics of the subject*, by Michel Foucault (2010a), a reading support for other investigations.

**Keywords:** archive; procedure; research.

## A pesquisa arquivística e o gesto problematizador em Foucault

**RESUMO.** Michel Foucault utilizou diversas ferramentas analíticas em suas pesquisas, mas um gesto investigativo esteve presente em todo o seu percurso arqueogenealógico: a problematização. Considerando esta noção, este texto tem como objetivo arquivar alguns gestos problematizadores de Michel Foucault na obra *A hermenêutica do sujeito* (2010a), a qual reúne suas aulas ministradas no *Collège de France* no período 1981-1982. O arquivamento deu-se pela leitura sistemática das aulas deste curso, a fim de identificar todos os problemas postos por Michel Foucault. Os problemas foram suspensos como enunciados, como elementos do arquivo, sendo possível observar seu funcionamento ao longo das aulas. Cada problema foi localizado na obra a partir dos seguintes marcadores: página do livro, hora (1A ou 2A), data da aula (dia/mês/ano). Os problemas abordados por Foucault no decorrer do curso e rastreados no conjunto da obra foram arquivados em quatro categorias: a) problema disparador da investigação; b) problemas de ordem histórico-procedimental; c) problemas lançados ao presente; d) problemas lançados ao arquivo. O gesto investigativo-problematizador de Michel Foucault, atrelado à pesquisa arquivística, pode ser tomado como uma maneira de investigar em que a forma do problema se coloca em jogo ao longo de todo o processo de pensamento. A problematização foucaultiana não se dá apenas pelo problema disparador, que se modifica ao longo da investigação, mas também pela localização de problemas lançados ao próprio arquivo. Este texto pode funcionar como um arquivo das problematizações do curso *A hermenêutica do sujeito*, de Michel Foucault (2010a), um apoio de leitura para outras investigações.

**Palavras-chave:** arquivo; procedimento; pesquisa.

## La investigación archivista y el gesto problematizador en Foucault

**RESUMEN.** Michel Foucault utilizó diversas herramientas analíticas en sus investigaciones, pero un gesto investigativo estuvo presente durante todo su transcurso arqueogenealógico: la problematización. Considerando esta noción, este texto tiene como objetivo archivar algunos gestos problematizadores de Michel Foucault en la obra *La hermenéutica del sujeto* (2010a), el cual reúne sus clases dictadas en el *Collège de France* en el período 1981-1982. El archivamiento se dio por la lectura sistemática de las clases de este

curso, con el fin de identificar todos los problemas planteados por Michel Foucault. Los problemas fueron suspendidos como enunciados, como elementos del archivo, siendo posible observar su funcionamiento a lo largo de las clases. Cada problema fue localizado en la obra a partir de los siguientes marcadores: página del libro, hora (1A o 2A), fecha de la clase (día/mes/año). Los problemas abordados por Foucault en el desarrollo del curso y rastreados en el conjunto de la obra fueron archivados en cuatro categorías: a) problema disparador de la investigación; b) problemas de orden histórico-procedimental; c) problemas lanzados al presente; d) problemas lanzados al archivo. El gesto investigativo-problematizador de Michel Foucault, vinculado a la investigación archivística, puede ser tomado como una forma de investigar en que la forma del problema se pone en juego a lo largo de todo el proceso de pensamiento. La problematización foucaultiana no se da solamente por el problema disparador, que se modifica a lo largo de la investigación, sino también por la localización de problemas lanzados al propio archivo. Este texto puede funcionar como un archivo de las problematizaciones del curso *La hermenéutica del sujeto*, de Michel Foucault (2010a), un apoyo de lectura para otras investigaciones.

**Palabras clave:** archivo; procedimiento; investigación.

Received December 27, 2022.

Accepted April 5, 2023.

## Introduction

“A new archivist has been appointed in the city. But has he really been appointed? Or would he be acting on his own [...]. The new archivist announces that he will only take care of himself with the statements” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 13, free translation). What does this archivist do? He refutes history in its totalizing and representational character, interrogating it about its present marks, its dispersions and discontinuities. In doing so, he disregards the postulates of linear and chronological forms and examines the formation and transformation of statements through a documentary mass. Because of that, “They say that he is a faker who cannot be based on any sacred text and who barely quotes the great philosophers” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 130, free translation).

Michel Foucault, the new archivist announced by Gilles Deleuze, appropriated the authors he considered interesting and who constituted tools of thought for him, just as he wanted his books to serve as tools for other readers. In an interview with Roger Pol Droit in 1975, he says:

All my books, whether *History of Madness* or others, can be little toolboxes. If people really want to open them, utilize such phrase, such idea, such analysis, as a screwdriver or a wrench, to short-circuit, disqualify, break the systems of power, including, eventually, the very systems from which my books result, well, so much the better! (Foucault, 2006, p. 52, free translation).

Foucault employed several analytical tools to operate with his research, but an investigative gesture was present throughout his archaeogenealogical journey, even if he only mentions this notion later in his works. It is what the author will call problematization. According to researcher Philippe Chevallier (2015, p. 298), Foucault took “[...] borrowed from long ago [...]” the term ‘problematization’ from Richard Avenarius and introduced it in 1981, at the Catholic University of Louvain:

I will also employ a barbaric word. But words are only barbaric when they do not say very clearly what they mean, such that many familiar words are barbaric, because they say many things simultaneously or say nothing at all; and, on the contrary, certain technical words, constructed in a bizarre manner, are not barbaric if they say almost clearly what they mean [...]. I would say that I make the history of problematizations (Foucault, 2012, p. 244, free translation).

According to Frederic Gros (2015, p. 296, emphasis added), “[...] the term ‘problematization, neologism that Foucault creates from ‘problem,’ appears late in his oeuvre (there are some mentions of it in the course of 1978, *Security, Territory, Population*, but it is especially in the eighties that the term will be used regularly).” However, if the notion of problematization is already mentioned in some of his works, it is only in an interview given to Paul Rabinow in 1984, entitled ‘Polemic, politics and problematizations’ and published posthumously in volume V of *Ditos e escritos* (2010b), that Foucault develops it more effectively. In this interview, Foucault says:

For a long time, I have sought to know if it is possible to characterize the history of thought, distinguishing it from the history of ideas, that is, from the analysis of representation systems, and from the history of mentalities, that is, from the analysis of attitudes and behavior schemes. To me, it seemed there was an element capable of characterizing the history of thought: one could call it the problems or, more exactly, the problematizations (Foucault, 2010b, p. 228, free translation).

Also according to French philosopher Judith Revel (2011), the most striking feature of Foucauldian thought is problematization. She says it is an investigative gesture that guided Foucault's works, having been evoked by the author's passion for several themes and his interest in discovering problems.

Foucault (2010a), therefore, took problematization as an investigative gesture to interrogate the present. In giving form to a problem, Foucault (2010a) questions the how and why of a given theme emerging at a given moment, analyzing singular practices and events. As stated by Chevallier (2015, p. 299, free translation), "[...] problematization is an activity in which new ways of thinking are invented, not so much new representative contents, but new relations between already existing contents."

The investigative-problematizing gesture of interrogating the present, in the words of Santos (2022, p. 77, free translation), "[...] is interconnected to the work with archive [...]" – archive not as inert matter, but, in the manner of Foucault, as "[...] a practice that gives rise to a multiplicity of statements as so many regular events, as so many things offered to treatment and manipulation" (Foucault, 2015, p. 159, free translation). Thus, "[...] its series, its links and its extension would be the result of the researcher's hand, which starts from a problem in the present and goes back in time, scouring the material at its disposal, in search of its echoes" (Santos, 2022, p. 78, free translation).

## Foucault's problematizing gesture amid the archive

From the course "On the government of the living," taught by Foucault at the *Collège de France* in 1980, emerges what is later called a 'last Foucault.' This new way of writing and telling the history of the present shows a Foucault operating with his thought, showing the working of his research. Noguera-Ramírez (2009), referring to professor Foucault, states that, when reading his courses, it is possible to appreciate "[...] concepts and notions used as explanatory tools or elaborated in the development of research, but not resumed in publications; notes or sketches, drafts (sometimes implicit) of possible problems to be deepened, of themes to be researched" (Noguera-Ramírez, 2009, p. 3, free translation).

It can be observed, then, that the place that problematization occupies in Foucault's courses may assume an importance as central as his research themes. That is because, as observed by Chevallier (2015, p. 308, free translation), "[...] A problematization is the way in which thought projects itself forward in an interrogative form, without being able in any way to anticipate what will come from it and the answers that history will retain." But how did Foucault operate with the problematizing gesture in his courses?

At the beginning of each class, Foucault posed a question, based on which he organized his presentation about the problem worked on in his research. "In fact, a problem is born, develops and is solved not *in vivo*, but in thought." (Chevallier, 2015, p. 302, free translation). The problems also showed the methodological procedures he had used in the investigations. "The problem is not formulated in 'what is this or is it not?', but in 'How?': 'How should the subject relate to such or such object (their body, the other, riches, food, death, etc.)?'" (Chevallier, 2015, p. 302, emphasis added). With each new course, Foucault justified the choice of his object, while demonstrating the movements of reordering new elements, which maintained the vitality of his archive.

The vitality of Michel Foucault's problematizations in the archives can be observed in the transcripts of the courses taught by him at the *Collège de France*. As a purpose of this text, we sought to archive some problematizing gestures of Michel Foucault in the work *The hermeneutics of the subject* (2010a), which collects his classes taught in the 1981–1982 period. This course not only allows us to ascertain the problems that Foucault faced in the archive of 'care of the self' and 'know thyself' (notions traced in the archive by the philosopher to produce the analysis of the practices of the self), but also makes it possible to archive the problematizing gestures of the researcher.

The archiving procedure occurred through the systematic reading of the course classes, in order to identify all the problems posed by Michel Foucault to his listeners. The problems were raised as statements, a notion as understood by Michel Foucault in the work *The archaeology of knowledge* (2015). The statements, for the philosopher, are a function of existence through which "[...] one can decide, then, by analysis or intuition, whether they 'make sense' or not, according to what rule they succeed or overlap, of what they are signs, and what kind of act is performed by their formulation (oral or written)" (Foucault, 2015, p. 105, emphasis added, free translation).

The problems, here taken as statements — as elements of an archive —, were archived in a manner that one can observe how they work throughout the researcher's classes. Each problem was pinpointed in the course *The hermeneutics of the subject*, by Michel Foucault (2010a), with the following markers: book page,

time (1A or 2A), class date (day/month/year). The problems are presented in this text in direct quotations (free translation).

Based on this work, we traced and archived four modes through which the philosopher produces problems: 1) problem that triggers the investigation; 2) problems of a historical-procedural order; 3) problems that address the present; and 4) problems that address the archive.

### Problem that triggers the investigation

The problem that triggers the investigation developed by Michel Foucault in the course *The hermeneutics of the subject* (2010a) changed gradually throughout the classes. There were six modifications of the triggering problem as the course progressed. The philosopher presented the problem that triggers the investigation in the first class (06/01/1982) and then presented it again in the sixth (10/02/1982), seventh (17/02/1982), eighth (24/02/1982), ninth (03/03/1982) and last (24/03/1982) classes. Below, all the findings of this first archival approach were archived.

The question I would like to address this year is the following: in what form of history were established, in the West, the relations, which are not raised by usual practice or historical analysis, between these two elements, the 'subject' and the 'truth' (Foucault, 2010a, p. 4, 1A6/1/82, emphasis added).

In fact, this is a difficult, complex question, which I will dwell on a little more because it is exactly at the heart of the problem that I intended to pose this year – in fact, that I have been wanting to pose for some time – which is, fundamentally, the following: how is the relation between the truth-telling (veridiction) and the practice of the subject established, fixed and defined? Or even more generally: how are the truth-telling and the governing (of oneself and others) linked and articulated with each other? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 205, 2A10/2/82).

I would now like to return a little to this point with regard to the Cynics, the Epicureans, [but] I would like to return to the Stoics because I find in them an important problem, important at least for me, since it is at the heart of the problems I would like to pose and since, deep down, the question I ask myself is this: how could the question of the truth of the subject be constituted through this set of historical phenomena and processes that we can call our 'culture'? How, why and at what cost have we been engaged in sustaining a true discourse about the subject, about the subject that we are not, as a mad subject or delinquent subject, about the subject that, in general, we are as we speak, work, live, and finally about the subject that, in the particular case of sexuality, we are directly and individually for ourselves? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 226, 1A17/2/82, emphasis added).

In our familiar categories of thought, we consider it as an evidence that, when we talk about the problem of the relations between subject and knowledge, the question posed, the question we ask ourselves is the following: is it possible to have of the subject a knowledge of the same type as that we have of any other element in the world or, on the contrary, is another type of knowledge necessary, irreducible to the first, etc.? In other words, I think that very spontaneously, we pose the question of the subject-knowledge relation as follows: can there be an objectification of the subject? [...] It is this spiritual modalization of the subject that answers the general question: what happens to the subject's relations with the knowledge of the world? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 283, 2A24/2/82).

Since speaking implies saying the true, how not to impose, in the manner of a kind of fundamental pact, on every subject who takes the turn to speak, that they say the true because they believe it true? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 327, 2A3/3/82).

It seems that there lies the root of the question that in the West was posed by philosophy or, if we want, the challenge of Western thought to philosophy as discourse and as tradition. This is the challenge: how can that which is offered as an object of knowledge articulated by the domain of 'téchne' be at the same time the place where is manifested, where is experienced and where is hardly realized the truth of the subject that we are? In what way can the world, which offers itself as an object of knowledge through the domain of the 'téchne,' be at the same time the place where is manifested and where is experienced the 'self' as an ethical subject of truth? And, if this is the problem of Western philosophy – in what way can the world be an object of knowledge and at the same time a place of proof for the subject; in what way can there be a subject of knowledge, who offers oneself the world as an object through a 'téchne,' and a subject of experience of oneself, who offers oneself this same world, but in the form, radically different, of a place of proof? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 438, 2A24/3/82, emphasis added).

### Problems of a historical-procedural order

In addition to the problem that triggers the investigation undergoing modifications throughout the course, there were problems of a historical-procedural order that Michel Foucault (2010a) brought throughout the

classes. These problems raise points as to choices, to ways of viewing the archive, the relations between problems and implications in the questions made visible. Below are twenty-two (22) statements about historical-procedural problems:

Thus, while everything indicates to us that in the history of philosophy – even more broadly, in the history of Western thought – the *‘gnôthi seautón’* is undoubtedly the founding formula of the question of the relations between subject and truth, why choose this apparently somewhat marginal notion, which certainly permeates Greek thought, but which seems to have been attributed no particular *status*, that of the care of the self, of *‘epiméleia heautoû’*? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 4, 1A6/1/82, emphasis added).

Before concluding these general purposes, however, I would like to ask the following question: why, in spite of everything, has the notion of *‘epiméleia heautoû’* (care of the self) been disregarded in the way Western thought, philosophy, has remade its own history? What happened so there was such strong favor, so much value and so much intensity given to ‘know thyself’ and so there was disregard, in the dim light at least, as to this notion of care of the self, which, in fact, historically, when we investigate the documents and texts, seems to have framed the principle of ‘know thyself’ and constituted the support of a whole set that is, after all, extremely rich and dense in notions, practices, ways of being, forms of existence, etc.? Why this favor, for us, to the *‘gnôthi seautón’* at the expense of the care of the self? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 12, 1A6/1/82, emphasis added).

This question, which is not for me to solve, is certainly the following: is it possible, in the very terms of psychoanalysis, that is, of the effects of knowledge, therefore, to pose the question of the subject’s relations with truth, which – from the point of view, at least, of spirituality and the *‘epiméleia heautoû’* – cannot, by definition, be put in the very terms of knowledge? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 29, 2A6/1/82, emphasis added).

In short, in the succession of the two questions (what is the self and what is care?), it is a matter of answering one and the same question: it is necessary to provide of oneself and of the care of the self a definition such that can be derived from it the knowledge necessary to govern others. This is, therefore, the game of the second half, the second part of dialogue that begins in 127e. And that is what I would now like to examine alternately. To begin with, the first question: what is this self that one must take care of oneself with? And secondly: what should this occupation, this care, this *‘epiméleia,’* consist of? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 48, 1A13/1/82, emphasis added).

First question: what is the self? Well, I believe it is necessary to observe, from the outset, the manner how the question is posed. It is posed in an interesting manner, because we see very naturally reappearing – relative to the question about ‘what is the self?’ – the reference to the Oracle of Delphi, to Pythia, to what she says: know thyself (*‘gnônai heautón’*) (Foucault, 2010a, p. 48, 1A13/1/82, emphasis added).

It is, in a way, a methodological and formal question, but, I believe, totally capital in this entire movement: it is necessary to know what ‘heautón’ is, it is necessary to know what the self is. Therefore, not like ‘what kind of animal is it, what is its nature, how is it composed?’, but [what is] this relation designated by the reflexive pronoun ‘heautón’, what is this element that is the same on the subject’s side and the object’s side?” (Foucault, 2010a, p. 49, 1A13/1/82, emphasis added).

In a very significant way, the analysis that will lead us from the question – ‘what is my self?’ – to the answer – ‘I am my soul’ – is a movement that begins with a small set of questions that I would summarize, if we want, in the way I go on to expose. When it is said – ‘Socrates speaks to Alcibiades’ – what does that mean? [...] The question posed is the question of the subject. ‘Socrates speaks to Alcibiades,’ what does that mean, Socrates asks, that is, what is the subject that is supposed when one evokes this activity of the word that is Socrates’ in relation to Alcibiades? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 51, 1A13/1/82, emphasis added).

The question I would like to pose, a question that is both historical and methodological, is [the following]: can it be said that the care of the self now constitutes a kind of universal ethical law? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 101, 2A20/1/82).

I have not told you about it yet because, precisely, we end up there; we see, however, that the chronological shift that led us from the care of the adolescent self to the care of the self in the direction of becoming old establishes the problem of knowing what is the objective and the goal of this care of the self; in what can one be saved? We also see that the medicine/practice of the self-relation brings us to the problem of ‘saving oneself by achieving one’s own salvation’: what is it to have good health, to escape from diseases, to be at the same time led to death and, in a way, save oneself from it? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 109, 2A20/1/82, emphasis added).

The question is only this: why take the dialogue of the ‘Alcibiades’, to which, ordinarily, commentators do not ascribe such great importance in the work of Plato? Why take it as a milestone, not only to talk about Plato, but also to put into perspective, after all, an entire plane of ancient philosophy? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 153, 1A3/2/82, emphasis added).

That said about the meaning I intend to give to this analysis – which may seem a little repetitive and meticulous – of the care of the self and of the relation of oneself to oneself, I would now like to return to the question I posed in the last class, namely: what relations were established, at the time I speak to you about, between the principle of

conversion to the self and the principle of knowledge of the self? In this simple and crude form, would be the following question: from the moment that the precept 'to take care of the self' gained breadth, generality, assumed the radical and absolute character of 'one must convert to oneself,' 'one must spend one's life returning to oneself and seeking to reunite with oneself', from that moment, would not the precept 'to convert to oneself' imply the need to shift, partially or totally, the gaze, the attention, the sharpness of the spirit, from the direction to others and to the things of the world to the direction to oneself? More precisely, would not 'converting to oneself' fundamentally imply constituting oneself as an object and domain of knowledge? Or, to pose the same question according to a historical perspective and linearity: would we not find there, in this Hellenistic and Roman precept of conversion to oneself, the point of origin, the first rooting of all practices and all knowledge that will then develop in the Christian world and in the modern world (practices of investigation and direction of consciousness), [would we not find there the] first form of what can later be called spirit sciences, psychology, analysis of consciousness, analysis of 'psykhé', etc.? Would not knowledge of the self, in the Christian sense and then in the modern sense, take root in this stoic, epicurean, cynical, etc. episode that I try to analyze? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 226, 1A17/2/82, emphasis added).

In any case, I would like to return to the point that undoubtedly constituted an important historical move: would not the moment when, in Hellenistic and Roman culture, the care of the self became an autonomous, self-finished art, valuing the entire existence, have been a productive moment for us to see the formation and formulation of the question of the truth of the subject? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 227, 1A17/2/82).

Now, I would like to return to this question of conversion to oneself, no longer from the perspective of knowledge and 'máthesis', but from another standpoint: what is the type of action, the type of activity, the mode of practice of oneself over oneself that implies conversion to the self? In other words: what is the operative practice that, outside of knowledge, is implied by conversion to the self? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 281, 2A24/2/82, emphasis added).

From the moment we no longer consider conversion to the self from the point of view of 'máthesis' – of knowledge, knowledge of the world, of the question for self-knowledge, etc. – but from the angle of practice, of the exercise of self over self, will we not find ourselves in an order of things that is surely no longer that of truth, but that of law, rule, code? Will we not find, in the founding principle of this 'áskesis,' of this practice of self for self, of self over self, the founding and first instance of the law? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 282, 2A24/2/82, emphasis added).

I believe that we must now apply to the question of 'áskesis' the same detachment, the same liberation in relation to our own categories, to our own questions. Indeed, when we put the question of the subject in the order of practice (not only 'what to do,' but also 'what to do with myself?'), I think that very spontaneously – I do not mean 'very naturally,' I should rather say 'very historically,' and this by a necessity that we carry – we consider it an evidence that the question about 'what happens to the subject and what he must do with himself' [needs to be put] in function of the law. That is, to what extent, on what basis and to what limit should the subject submit to the law? Well, in the culture of the self of Greek, Hellenistic, Roman civilization, the problem of the subject in their relation to practice leads, I believe, to something different from the question of the law. It leads to the following question: how can the subject act as they should, be as they should, insofar as they not only know the truth, but insofar as they speak it, practice it and exercise it? I have formulated the question poorly, it would be necessary to say more exactly the following: the question that the Greeks and Romans pose about the relations between subject and practice consists in knowing to what extent the fact of knowing the truth, of telling the truth, of practicing and exercising the truth, can allow the subject not only to act as they should act, but to be as they should be and how they want to be (Foucault, 2010a, p. 283, 2A24/2/82, emphasis added).

I will be very brief on the reading/writing issues because they are easier and more familiar subjects, and also [because] I was already quite anecdotal in the previous class; I will move on straight to the issue of the ethics of the word (Foucault, 2010a, p. 317, 2A3/3/82).

What are these exercises? What is this asceticism that is presented, defined in the philosophy of the High Empire, or in general in this practice, in this culture of the self of that time, which I try to define, describe? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 374, 1A17/3/82).

Therefore, should a continuity be admitted or not? Should it, in fact, be considered that there has been something like a transference, an implantation and at the same time a decantation of these essentially magical and somatic practices, turned into philosophical and spiritual practices? Are they in fact two different sets of practices that cannot approach each other? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 375, 1A17/3/82).

The 'regula vitae' (the rule of life) is essential. Why? It would be necessary to go back to that. It is true that many elements concurred (Foucault, 2010a, p. 381, 1A17/3/82, emphasis added).

However, there is no precise problematization of these two themes. It is not theorized the question: 'To what does life prepare as preparation?'; nor the question: 'What is discrimination, which at the same time is one of the conditions and one of the effects of life as proof?' (Foucault, 2010a, p. 401, 2A17/3/82, emphasis added).

What to say about it? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 403, 2A17/3/82).

In fact, here too, in a schematic way, how to say what happens with the '*meléte*' (meditation that is precisely not a memory)? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 409, 1A24/3/82, emphasis added).

## Problems addressing the present

Some of the statements made visible are problematizations that Michel Foucault (2010a) addresses to his students throughout the course. Sometimes, there is a tone of irony; other times, it is procedural issues that are associated. Below are twelve (12) statements produced from the archive and addressed to the philosopher's present time.

How do these injunctions to exalt oneself, to worship oneself, to turn to oneself, to render service to oneself sound in our ears? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 13, 1A6/1/82).

And this milestone, well understood, should be sought [...] on the side of science? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 26, 2A6/1/82).

A question that, consequently, does not relate to the nature of man, but to what we today – for the word is not in the Greek text – would call the question of the subject. What is this subject, what is this point in whose direction must be oriented the reflective activity, the reflected activity, this activity that returns from the individual to himself? What is this self? This, the first question. Second question to be also solved: how can the care of the self, when we develop it as it should, when we take it seriously, lead us, and lead Alcibiades to what he wants, that is, to know the '*tékhnē*' he needs to govern others, the art that will allow him to govern well? [...] What comes into play in the dialogue, then, is: which self must I take care of myself with in order to be able, as it should be, to take care of myself with others whom I must govern? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 36, 2A6/1/82, emphasis added).

But who knows exactly what it is to 'take care of oneself with oneself'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 48, 1A13/1/82, emphasis added).

How could we briefly characterize this golden age? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 75, 1A20/1/82).

Let us return, then, to the question I posed: can the care of the self be considered, in Hellenistic and Roman culture, as a kind of general law? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 101, 2A20/1/82).

In explaining how Euphrates speaks well, how exquisite his language is, how he convinces so well that, after being convinced, one would wish to continue to listen to him, although one no longer needs to be convinced, what does Pliny do but show that Euphrates is not a philosopher of rude, harsh language, limited to his only objective – to convince and change the soul of his listener –, but that he is also a little rhetorical, that he was able to integrate [...] his own pleasures [...] into the rhetorical discourse within philosophical practice? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 139, 2A27/1/82).

Should we then say that this Epicurean friendship, as it is extolled by Epicurus and all his disciples, would be nothing more than utility, that is, that it would be entirely commanded by a care of the self that would be the care of utility? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 174, 2A3/2/82).

For the Prince, the political man par excellence, the only one who, in the political field of the Roman world, contrary to what happened in the Greek city, has to take care of himself entirely with others, [for] him, should not the care of the self be commanded, as in Plato's '*Alcibiades*,' only by the care that he must have with others? Would not the Prince be the only one in society, the only one among human beings, who should only take care of himself with himself to the extent that [he must] – and in order to effectively be able to – take care of himself with others? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 179, 2A3/2/82, emphasis added).

The question that must be posed, then, I believe, is [the following]: when Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, etc., establish as imperative "look at thyself," would it concern the platonic look – look to discover in thee the seeds of truth – or would it be: thou must you look at thyself in order to detect in thee the traces of concupiscence and expose, explore the secrets of thy consciousness (the '*arcana conscientiae*')? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 196, 1A10/2/82, emphasis added).

But we can re-read a whole branch of nineteenth-century thought as the difficult attempt, or a series of difficult attempts, to reconstitute an ethics and an aesthetics of the self. Let us take, for example, Stirner, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, dandyism, Baudelaire, anarchy, anarchist thought, etc., and we will have a series of attempts, undoubtedly entirely different from each other, but all of them, I believe, more or less polarized by the question: is it possible to constitute, reconstitute an aesthetics and an ethics of the self? At what price and under what conditions? Or else: should not an ethics and an aesthetics of the self finally be inverted in the systematic refusal of the self (as in Schopenhauer)? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 224, 1A17/2/82).

To constitute oneself by an exercise in which the truth-telling becomes the subject's way of being: what would be more distant from what we now understand in our historical tradition as an '*ascesis*,' an ascesis that renounces itself in function of a true Word that was said by an Other? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 292, 2A24/2/82, emphasis added).

## Problems addressing the archive

Other problems verified are those that Michel Foucault (2010a) addresses to the archive, as the description of the data is developed in the classes. It is thus, by creating new problems around what the documentary description makes visible, that Foucault gives movement to his thinking. These problems addressing the archive take different forms, such as: 'what is this?', 'why?', 'how?', 'who is this?', 'what does this mean?', 'this in what sense', 'in what way?', 'which ones?' These questions are always directed to the archive that is described and sometimes produce a new analysis, in order to provide another perspective of the same problem. It is observed that these problems correspond to most of the archive of problematizations in The hermeneutics of the subject. The following archive shows one hundred and forty (140) statements with problems addressed by Foucault (2010a) to the archive.

For someone who led a certain way of life, who is not sure what it was, but such that he risks being sentenced to death after a judgement like this, after all, isn't there something shameful about it? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 7, 1A6/1/82).

And what would be the teaching he would give if he were not convicted, since he had already given it before the accusation? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 7, 1A6/1/82).

Let us consider, more precisely, the first nine paragraphs of Spinoza's '*On The Improvement of Understanding*'. We will see in a very clear way – for reasons that we know well and on which I do not need to insist – how the problem of access to truth, in Spinoza, was linked, in his own formulation, to a series of demands that concerned the very being of the subject: in what and how should I transform my very being of subject? What conditions must I impose in order to have access to the truth, and to what extent will this access to the truth grant me what I seek, that is, the sovereign good, the sovereign good? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 27, 2A6/1/82, emphasis added).

What if Alcibiades were proposed the ancient question, classical in Greek education, with reference to Homer, etc., namely – supposing you had to choose between dying today or continuing to lead a life without any brilliance, what would you prefer? – [...] What does he already have and what else does he want more of? [...] And why only him? [...] Why? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 31, 2A6/1/82).

Well, how was Alcibiades formed, in regard to this education, either that of Sparta, or that of the Persians? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 33, 2A6/1/82).

Finally, fourthly, we see that the need to take care of oneself with oneself emerges as an urgency, not at the moment of the text in which Alcibiades formulates his political projects, but when he realizes that he ignores... what does he ignore? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 36, 2A6/1/82).

We see, then, two questions arise at this moment, two questions to be resolved that are directly linked to each other. The need to take care of oneself with oneself poses the following question: what, then, is the self that needs to be taken care of when it is said that one needs to take care of the self? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 36, 2A6/1/82).

Socrates solaces him, saying: it is not so serious, do not worry, after all, you are not fifty years old, you are young; ergo, you have time. But time for what? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 43, 1A13/1/82).

First, in the imperative 'it is necessary to take care of oneself with oneself,' what is this thing, what is this object that you have to take care of yourself with, what is this self? Secondly, in the 'care of the self,' there is care. Given that the game of dialogue is – if I must take care of myself with myself, it is in order to become capable of governing others and ruling the city –, what form should this care have, in what should it consist of? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 48, 1A13/1/82, emphasis added).

In the formula '*epimeleisthai heautoû*', what is the '*heautoû*'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 49, 1A13/1/82, emphasis added).

What is this identical element, in a way present throughout in care: subject of care, object of care? What is it? [...] What, then, is this '*heautón*', or rather, what is referred to in this '*heautón*'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 49, 1A13/1/82, emphasis added).

Knowing the art of medicine, knowing how to make diagnoses, prescribe medicines, cure diseases, when the doctor gets sick and applies all this to himself, could it not be said that he takes care of himself with himself? Well, the answer will, surely, be no. For when he examines himself, makes a diagnosis about himself, puts himself on a regimen, what does he actually take care of himself with? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 54, 1A13/1/82).

When a good father of a family, a good owner of the house, a good owner takes care of himself with his goods and wealth, takes care of himself with prospering what he possesses, takes care of himself with his family, etc., can it be said that he takes care of himself with himself? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 54, 1A13/1/82).



Finally, thirdly, can it be said that Alcibiades' suitors take care of themselves with Alcibiades himself? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 54, 1A13/1/82).

Secondly, the question of the relationship between the care of the self and social activity, the private duties of the breadwinner, the husband, the son, the owner, the slave-owner, etc. will also be regularly raised – questions which, as we know, are grouped, in Greek thought, under the name of “economics.” Is the care of the self compatible or not with the set of these duties? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 55, 1A13/1/82).

In what should take care of oneself with oneself consist? (p. 62, 2A13/1/82).

Now what does this comparison, which is well known, show, applied to the soul? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 65, 2A13/1/82).

It is by turning to this element assured in thought and knowledge that the soul can see itself. Now, what is this element? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 65, 2A13/1/82).

Alcibiades, then, promises. What does he promise, at the end of this dialogue in which, so contumaciously, he was incited to take care of himself with himself? What does he promise to Socrates? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 66, 2A13/1/82).

One of these conditions concerns the field of application of the care of the self: who should be taken care with themselves? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 75, 1A20/1/82).

Why does one take care of oneself? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 77, 1A20/1/82).

How does the care of the self become and should become coextensive with individual life? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 79, 1A20/1/82).

Now, this Serenus, to whom had been equally dedicated the ‘*De constantia*’ and, probably, as far as we know, the ‘*De otio*,’ who was he? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 81, 1A20/1/82, emphasis added).

Well, who is Lucilius? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 82, 1A20/1/82).

How many young people would Socrates have questioned on the street so that, despite everything, some would end up listening to him and taking care of themselves with themselves? Could Socrates, Epictetus asks, persuade all who came to him to take care of themselves? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 107, 2A20/1/82).

What is this pathological state, this morbid state from which one must emerge? (p. 118, 1A27/1/82).

Now, what is ‘*stultitia*’? The ‘*stultus*’ is the one who is not careful with himself. How is the ‘*stultus*’ characterized? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 118, 1A27/1/82, emphasis added).

And what is wanting as it should? [...] And what does it mean to want freely? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 119, 1A27/1/82).

Now, what is the object that can be wanted freely, absolutely, and always? What is the object to which the will can be polarized in such a way that it will exercise itself without being determined by anything from the outside? What is the object that the will can want absolutely, that is, without wanting anything else? What is the object that the will can, under any circumstances, always want, without having to modify itself at the whim of occasions and time? The object that can be freely wanted, without having to take into account external determinations, is evidently only one: the self. What is this object that can be wanted absolutely, that is, without placing it in relation to any other? The self. What is this object that one can want always, without having to exchange it according to the course of time or the flow of occasions? The self. Therefore, what is, in fact, the definition of the ‘*stultus*’ that – without extrapolating too much, I believe – we can extract from these descriptions made by Seneca? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 120, 1A27/1/82, emphasis added).

The question that then arises is the following: what, then, is the action of the other that is necessary for the constitution of the subject by himself? How does it come to be inscribed as an indispensable element in the care of the self? What is, so to speak, this outstretched hand, this ‘*eduction*’ that is not an education, but something else or something more than education? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 121, 1A27/1/82, emphasis added).

Now, concretely and practically, in what way do philosophers, in what way does philosophy articulate the need for its own presence with the constitution, development and organization, in the individual, of the practice that he makes of himself? What instrument does it propose? Or rather, through what institutional mediations does it intend that the philosopher, in his existence, in his practice, in his discourse, in the advice he will give, will allow those who listen to him to make the practice of themselves, take care of themselves and finally achieve what is proposed as an object and as a goal, and which are they themselves? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 122, 1A27/1/82).

How to make this bitter need appear, or rather, impose it on those who made this mistake and have this illusion? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 126, 1A27/1/82).

And what are the elements of that day so described, which are considered pertinent by Marcus Aurelius to make his report, to account to Fronto? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 144, 2A27/1/82).

What does this mean? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 147, 2A27/1/82).

To whom is an explanation given? Well, to him who is 'your sweetest master.' Here we see the exact translation of the fundamental principle of the examination of conscience. But what is this letter, anyway? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 147, 2A27/1/82, emphasis added).

As for yourself, you have in relation to yourself (to the day that has passed, the work done, the distractions that have occurred) this attitude, this position of one who will be accountable to someone, of one who lives their day in a way so they can and must present it, offer it, decipher it before another – who will be who? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 148, 2A27/1/82).

And why should he be taken care of himself, in both senses of 'why'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 157, 1A3/2/82, emphasis added).

But take care of myself with what? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 157, 1A3/2/82).

Thus defined, would salvation as the goal of a relationship with oneself in which completeness is found – salvation that is nothing more than the very completeness of the relationship with oneself – then entirely exclude the problem of the relationship with the Other? Would 'Salvation of self' and 'salvation of others' be definitively disconnected or, to employ once again the Neoplatonic vocabulary, would the political and the cathartic be definitively dissociated? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 173, 2A3/2/82, emphasis added).

And why should it be chosen by itself? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 175, 2A3/2/82).

And happiness ('*makariótes*') of which it is a part, in what does it consist? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 175, 2A3/2/82, emphasis added).

Why was that done? Out of selfishness? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 178, 2A3/2/82).

And, to criticize it, what does it extol? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 178, 2A3/2/82).

The Empire, the Principality, becomes craft and profession. And why? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 181, 2A3/2/82).

What is this thing always [remembered]? Of what one must be a good emperor? No. From what must humanity be saved? No. Of what is one devoted to the public good? No (Foucault, 2010a, p. 182, 2A3/2/82).

And what is the objective? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 182, 2A3/2/82).

What is the pivot? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 186, 1A10/2/82).

Is the self the point to which we return through the long circuit of asceticism and philosophical practice? Is the self an object that we always keep before our eyes and that we reach through a movement that only wisdom could promote? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 192, 1A10/2/82).

Fixing oneself as a goal, how to establish an adequate and full relationship of oneself with oneself? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 193, 1A10/2/82).

Thus, we find in Epictetus the need to expel the erroneous judgments we may have in mind. And why do we need to expel erroneous judgments? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 193, 1A10/2/82).

When Plutarch, Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius say that one must examine oneself, look at oneself, what kind of knowledge is it? Of an appeal to constitute oneself as an object [...] [of knowledge? Of a 'platonic' appeal? Would it not be a similar appeal to what we will find in later Christian and monastic literature, in the form of a recommendation of vigilance that will translate into certain precepts and advice, such as: pay attention to all the images and representations that can enter the spirit; do not cease to examine each of the movements that occur in your heart in order to try to decipher in them the signs or traces of a temptation; seek to determine whether what comes to your spirit was sent to you by God or by the devil, if not by yourself; would there not be a trace of concupiscence in the seemingly purer ideas that come to your spirit? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 196, 1A10/2/82, emphasis added).

What does it mean to 'turn one's gaze toward oneself' in these texts, I repeat, of Plutarch, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, etc.? I believe that, in order to understand what 'turn one's gaze towards oneself' means, it is necessary, initially, to ask the following question: what should the gaze turn away from when it receives the recommendation to turn towards oneself? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 196, 1A10/2/82, emphasis added).

In what does this shift of curiosity consist? [...] And what are these more pleasant things? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 198, 1A10/2/82).

What is a good athlete? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 207, 2A10/2/82).

Would it be a pure and simple difference in content – useful knowledge/useless knowledge –, situated, on the side of useless knowledge, that of the world, of the things of the world, and, on the side of useful knowledge, that of man and human existence? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 207, 2A10/2/82).

Before that, what things do one needs to know? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 209, 2A10/2/82).

Demetrius speaks of another modality of knowing. He contrasts two modes of knowledge: one through causes, which he tells us is pointless; and another mode of knowledge, which is what? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 210, 2A10/2/82).

What is this '*physiología*'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 213, 2A10/2/82, emphasis added).

On what object do they work? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 213, 2A10/2/82).

What will Epicurus oppose to this '*paideía*' thus criticized? Precisely '*physiología*'. '*Physiología*' is different from '*paideía*'. And what distinguishes it? First, instead of fabricating people who are nothing but pompous and inconsistent braggarts, what does '*physiología*' do? (p. 214, 2A10/2/82, Foucault, 2010a, emphasis added).

What does it mean to return to oneself? What circle is this, what circuit, what fold is this that we must operate in relation to something that, however, is not given to us, but only promised at the end of our life? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 222, 1A17/2/82).

What is the Platonic model? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 227, 1A17/2/82).

The Christian model – of which, if we have time, I will speak to you in more detail – in what way is it characterized? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 228, 1A17/2/82).

Would 'converting to oneself' imply or demand a task that was fundamental, continuous, of knowledge of what we would call the human subject, human soul, human interiority, interiority of consciousness, etc.? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 231, 1A17/2/82, emphasis added).

I think, however, that the question thus arises: what do the Stoics mean when, at the same time, they insist on the need to order all knowledge to the '*tékhnē tou bíou*', to direct the gazes to oneself, associating to this conversion and this inflection of the gaze over oneself the entire course of the world order, of its general and inner organization? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 232, 1A17/2/82, emphasis added).

Well, in what must this labour consist, to which one must now hasten because of age and all wasted time? [...] And what close domain is this if not me myself? [...] If it is with oneself, what, then, should one not take care of oneself with? With the rest? Yes, if we want to. But what is this rest? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 235, 1A17/2/82).

And what does this historical knowledge tell us? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 236, 1A17/2/82).

And then we come to the third development, the third moment of the text: since history is not capable of showing us true greatness, in what will that true greatness consist? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 236, 1A17/2/82).

At this point, how does Seneca insert in this goal – defined by the opposition to historical chronicles – the possibility and the need to travel the world? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 243, 2A17/2/82).

How can we say that the self is honored, pursued, kept before the eyes, in whose proximity is experienced this delight that is absolute and, at the same time, that one needs to free oneself from? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 244, 2A17/2/82).

And, then, in what will consist liberating oneself from this kind of relationship with oneself? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 245, 2A17/2/82).

What will this gaze allow us, which we thus obtain by the movement of withdrawal in relation to this world and of ascent to the top of the world, from where the secrets of nature open? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 248, 2A17/2/82).

Why does this knowledge of nature liberate us? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 250, 2A17/2/82).

And what can be seen in this world, from this view from above? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 254, 2A17/2/82).

The problem posed last time was this: what place does the knowledge of the world occupy in time and in the general precept of conversion to oneself? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 259, 1A24/2/82).

What are the '*parasthemata*' to which Marcus Aurelius alludes when he says: 'To the abovementioned '*parastémata*' let still another be added'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 261, 1A24/2/82, emphasis added).

One concerns that which we must consider as the good: what is the good for the subject? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 261, 1A24/2/82).

How will this exercise develop and in what does it consist? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 262, 1A24/2/82).

It is, in short, about testing this object. In what will this proof, this test of the object consist? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 266, 1A24/2/82).

At the moment when these things present themselves to the spirit and when the '*phantasia*' offers them to the perception of the subject, should they – in relation to things and according to the content of the representation – resort to a virtue such as sweetness, or to a virtue such as courage, or to a virtue such as sincerity, or such as good faith or such as the '*enkráteia*' (mastery of the self)? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 267, 1A24/2/82, emphasis added).

Why do this exercise? Why try to get rid of this movement of set presented by dance or music, to abstract and isolate from it each element in its greatest particularity, in order to apprehend the reality of the instant in what it may have of absolutely singular? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 270, 1A24/2/82).

And why is it necessary thus to consider things, from top to bottom, in order to despise them? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 270, 1A24/2/82).

Thus, when we have under our eyes a powerful, arrogant man who wants to flaunt his power, who wants to impress us with his superiority or frighten us with his anger, what is to be done? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 274, 1A24/2/82).

How to acquire virtue? Does one acquire virtue as one acquires the knowledge of medicine or the knowledge of music? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 281, 2A24/2/82).

What is the '*paraskeuē*'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 286, 2A24/2/82, emphasis added).

But exercise in what? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 286, 2A24/2/82).

And especially also, the Christian athlete is the one who will have an enemy, an adversary, who will keep alert. In relation to whom and to what? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 287, 2A24/2/82).

Secondly, what is this equipment ('*paraskeuē*') made of? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 287, 2A24/2/82, emphasis added).

The good athlete, who has enough '*paraskeuē*,' is not simply one who knows one thing or another concerning the general order of nature or the particular precepts corresponding to this or that circumstance, but is the one who has – for now, I say 'in mind,' but it will be necessary to return to this subject – rooted in them, implanted in them (these are Seneca's phrases in letter 50) what? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 288, 2A24/2/82, emphasis added).

And what is this '*paraskeuē*'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 291, 2A24/2/82, emphasis added).

Therefore, we have – and I will resume later – the matrix of the following question: given that the '*lógos*,' because it tells the truth, is capable of producing spontaneously and as if automatically effects on the soul, how can it be explained that it does not produce indefinitely, in the very passivity of attention, positive effects? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 301, 1A3/3/82, emphasis added).

And how, then, could listening be a '*tékhne*,' if the '*tékhne*' supposes a knowledge, knowledge that we can only acquire by listening? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 303, 1A3/3/82, emphasis added).

How, then, is this practice manifested, assiduous, regulated, not yet '*tékhne*'? Under what rule does it place itself and what are its requirements? The problem is this: since we have to deal with an ambiguous listening, which has its part of '*pathetikós*' and its '*logikós*' role, how to manage to conserve this '*logikós*' role, eliminating as much as possible all the effects of involuntary passivity that may be harmful? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 303, 1A3/3/82, emphasis added).

How is logical listening purified in the practice of the self? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 303, 1A3/3/82).

What does it mean to hush as much as possible? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 304, 1A3/3/82).

Direct one's attention as one should – what does that mean? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 310, 1A3/3/82).

What will come to the grammarian's spirit when he pays attention to this verse: 'Time flees, the irreparable time'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 311, 1A3/3/82, emphasis added).

In the practice of the self, in this art of the practice of the self, would there be any regulation, requirements or precepts concerning the word? What should be said, how should it be said, and who should say it? I recognize that this question has no meaning or existence – and only in this way could I formulate it – but through an anachronism or, in any case, from a retrospective view (Foucault, 2010a, p. 324, 2A3/3/82).

But what truth is this that he has to say, he, who is directed, he who is led to the truth, who will by another be led to the truth? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 324, 2A3/3/82).

A problem, then, arises: what happens to the master's discourse? Would there be, in this game of asceticism, that is, in the game of progressive subjectivation of true discourse, a portion to be distributed to the master's discourse and to the manner in which it unfolds? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 327, 2A3/3/82).

Authenticate what, in Epictetus' colloquies? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 327, 2A3/3/82).

What is represented by the '*hypomnēmata*' that he will, then, publish? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 328, 2A3/3/82, emphasis added).

First of all, what is flattery, and in what, why should truth-telling oppose it? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 335, 1A10/3/82).

Why is flattery important? What makes flattery such an important moral hazard in the practice of the self, in the technology of the self? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 335, 1A10/3/82).

Anger and flattery are on a par in the matter of vices. In what and how? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 335, 1A10/3/82).

What are these treatises on anger about? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 336, 1A10/3/82).

What is anger? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 336, 1A10/3/82).

How could power be anything other than a privilege of status that is exercised as and when one wishes, according to this very original status? How would the exercise of power become a precise and determined function whose rules would not be in the statutory superiority of the individual, but in the precise and concrete tasks that he must exercise? How would the exercise of power become a function and a craft? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 336, 1A10/3/82).

What effectively is flattery? (p. 337, 1A10/3/82).

Through what and how can the inferior gain the favors and benevolence of the superior? How can he divert and use to his own advantage the power of the superior? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 337, 1A10/3/82).

And what is it to contain in its limits the function performed? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 338, 1A10/3/82).

In what way and why will the discourse of the other no longer be needed? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 340, 1A10/3/82).

And what rules command this art? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 343, 1A10/3/82).

Is it about defending a cause, is it about arguing in front of an assembly about war and peace, is it about removing a criminal charge, etc.? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 344, 1A10/3/82).

What mainly characterizes this '*parrhesía*' is that it is essentially defined not so much by the content itself – the content is evident and is given, it is the truth –, but what will define it as a specific practice, as a particular practice of true discourse? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 344, 1A10/3/82, emphasis added).

And how will be played this moral role, [which is] to help the individual in the formation of themselves, in the constitution of a proper relationship with themselves? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 345, 1A10/3/82).

According to Philodemus' text, on what is this conjectural art based, after all? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 348, 1A10/3/82).

But intensify and animate what? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 349, 1A10/3/82).

How to choose and recruit this Other, who is to be neither indulgent nor hostile, of whom we have absolute need to heal ourselves because of our love for ourselves? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 356, 2A10/3/82).

Verifying, therefore, that he is not a flatterer, it is then that you will address him. And what to do, what will happen? First, we will initiate a conversation, a conversation alone with him, in which we will in a way ask him the first question, which is also the question of trust: would he not have noticed, in our behavior, in the way we speak, etc., traits, signs, proofs of passion, passion that we ourselves would have? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 356, 2A10/3/82).

Ultimately, what is the function of popular eloquence? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 359, 2A10/3/82).

And how will this utility manifest itself? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 362, 2A10/3/82).

What does it mean to 'show thought rather than speak'? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 363, 2A10/3/82, emphasis added).

Thus, the entire second part of the '*Alcibiades*' was, therefore, dedicated to this question: what is it to take care of oneself with oneself? What is, firstly, this very self with whom one should be taken care of? Answer: it is the soul. And in what should consist this care that is addressed to the soul? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 376, 1A17/3/82, emphasis added).

Shall I first try to decipher, in myself, all that may constitute traces, traces of what? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 379, 1A17/3/82).

What are these exercises? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 379, 1A17/3/82).

And that same goal (to form, by the exercises of the soul and body, the '*andreía*' and the '*sophrosýne*'), how will it be achieved? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 384, 1A17/3/82, emphasis added).

This is '*diákhysis*,' and it must be avoided. And how to avoid it? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 389, 1A17/3/82, emphasis added).

What does it mean to love them with energy without weakness? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 394, 2A17/3/82).

Why choose rude adversaries for students to whom you give your favors and your interest? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 396, 2A17/3/82).

But, according to the traditional thesis of the Stoics, how occurs this emptying of evil as evil? That is, how do we discover that what we experience as an evil, or believe to be an evil, in reality is not? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 397, 2A17/3/82).

In a sense, no doubt, one could say: but this is not so new, and though it seems to represent, and effectively represents, in relation to Stoic dogmatics, a certain mutation or a certain change of tonic, this idea that life is one long thread of misfortunes by which men are proved is in fact an old Greek idea. After all, was not it that sustained all the classical Greek tragedy, all the great classical myths? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 399, 2A17/3/82).

But what is this preparation, preparation for what? Is it a preparation of the relationship of identification, of assimilation of the soul with universal and divine reason? Was it to prepare man for the realization of his own life to the decisive and revealing point of death? Was it to prepare man for an immortality and a salvation, an immortality fused with universal reason or a personal immortality? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 400, 2A17/3/82).

The same could be said about the question of discrimination: but, anyway, what does it mean? Are we to suppose that there are, from the outset, bad men and good men? And that God puts the good on the side of misfortune and the bad on the side of delights? Or must we admit that there is indeed a sort of an exchange of signs: in subjecting men to trials, seeing those who resist them, who do well, God would then multiply the trials around them, while to others, on the contrary, to those who showed in the first trials their incapacity, He would reserve the delights? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 401, 2A17/3/82).

[What] is inferred from the idea that life should be assumed as a trial? What is the meaning and purpose of life with its formative and discriminating value, of the whole of life considered as trial? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 403, 2A17/3/82).

And what should result from this trial? Reconciliation with the gods? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 404, 2A17/3/82).

While humans – and this is what characterizes them – are living beings who have to take care of themselves with themselves. Why? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 411, 1A24/3/82).

If we now move no longer from animals to humans, but from humans to Zeus, what is Zeus? He is simply the being that does nothing but take care of himself with himself. What characterizes the divine element is the ‘*epiméleia heautoû*’ as if in a pure state, in its total circularity and without any dependence on anything. What is Zeus? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 411, 1A24/3/82, emphasis added).

And how does one prepare for evils? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 421, 1A24/3/82).

First of all, the ‘*praemeditatio*’ is proof of the worst. In what sense? (Foucault, 2010a, p. 421, 1A24/3/82, emphasis added).

## Final considerations

Michel Foucault's investigative-problematizing gesture, associated with archival research, can be considered as a means of investigating how the form of the problem comes into play throughout the entire thought process. The Foucauldian problematization occurs not only through the triggering problem, which changes throughout the investigation, but also through the tracing, in the archive, of the problems posed by himself.

Such gesture shows Foucault's philosophical journey and also an epistemological attitude, that is, it shows the way in which Foucault approached history, without any transcendentalism, causality or linearity. Instead of seeking a continuous and causal history, Foucault was interested in investigating, problematizing, taking the historical *a priori* as the object of his research. It is in this tone that Foucault affirms his position about archives: “[...] the idea that history seeks the ‘accuracy of the archive’ and philosophy the ‘architecture of ideas’ seems foolish to us” (Artières, 2014, p. 139, emphasis added). Thus, according to Foucault, the analysis of archives is a new mode of investigating history, its present marks, its dispersions and discontinuities.

Hence the fact that it is not possible to access an archive in its entirety, since the archive is not the total of texts and documents of an era. As stated by Aquino and Val (2018, p. 47, free translation), “[...] A same archive allows, therefore, several configurations, depending on the problems and the reading grids of the researcher who undertakes it.” From this perspective, we believe that this text can function as an archive of the problematizations of the course *The hermeneutics of the subject*, by Michel Foucault. However, the archiving carried out here is only a possibility of reading Foucault's investigative-problematizing gesture in the aforementioned work. There will always be other possibilities, since the archive itself always shows its lacunary character.

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## NOTE:

The authors were responsible for the conception, analysis and interpretation of the data, writing and critical review of the content of the manuscript.