

**postthought: parrhesia
graphomania scenius**

valery vino

INTRODUCTION

In the ante-mortem series of lectures, our contemporary Michel Foucault excavates a vital cultural matter. The philosopher canvasses diverse critical exercises as possible stepping stones to an occasion of “truth-telling.” The classic authors called this aptitude and right – *parrhesia*, an apposite problem for any age. Touching on personal and public, political and cosmic spheres, Foucault’s account considers *fearless speech* in the context of human affairs, the building blocks of handmade cultures.

To iterate Foucault once more, where and how can one learn to become the person “who speaks and who, regardless of everything, takes the risk of telling the whole truth” in a given situation, and is willing to accept the consequences?¹ This special volume of *Parrhesia* aims to drum up interest in this credo in relation to philosophical and journalistic practices, with particular regard to corresponding critical education.

Parrhesiastic activities, risks, and characters vary and transform according to their context.² For example, a resolute commitment to an academic milieu is likely to fashion a manner of inquiry different to one triggered by a military milieu. The biographies of Plato and Xenophon, Derrida and Montaigne, as well as of several XXth century *parrhesiastes* like Frantz Fanon and bell hooks, Simone Weil and Albert Camus, to name a few, suggest that fluctuating occupations and lifestyles influence one’s scholarly concerns, and vice versa. Extending to nomadism, existential mobility mobilises one’s skills: stylistic, thematic, methodological, and various nano-factors are all susceptible to situational modifications, shaping a writer’s worldview, as an artist, guide, and a teller of difficult truths.

Philosophers are remembered for the problems they pose, the questions they ask, for emancipating thought and heart, thereby making us see further than our noses. As a discipline and occupation, journalism is considerably younger than philosophy. Nevertheless, many journalists work in a similar vein, researching and exposing veridical facts, patterns of error and injustice. In an effort to correct dominant views and public awareness, countless philosophers and journalists suffered harassment and persecution. There is nothing surprising about this: both camps take pride in nourishing skilful analysts and story-tellers, assuring us their aim is to convey the truth.

Even so, traditional approaches to philosophical education today are fairly questionable, making one’s body a passive recipient of abstract knowledge, while overlooking vital areas like wilderness and community. With little hands-on, participatory inquiry and experience, mainstream school and tertiary studies

thus tend to be out of touch with the issues cropping up in everyday culture, particularly at the grassroots levels where practical knowledges abound. The thing is, philosophy only recently emerged as a chiefly academic, professional enterprise. Comparatively, many prominent figures in the past practiced philosophy in courts and caves, cemeteries and temples, in market-spaces and mountain tops, on a tightrope, in solitude and community – all marking philosophical life in the plurality of its aptness. In this web, we find a string of surviving pragmatic creeds testing the epistemic groundwork for scientific and social change, from which for our purposes we pick these two. First, John Dewey, elegantly:

If ideas, meanings, conceptions, notions, theories, systems are instrumental to an active reorganization of the given environment, to a removal of some specific trouble and perplexity, then the test of their validity and value lies in accomplishing this work. If they succeed in their office, they are reliable, sound, valid, good, true. If they fail to clear up confusion, uncertainty and evil when they are acted upon, then they are false.³

On one hand, the motive that drives Dewey is inspiring: each project's truthfulness lies in its potency to transform things, as a tool that draws us away from errors and harm that entail suffering for no good reason. On the other hand, this formulation overlooks at least one substantial material obstacle: "reorganisation" in question tends to challenge the ruling order of things, in one's family or society, that may in their turn fight against the change. Does a solo struggle, in the form of disobedience or research, have a meaningful future today? Relatedly, the second cautionary statement, as above, so below, is by Fred Moten in conversation, unreserved:

... look: the problematic of coalition is that coalition isn't something that emerges so that you can come help me, a maneuver that always gets traced back to your own interests. The coalition emerges out of your recognition that it's fucked up for you, in the same way that we've already recognized that it's fucked up for us. I don't need your help. I just need you to recognize

that this shit is killing you, too, however much more softly, you stupid motherfucker, you know?⁴

Acted upon in a period of time (2021-2025) defined by aggravating cosmopolitical, health, educational, and environmental crises, the intuition that drives the creation of this special volume is that a coalition – “scenius” – of journalists and philosophers can reinvigorate and transform the currently disjointed and yet kindred forms of *parrhesiastic* labour.

In a paper published more than thirty years ago, Kenneth Goodman made a prescient remark:

If philosophy is to be counted an important or even a fundamental activity, then it is a little mysterious why there is so little of a philosophical nature in a popular press that pays lip service, at least, to completeness in chronicling human affairs.⁵

To be fair, in recent years some scholars have been pitching their research to avenues like The New York Times and The Guardian, but such short pieces tailored for wide readership and taste can barely qualify to belong to a philosophical journalism or journalistic philosophy. The absence of a hybrid vanguard genre, and of common influential outlets, seems particularly bizarre when we consider new journalism (which is no longer new), and its successful wedding (since the 1970's) of journalistic with literary techniques.⁶ If journalism and literature are not only compatible, but also illuminating, and furthermore, if literature has been congruous with philosophy ever since Plato's *Dialogues*,⁷ we may find ourselves, then, manoeuvring in methodological virgin lands.

When it comes to journalism studies, it tends to have little regard for the history of philosophy, its intellectual rigour, limits, and creativity. It is unlikely that today's industry-oriented journalistic training will become disadvantaged with the inclusion of bullet-proof philosophical questions – the surviving sources of striving for certainty and a better life. Admittedly, contemporary research in

journalism does display a tendency to draw from the sub-discipline of ethics, in the extensive field of media ethics – a cousin of sports and business ethics.⁸ However, this research trajectory is impotent to do justice to the power of philosophy and journalism dancing together toward a new hybrid field of inquiry. It is one thing to borrow from an array of normative and meta-theories to clarify the issues undermining the journalistic industry, in hope to ameliorate professional values and education. It is an entirely different thing to educate contemporary *parrhesiastes*. The fact that, in the wake of digital journalism, every single decent media publisher is dying to attract subscribers and donations, in resistance to biased control by media monopolists, suggests that in the current intellectual climate such mainly single-authored scholarship serves little purpose but the naive proliferation of academic knowledge and self-promotion, in the place of a radical educational reorientation.⁹

With a few exceptions, there is nowhere to learn about the dialogue between philosophy and journalism, since journalists and philosophers have no arena to share. This omission is both disturbing and intriguing, emblematic of a lack of research, theory and practice, rather than a rivalry. The scarcity of scholarship and praxis dedicated to the intersections between journalism and philosophy implies that to date we know very little about the prerequisites and paradigms of truth-telling generated by the two forms of *parrhesiastic* inquiry carefully paired and tested. And so our collaborative volume is dedicated to a new audience and a range of theorists and detectives who do not give up on truth-telling, alert to crisp truths yet to be uncovered, in spite of the toxic air of twisted facts and vomit news on repeat.

DIMENSIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PARRHESIA

We are now going to review the ambit of *parrhesia* delimited by the authors of this volume, each offering surprisingly different angles, bearing witness to the riches beneath *the courage of truth*. The volume's tone is set in motion in an opening essay by John M. Carvalho, who attended the '83 Foucault seminars at the University of

California in Berkeley. Professor Carvalho situates his analysis in the dominant epistemological context of “post-truth-politics.” Marketed by the “deployment of social media to accelerate the speed and expand the range of circulation,” “post-truth dissimulation advances on that strategy by declaring what is manifestly false to be true and doubling-down on those fabrications to smother all claims to the contrary.” The omni-presence of post-truth rhetoric is a real threat to the viability of common sense, paving a way to fascism and other atrocities. For instance, the führer of capitalist extremism, shutting down his critics on X, Elon Musk consistently sells the media-Leviathan as a medium that promotes free speech. His boss and beneficiary, president Trump, after a diplomatic fight with Vl. Zelensky in the White House, now freely refers to Ukraine as the catalyst of the war *against* Russia. One educated way out of such blunt and harmful (self-) contradictions is in tandem with Foucault’s problematisation of *parrhesia* as a social practice. Carvalho focuses on “a philosophical *parrhesia* found in the figure of Socrates,” unthinkable without the practice of “*epimeleia heautou* or care of oneself.” On this foundational view, *parrhesia* is learned in a dialogue with neither a colleague nor a buddy nor oneself, but a friend as a means to self-formation, building up to a set of skills the Ancient Greeks called “self-control (*sôphrosunê*).” In the absence of temperance and enduring friendships, so the story goes, one is doomed to fail to guide others. Hinging on the bond of reciprocal love, a shared passion as a treasure, friendship becomes the bedrock of social engagement, by way of trust: “Between friends all is common,” Protagoras helps us remember at eternity’s gate. It is then an antithesis to friendship that fosters a closed unit, like a self-centred figure of family, or a sect. Friendship is a pleasantly hard art to learn: when it comes to searching for truthful meanings together, we are to stage for one another a scene ascending to what we do not know. Conducive to this playful activity are (Socratic) irony and humility, found at cross-purposes with (Plato’s) winds of vanity.¹⁰ Since current searches for any difficult truths in the popular media wither away with the primacy of shamelessly self-serving/ refuting statements, Carvalho proposes to embrace the Cynic lineage of *parrhesia* in what Foucault calls “aesthetics of existence.” Specifically, Carvalho favours

staging “provocative dialogues and artefacts,” by friends, artists, journalists, and comedians alike, as “fragile achievements” seeping from “a life formed from affordances dishonestly depleted by post-truth politics.” This avant-garde form of *parrhesia* operates “beside the point of the mainstream” and does not “engage that mainstream dialectically.” Hence, its significance will be “felt by a minority of the population which has turned its back on the stupidity of post-truth for good reasons,” the author concludes.

Giving us a taste for the genre of philosophical journalism, the next three contributions enrich our understanding of the dimensions of contemporary *parrhesiastic* work.

What it means to aspire to fearlessness, and how today it is contaminated with antagonism, is an issue taken up by Christopher Schwartz, a philosopher who specialises in journalism without dismissing spirituality. Based on the premise that for Foucault, “the self and society are not static entities but are instead formed and sustained through power dynamics,” Schwartz contends that *parrhesia* is “characterised by a willingness to engage with, and challenge, societal norms and institutions while simultaneously being mindful of the potential consequences for both individuals and the collective.” To be efficacious, with respect to the speaker, the recipient, and the audience, an act of *parrhesia* must meet epistemological and ethical conditions, i.e. to be context-sensitive and compassionate. Thus, it is the responsibility of the *parrhesiast* that Schwartz emphasises. If they lack self-understanding and solidarity with the plights of the world, reminiscent of *sôphrosuné*, they will be prone to backslide into three kinds of “bad *parrhesia*”:

- i. *recklessness*, due to either being “unmindful” or uncaring “of the collective’s needs”
- ii. *deceit*, via manipulation, “prioritising *their* particular collective’s needs over and against all others,” as seen in the discourse of figures like Tucker Carlson
- iii. *injustice*, which fuels a kind of “tribalism” that severs “the world into

allies and enemies,” feeds off “a lack of reflection on the real power dynamics at play,” and ultimately is a backside of the lust for power

“The bad *parrhesiast*,” on this fluid view, “can speak truthfully yet ill-formed (reckless), ill-targeted (unjust), or in a manner manipulative of the audience’s biases (duplicitous), or some mix of these.” In agreement with Carvalho, Schwartz observes that “the United States’ media and political elites have immense algorithmic incentives to actively promote bad *parrhesia*,” asking “given that the system thrives on all this fearful screaming, what can be done”? In response, Schwartz offers four alternatives. Firstly, but also potentially problematically, one can refrain from being ideologically polarised and choose to remain fearlessly silent, either by not voicing their views, or by active resistance to the existing mechanisms of power, such as not having a voice in another farcical presidential marathon. While being silent has its place, it is also not clear whether such silence is always fearless or fearful, Schwartz noting, “what if withdrawing is what the bastards want”? Fearless listening is another option, and perhaps the bastards wouldn’t support this attitude as much, since it involves attentive and, preferably, discerning participation in a debate. In fact, an ability for listening coupled with fearless curiosity – Schwartz’s third alternative – breaks grounds necessary to a dialogue. Do we teach and learn these basic skills at schools? “Fearless curiosity is the conscious choice to ask sincere, tough, even potentially embarrassing questions,” and one excellent example of *parrhesiastic* curiosity is journalist Isobel Yeung cross-examining militant authorities about the backlash against women’s rights, in the documentary *Life in the Taliban’s Afghanistan* (VICE, 2022). Finally, while both Carvalho and Schwartz in the end borrow from the Cynics, they arrive at different conclusions. Carvalho’s *parrhesiast* shapeshifts into an aesthetic renegade, while Schwartz advocates for a spiritual transfiguration, that of “*irenica parrhesia*.” From this vantage point, it is desirable for the *parrhesiast* to be responsive to the mainstream while simultaneously remaining “open to other possibilities, including seeking [a space where] consensus and harmony [are possible].” Although not opposed to provocation, Schwartz nevertheless leans

toward a *parrhesia* characterised by “a spirit of good faith and respect for the humanity of the interlocutor.” Given the current toxicity levels, one would also add hugs, an eye for friendly humour, and forgiveness.

The above configurations of *parrhesia* are germane to societies where freedom of expression is not fanatically censored by the state. However, in the absence of appropriate education, despite all the liberties, free speech as a social right has a tendency to digress into empty opinions (*kenodoxia*) and wholesale oceans of lies. In this place of illusions, performances of *fearless speech* become dangerously scarce.

Since *parrhesiastic* praxis circles in and around socio-political contexts, we may learn a great deal about its modifications within an autocratic regime. To gauge *fearless speech* in a loosely democratic society still requires intellectual honesty and courage, whereas in dictatorial states *parrhesiastic* instincts instil anticipations of imminent payback, as freedom of expression is already under gunpoint. As an example of the seriousness of these contexts, a writer from Saint-Petersburg, Russia, and a candidate for a voice in this project, had to withdraw their participation for fear of consequences. It is, then, a blessing to have on the raft of this volume a piece that interrogates the political scene in Iran.

Situated in Mashhad, Majid Heidari poses a question: “how [do] autocratic states respond to acts of *parrhesia*”? Drawing from recent literature on *parrhesia* driven by Foucault (Dyrberg, Goodnight, Pernot), Heidari explores two forms of political *parrhesia* in his analytic reportage. The first “pertains to politicians critiquing the ruling majority,” and the second “involves citizens openly critiquing those in positions of power.” As examples of the first kind, Heidari considers two official letters, “Letter of the Ninety” (1990), authored by prominent activists, and “The Cup of Poison” (2003), written and signed by many members of the Iranian parliament. Both letters advocate for transparency and active solidarity with the ordeals of the everyman under the tight fist of the politico-religious dictatorship; both letters follow “the path of truth.” Still, everyone involved has been punished,

in one way or another, owing to the Supreme Leader's labelling these acts of dissent as "unjust," that is, aligning with pernicious Western capitalist values. Ironically, it is this sort of reasoning by sword and shield that Schwartz, a Western thinker, dubs unjust.

Directly preceding the Islamic Revolution, "Ten Nights of Goethe" (1977) is an example of the second kind of political *parrhesia*. Co-created by a squad of intellectuals and artists, in the sight of "thousands of cultural enthusiasts who sat in the rain," they demanded to support freedom of expression and dignity of artistic labour. Off the back of this event, the key participants were subjected to persecution, then either forced out of the country, or censored and imprisoned; the least submissive were put to death. In ominous circumstances human animals show what and who they stand for. Meanwhile, an activist and professor of Arts & Media, Heidari calls our attention to "pseudo-artists," and by extension pseudo-intellectuals:

... sycophantic, obsequious, servile, and submissive to the powerful ... opportunists who constantly appear in the media and festivals ... while being oppressive, tyrannical, self-satisfied, and arrogant towards the people.

Fortunately, the descendants of the Persian civilisation will never give up, anticipating "*kairos* ... the critical and decisive moment or opportunity." Heidari offers a final and recent example of political *parrhesia*, "The 14th Statement" (2019), bleeding for the "widespread violation of civil rights, especially women's rights" and "incompetence in leadership and proper governance of the country." The Islamic state conflated another collective act of *parrhesia* with an "act against national security," and dragged the participants and their supporters into exile and confinement. Finally, Heidari makes two observations leading to a great insight. Firstly, high officials and priests in effect encourage fierce criticisms of oppositional values, religions, and ways of life. This common strategy props up wantonness for power. Secondly, at the same time authorities are hostile to bold

criticisms exposing the miseries their lot brings about. It is in this maddening socio-political climate that we arrive at the conclusion, which applies to authoritarianism in general:

Consequently, one can deduce that an indicator of the effectiveness of *parrhesia* is when those in power instinctively deny the allegations and position themselves as victims. This defensive reaction serves as a clear signal that *parrhesia* has hit a nerve and presented a genuine challenge to the prevailing authority.

At another level, an existential distinction between courage and fortitude (which one can't grasp staring at a computer monitor) is divulged; in a personal message, Majid remarked that "I put my heart into that essay on *parrhesia* ... I had a blast working on it." Here is a lesson, and things are really warming up here.

Next door, polymath Joshua M. Hall telescopes all lenses upon Davi Kopenawa's experiences with whiteness as epidemic ontology. "[E]videnced by pathologically extreme appetites for death, destruction, and sickening," the Yanomani diplomat and elder sees our world running on fumes owing to spiritual amnesia. In an autobiography, *The Falling Sky*, the elder's *parrhesia* punctuates the symptoms of greediness emanating from urbanity – ecological doomsday and societal divisions, particularly in the context of intergenerational needs and objectives. Having survived the 1993 Haximu massacre, as a shaman, Kopenawa can sense and say things that may appear counter-intuitive, so long as one acknowledges surviving indigenous ontologies as fleshless entities. In Tungisic, "ša" in "šamān" stands for "to know." Accordingly, it is šamān's knowledges of the virtues found in endemic lifeforms that set the scene in this work. Hence, in preparation for his news, Hall takes us through the basic elements of Yanomani shamanism. To begin with, Yanomani healers "ingest a hallucinogenic substance, namely *yākoana* powder derived from the sap of local trees, to generate visions of "spirits" or *xapiri*, who:

... literally alter the shaman's body to render him capable of receiving and understanding their dancing messages. These spirits' dances are performed on shiny reflective surfaces (which Kopenawa calls "mirrors"), onto which the spirits descend, along gossamer-thin lines, from their palatial mansions in the skies. "As fine and translucent as spider webs or fishing lines," Kopenawa relates, "the xapiri's shining paths will become fixed along our arms and legs" (referring to the limbs of an experienced Yanomami shaman). "Then the spirits will come down along them to tear our chest and open a large clearing in it where they will do their presentation dance," Kopenawa concludes, the interpretation of which is the shaman's constant, lifelong occupation.

Please note that such knowledges of doctor-witches are criminalised and, as a consequence, policed in so-called civilised countries.¹¹ With respect to the lifeblood of Yanomami *parrhesiastic* praxis, Hall emphasises that it takes a form of the "gestural, non-verbal language of dance," and adds that for Kopenawa "the purpose of this spirit-dancing is a form of linguistic communication." "It is these spirits' words that I make heard," he shares, and "not just my own thought." In this ritual sphere, *xapiri* and shaman dance thought are one.

Further, in four statements, Kopenawa and Hall offer a counter-example of searches for wisdom of love. The first two touch the nerve of academicism and post-truth politics alike, while the second doublet of black *parrhesia* points to *graphomania*:

The path of their thought is often twisted and thorny.

They do not truly know the things of the forest.

They contemplate paper skins on which they have drawn their own words for hours.

If they do not follow their lines, their thought gets lost.

"They" – these figures of thought "descend from the Yanomami," which is not

to say they know the secrets of dancing, “being merely a lost, forgetful, and devastating once-Indigenous people.” By contrast, Kopenawa deploys his life-and-death artform to fight for land rights, where one of the more salient opponents is land-eating – a possessive attitude to the land, as though it was up to humans to own and butcher it. “What the white people call ‘minerals’,” he says, “are the fragments of the sky, moon, sun, and stars, which fell down at the beginning of time.” On this cosmogenic view, whiteness devours cosmos with us.

Let us conclude with a light step by Joshua, whose extensive research shows how poorly examined are the somaesthetic forces of dance in correlation with radical social change:

... entire being [of the *xapiri*], as well as their communications with the shamans, consists of elaborate dances, which Kopenawa compares to images in television, movies, photographs. This suggests that the spirit dances might be the figurative dances of lines and colours on surfaces of imagination, and thus potentially more accessible to white people.

As the adage goes, war can be sweet to those who have not tried it: the phenomenon lurking in the background of the preceding articles is addressed by the next two contributions. First, written in the background of escalating military conflicts around the world, we have Gwendalynn Roebke’s emphatic review of Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s *Against War* (2008), including a fresh interview with the manuscript’s author. Pursued along two axes, the stakes are high in this reflection. To start with, Roebke draws our attention to “the endless reality of violence present in our contemporary lives [which] can be traced through the living legacies of western modernity and coloniality,” cut from the same bloody cloth as whiteness. To be sure, war stands for “the reduction of the othered masses via coloniality, liberalism, capitalism, into combatants who qualified for extermination for the sole purpose that they stand in the empire’s way.” This self-assured way of life is very much alive and kicking in Canada and Australia (to take two examples) at the sacrifice of First Nations peoples who have been subjected to genocide and

mortifying material conditions at the hands of colonisers and colonists, intent to work⇨work⇨work, own land, flourish, and, in the end, to be happy. That is not new news, as per Maldonado-Torres: while “there is a qualitative transformation of the state of war, the core paradigm persists.” Namely, it is a cannibalistic ethic deployed by alpha-peoples, often openly monotheistic, and those who sing along thinking of themselves as being superior to – and, therefore, entitled to subjugate – others who resist to surrender to the premises, promises, and practices of Eurocentrism, or of any other mnemonic remains of geocentrism.

To switch axes, Roebke reminds us that “the key task in the book is not to muddle through a purely intellectual project that devises the perfect label for the atrocities that come from coloniality,” but to prepare the ground for “a call to action, a call for love, that stands to upend the colonial reality of normalised atrocity.” Specifically, Maldonado-Torres and Roebke focus on altericity, a radical rendition of Levinas’s fraternity, as “the intrinsic concern for the Other’s death.” To ascertain this form of intimate care, Roebke makes a distinction between the (loving) witness and the (silent) spectator. The latter silences by being silent, consuming “the violence being done to the colonised,” e.g. in media, while not “acknowledging the violent reality, as evident in their refusing to join in protest with the marginalised.” Materially invested in the status quo, the spectator is capable of functioning well in a dysfunctional world, even to the extent of pursuing “the ‘truth’ of the new reality of normalised brutality,” the “truth” emitted in a perpetual state of “necrotic peace.” One example of institutional spectatorship considered by Roebke is:

... the Western academies’ bureaucratic responses to the violence of settler colonial genocide unfolding in occupied Palestine and the pro-Palestinian liberation movements taking place across the world. At various institutions, Cornell, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, etc., the dominant sentiment among those in the bureaucratic rungs of power is to stay silent on Palestine and vocally endorse the settler state of Israel, for fear of losing donor support and appearing “too extreme”. To this end, the

silence propagated at many of these academic institutions relies on a glib spectatorship that plays into dominant narratives that erase Palestinian aliveness and legitimacy.

As a cure to this metastasis, the meditation turns to “vocal witnesses” and the attitude of altericity by way of “a reverberance of the death and dying of the marginalised in one’s own flesh.” In a world where one cannot discern an end to war, one can still hear the cry of the othered, should you keep your ear to the ground. To conclude, Maldonado-Torres and Roebke call upon a practice reminiscent of the canonical teachings in all major theisms, and yet which paradoxically runs against the grain of the dominant order of things – “love entailed in altericity insists on a sort of ‘becoming’ the Other despite physical and epistemic distance.” Thus, one may discover a path “to boldly speak truth to power through love,” and to act, desperately, as the othered, dead and alive, are heard through ourselves.

“I have been a witness, and these pictures are my testimony. The events I have recorded should not be forgotten and must not be repeated,” remarks photojournalist James Nachtwey, cited in the next contribution by Michel-Antoine Xhignesse. Perhaps the most gifted analytic aesthete of my generation, Xhignesse zooms in on the journalistic practice of war photography, which he contrasts with the state propaganda that in principle bends the heinous truth beyond recognition. For Xhignesse, this demarcation hinges “on the ideal of objectivity to communicate the surreal horror of distant goings-on to audiences who are emotionally and geographically far removed from the everyday realities of war.” The paper questions whether war photography, backed up by intricate mechanical processes, “is a ‘transparent’ medium,” unlike a painting where the artist’s moods, beliefs, and intentions seem to be ineliminable. If a photographic representation of war is indeed transparent, one would be justified in likening this quality with that of “air, glass, or water.” Following that, Xhignesse walks us through a brief history of military photojournalism, from its propagandistic genesis to the contemporary codes of ethics, “governed by epistemic norms that aim for the accurate transmission of information by allowing us to see through

the photographic surface to the events which generated it.” Does this entail that war photography “is exclusively or even primarily an epistemic practice”? Astoundingly, Xhignesse argues that while war photographers chronicle “evidence of horrific events,” they are motivated:

... to convince us of some position (viz., that war is morally repugnant) and to spur us into action (viz., by opposing the war in question). In other words, war photography’s primary aims are *perlocutionary*. In this respect, war photography mirrors propaganda, whose aims are likewise perlocutionary. But where propaganda aims to persuade us *without* regard for the truth, war photography aims to persuade us *with* the truth.

It is both remarkable and unsurprising that the aesthetic and prefigurative effects of war photography are not acknowledged by the international codes of ethics, with the exception of Spain’s National Association of Graphic Press and Television Reporters. To elucidate “the shift from an epistemic to a perlocutionary practice,” thereby considerably advancing our understanding of military photojournalism, Xhignesse invites us to discern a difference between the war photograph’s object and subject. The object marks “the bodies and events depicted on the image’s surface,” and they “*represent*” its subject – “the war and its horror which, as an abstract and temporally-extended event, cannot be depicted in ways which will preserve real similarity relations.” Accordingly, works of war photography are “transparent with respect to their object, but not their subject,” the heaviest nihilistic meaning of which ought to elicit terror and aversion, like rape, motivating us to resist it. In Xhignesse’s eyes, the war photographer is a true *parrhesiast* who “risk[s] life, limb, and reputation to show us the consequences of what are often otherwise popular foreign policy interventions in distant lands,” that is to say, “to represent the carnage and misery to which she stands witness.”

To expose executive brokers in corporate politics, Stefanie Baumann uncoils another representational medium – *parrhesiastic* documentary, running afoul of “populist interests or profit orientation [which] inflict topical choices, formal

criteria, and formatting constraints.” While the latter, highly adaptable ideology of production “may be interesting, fascinating, enlightening, or entertaining ... it is not *parrhesiastic* in an emphatic sense.” As an example of *courage of truth* in documentary, Baumann invokes Laura Poitras’ *Citizenfour* (2014), in which infrastructure analyst Edward Snowden reveals “that the US government’s NSA programme,” chained up with “tech and other large corporations,” as well as Australian, British, and Canadian intelligence agencies, “had been secretly collecting metadata of citizens ... under the pretext of increased security needs.” A net of industrial espionage was cast on planetary scale, targeting not only common people, but also high-ranking merchants and politicians. To balance up the totalitarian theft, Ed Snowden took the stage, besieged in a hotel room in Hong-Kong, “I am more willing to risk imprisonment, or any other negative outcome personally, than I am willing to risk the containment of my intellectual freedom and that of those others around me whom I care for.” Like Julian Assange, Snowden emulates a “genuinely critical attitude, understood with Foucault as ‘the art of voluntary insubordination’ ... ‘of not being governed like that and at that cost’,” one comparable with the creed of a proto-anarchist Étienne de La Boétie.¹² “What exactly is the relation between the film and the notion of *parrhesia*?” asks Baumann. First, setting the seal on her 9/11 trilogy of documentary films, Poitras and her colleagues’ “involvement in the very act of making Snowden’s revelations public was undoubtedly crucial.” Moreover, released fifteen months after the materials blazoned to the press, the documentary accomplishes another two objectives. “*Citizenfour* aims to reach a broad audience of people who have all been betrayed by government initiatives – a community of peers,” not to mention that “it has drawn attention to the human aspect of the *parrhesiastic* act.” As the film unfolds, Snowden is turned from a handsome man with a high-paid government job to the enemy of the state, from looking mint to defaced. Shot in a plain manner with cliff-hangers, the documentary “shifts the focus from *parrhesia* as such to its conditions of possibility in times of digital surveillance.” The film team’s development of trust and coalescence is edifying.

In what follows, Baumann considers another two documentaries, René Vautier's anti-colonial *Afrique 50* (1950) and Jan Němec's *Oratorio for Prague* (1968). We entreat the reader to connect with these *parrhesiastic* monuments. Note that both filmmakers, similarly to the Iranian whistle-blowers discussed in Heidari's piece, suffered bitterly for their courage to film the truth, while their cinematic works "reveal the attempts of those in power to conceal the violent nature of their rule and the repression of the people in draconian ways." In closing, Baumann spotlights documentary as a subversive medium, in view of exposing "the mechanisms of oppression that perpetuate racial inequality, political and economic domination by imperialist powers," as well as provoking "the hegemony of dominant imagery that shapes our perception of reality." One counterexample is Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968), displaying "neo-colonialist violence in Argentina and abroad through a montage of heterogeneous material, such as archival footage, political analysis, clandestinely recorded material, quotations of revolutionaries like Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, and Aimé Césaire." However, the essay concludes with a sobering reminder. As the wheel of disaster capitalism – and its shadow: religious narcissism – is turning with the strain, hardly anything, not even a televised genocide, is able to stir up sustained acts of great-souled dissent. Summing up, Baumann wonders, "how the audience's willingness to deal ethically with complicated truths can be aroused"? Perhaps that is one of the key problems steering Foucault's own classes, and to which this special volume is dedicated.

Our second-to-last contribution takes on a couple of superstructures symbiotic with the status quo – the police and the prison-industrial complex. In a dialogue, Adam Elliott-Cooper and Geo Maher discuss the origins and proportions of policing in the imperial contexts of Great Britain and the USA, mindful of their colonial domains. Concerning the UK, Elliott-Cooper traces the origin of police to the army and "the emergence of capitalism, coupled with empire playing a crucial role in policing oppressed people, whether they be the working classes of Europe, but also the colonised and enslaved subjects in places across the

Americas.” As Maher adds, the professional London model of police “acquired its militarised characteristics in places like Haiti, Nicaragua, and in the Philippines” – upon return, the police “were designed across the United States, doing so along military lines.” Elliott-Cooper contends that to maintain dominance, the ruling classes deploy a recurrent scheme, namely framing the service as a gateway to middle-class privileges. Typically, the stratum of police officers is recruited “from oppressed classes,” – the poor, working class peoples, descendants of slaves, migrants, and refugees, – “in exchange for their loyalty.” To grasp the hierarchical complexity of policing, one must face up to the status of whiteness (“white supremacy”) and property fetishism. The police are not only “servants of capital,” as per Maher, but also, whether in the U.S. or Australia, the history makes it clear that, as soon as slavery was abolished, “all of a sudden the police became incredibly important to control the movement of these free people through the process of criminalisation and, ultimately, convict leasing and mass incarceration,” a pattern that persists to this day. African Americans are incarcerated at around 5 times the rate of whites.¹³ In an imperial colony, an Indigenous Australian “is 14 times more likely to be incarcerated than a non-Indigenous Australian.”¹⁴ These disproportions speak volumes about the metabolic pathways in our societies. As Elliott-Cooper emphasises, the problem of policing also hinges on property ownership and its protection as decisive aspects of a neoliberal society, “a nation of property.” “The more the state is able to create a relationship with property which is personal, rather than collective, the greater they can create a reliance (or a perceived reliance) on the police and prison systems.” Particularly in the context of colonised lands, every citizen must be educated to pose a question to themselves and their friends: on what grounds do I (and, by extension, my heirs) believe this land can be owned? And be aware that those who frame conversation by preconceived answers are among the coarsest interlocutors.

Necropolitics is coterminous with armed conflicts maintaining the self-devouring order. Elliott-Cooper urges to “erode, get rid of, and replace the structures of power and inequality and oppression, which lead to people harming others.” Specifically,

we need to focus on “mutual aid and solidarity, rather than growth, extraction, and the profit motive,” and “to unlearn the forms of heteropatriarchy and racial hierarchy which make these forms of violence and exploitation possible.” The struggle against these paradigms clears a way for a world where prisons and police may become obsolete. “If you don’t rebuild society on different foundations, the same old institutions will continue to develop,” Maher warns us. Mutual care and mobilisation, the interlocutors stress, form a backbone of the change in question. While Elliott-Cooper provides examples of community-led initiatives in the UK, like “a domestic violence shelter,” Maher invokes the “micro-understandings” of a police-less world with reference to conflicts between family members and friends, where tensions can be mitigated through dialogue. In the same vein, he adds that our most recent events, such as the Minneapolis riots, provide examples of “inclusive, multi-racial and multi-class, self-defence community patrols ... preventing certain kinds of harm from being perpetrated by young people, encouraging them not to burn community centres and spaces, encouraging them to go home, bringing them to their parents instead of bringing them to the police.” Finally, Maher and Elliott-Cooper establish connections between wars on drugs, the enlargement of police forces, and colossal fatality/incarceration rates. If the nation-states were interested in supporting disadvantaged populations, if the latter were able to negotiate material conditions as a gateway to fulfilling lives, then we would be “able to think in a more clear-headed way about what our communities need in terms of protection,” Maher concludes. Indeed “why, with all the growth in policing that’s happened over the past 40 years,” bearing in mind the unprecedented funds flushed into the body of police, rather than community initiatives, is society “still not as safe as we would want it to be?”

GRAPHOMANIA

“Whenever I ask a certain acquaintance of mine to tell me what he knows about anything, he wants to show me a book: he would not venture to tell me that he has scabs on his arse without studying his lexicon to find out the meanings of *scab* and of *arse*.”

Montaigne, “On Schoolmaster’s Learning”¹⁵

The multiplicity of voices in this volume is intended to appeal to a heterogeneous readership. Still, because journalists and, particularly, philosophers today almost with no exception are trained at universities in disjointed departments, and because for Foucault *parrhesia* is an educational problem, we must be realistic about the odds of a suitable education being delivered in a tertiary setting. Accordingly, let us reflect on a message from Crispin Sartwell who meant to contribute to our volume, but was unable, due to the unpredictable circumstances we have all been navigating recently:

Should we try this?: Academia is the most *aparrhesiastic* of contexts ... Academic philosophy is written in dry bursts of complexity and a thicket of references; journalism at least ought to be lively, and footnoteless. Academic philosophy is intended for philosophy professors and graduate students, journalism for some broader audience. The differences are professionally located and professionally enforced. So the question arises whether either of these situations, or both together, do or could encourage the telling of difficult truths, which is what I conceive to be their common purpose. Not to be too depressing about it, but it is extremely hard to envision, let’s say, the academy moving in this direction; it’s been headed the other way emphatically at least since the 1980s. I suppose I think it is structurally unsuited for such an outcome.

Is academia an *a[nti]parrhesiastic* milieu? The reader should decide for themselves, but here are a few facts. Formalised in accordance with the cut-throat labour market of our day, in the ultra-liberal university jobs are modelled not unlike in a corporation, spearheaded by top managerial guns, packaged by marketologists and law firms toward the accumulation of assets and prestige from draconian performance expectations. Affiliated – or even identified – with such a business-oriented milieu over the course of time, only the most vigilant can resist internalising its values and limits. This complex phenomenon is widely criticised

by anxious graduates, fierce freelance thinkers, and some academics who muster the courage to bristle at their own milieu, having a reputable social standing. Two teachers meet in one reflection:

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon writes: “‘Brother,’ ‘sister,’ ‘comrade’ are words outlawed by the colonialist bourgeoisie because in their thinking my brother is my wallet and my comrade, my scheming’ (Fanon 11). This is exactly the sort of discouragement that masters have always encouraged. Every relationship is ultimately based only on the self-interest of the human animal, which effectively renders ‘equality’ and ‘liberty’ fantasy words dissimulating their own resentment and reality. There can be no real friends or enemies in the realm of generalised competition, simply opportunistic transient groupings based on tactical considerations; all such tactical considerations have as their alpha and omega the god of economic growth.”¹⁶

Coming from “below,”¹⁷ let me open my gut, “heart and mind completely,”¹⁸ adding several perspectives to the above. First, despite the official narrative of multiculturalism, like in popular politics, there is an issue of cronyism verging on nationalism. Whether in the case of designing syllabi or job offers, the status quo is kept safe through systematic protectionism based on professional and in-group similitudes, including ethnocentric reckonings, and underhand favours. Thus, one is caught in a schizo trap of going global while staying provincial. And we are not to forget the good old gerontocracy: the youth is our future, unforeseen, but remember that first a junior must learn to bend over backwards! Then, since nominally racial capitalism clusters people into the powerfully rich against the poor, we note that only academic researchers qualify to exercise the prerogative to dip into governmental grant schemes, the funds that are typically split behind the walls of the ivory tower. Moreover, major philosophical societies today, in the Australasian region and elsewhere, adopt the vulgar jargon of “inclusive culture,”¹⁹ while executive members at the helm of these organisations are exclusively academics. This ilk of meritocracy is a borderline intellectual sectarianism: as

though thinkers labouring outside of or on the fringes of academia, outlawed but not outnumbered, in principle had nothing meaningful, neither skills nor vision, to offer.²⁰ In a nutshell, there is presently very little dialogue, for dialogue assumes symmetrical interest. The truth is that along the borderlands – material and methodological, ethical and ethnic – great struggles take place, resourceful enough to retrofit the mainstream palaeontology of thought for a new audience. Camus’ journalistic work for *Combat* is one supreme educational example. Also, as per Moten & Harney, Maldonado-Torres,²¹ Tommy J. Curry,²² and other undercover rebels, one can take advantage of the resources available in state/industry-sponsored education, weaponise them, while being openly critical of its ethos, apparatus, and bureaucratic intrigues. Let us listen to Dilar Dirik in her recent “Self-Critique,” written shortly after a stint at Oxford University:

As I see more plainly now, honest descriptions of reality are impossible under the shadow and influence of imperialist state propaganda – inevitable especially in places like Oxford and other institutions that are invested in the arms industry and entangled with government, the military, intelligence, and capitalist accumulation. The so-called ‘academic literature,’ i.e. the body of vetted written work, developed mainly by middle-class liberals invested in structures of western power, often creates more confusion than clarity. Over-investment in it, coupled with an ideologically-motivated refusal to engage with popular anti-systemic theories developed in the resistance against the forces of oppression, inevitably reinforces passive, liberal worldviews (and lifestyles) even among those scholars that fashion themselves as critical. Moreover, as academics like to think of themselves as critical, complex thinkers, they are often less likely to accept the influence of total information warfare on their understandings of the world. Serious and sensitive questions around deep state politics are usually anxiously avoided, ridiculed, or swept under the carpet. A more rigorous grappling with the ways in which the world is organized would profoundly shake the fundamentals of the western

academy, and so, psychologically clinging onto conventional arguments and discourses is the safer option for one's individual career.²³

Difficult truths reach their didactic efficacy in plain speech. We shall now uncouple “dry bursts of complexity” from Foucault's problematisation of *parrhesia* in terms of “frankness,” “truth,” “danger,” “(self)criticism,” and “duty.”²⁴ Upon commencing university studies, the pressure to read and write standardised essays, making Montaigne turn in his grave, is imposed as a rule of thumb. In this fashion, one comes to recognise their community of peers, their nomenclature and parlance, being gradually induced to parochialism, dressed as an area of specialisation. In this process, does anybody care to ask questions like Foucault: “How can we recognise someone as a *parrhesiastes*? ... What is the training of a good *parrhesiastes*?”²⁵ Or: is a good *parrhesiastes* at the same time a revolutionary? Nevermind, the professional pressure is reinforced as one attempts to climb up the chain of command, if that is their desire. Today, you must systematically prove yourself to a generic statistical median, commensurate with one's slot in the hierarchy, as a break between an open-ended philosophical life-style (*kata phusin*) and philosophy as an academic way of life is dilated.²⁶ A critical activity marketised on a promise to spark a passionate desire for knowledge, justice, and self/world-discovery, then, tends to snap into an impulse to research and publish to the utmost of one's abilities, so as to learn erudition while earning professional currency. A name for this impulse is *graphomania*.

To be sure, some things that are said/published are indeed critical (but are they self-critical/anecdotal?), risky (but do they entail risks to one's sense of security?), and veridical (but are they dutiful and context-sensitive?). While neither Foucault nor I wish to be too Kantian about it, unlike a rule (*arkhē/ἀρχή*) that commands obedience, duty is that which goes beyond self-interest (e.g. one's research interests). Duty is not necessarily universal in the prescriptive sense, gods forbid, it does not have to be sanctimonious, but, bottom line, it assumes attention to the enduring ills affecting all of us. Foucault remarks:

The last characteristic of *parrhesiastes* is this: in *parrhesia*, telling the truth is regarded as a duty. The philosopher who speaks the truth to those who cannot accept the truth, for instance, and who may be exiled, or punished in some way, is *free* to keep silent. No one forces him to speak, but he feels that it is his duty to do so.²⁷

In the contemporary context, we therefore call into question the validity of a corporate copyright stamp on the work of authors ascending to *parrhesia*. The pretence to knowledge sharing is a worldwide hoax. A great many people like myself with no access to a university library are reluctant or simply have no means to engage with research protected by insatiable publishing phalloglomerates. [Kiss the ring: with a turnover of £833 million in 2024, OUP & partners now accept outstanding research on poverty and colonial reparations – publish or perish, bitch!] If Foucault is right, then whom do we owe a duty to – a small segment of the demos dwelling in atomised tertiary spaces, or a greater whole? And wouldn't a frank commitment to the latter influence our preferences and enlarge our capacity to collaborate dangerously?

At last, the polysemy of the concept of *graphomania* can be illustrated with reference to situations as diverse as the ramblings of deranged minds, pornographic fixation on social media,²⁸ and savouring one's own thoughts in print. Our mission is to inoculate the academic variant of this penchant through self-care. In *Madness and Civilisation*, Foucault evaluates "mania" via archaeological optics, but for our purposes, at the base level, it is characterised by the embodied mind being inflamed,²⁹ or "agitated by a violent and continuous movement."³⁰ Well, it is not unnatural for an author to research and write, but when it is done out of a deep-seated sense of insecurity, that is, for fear of failing to meet hard deadlines and expectations, or for fear of losing one's credentials, prominence, and job – in living out these prospects of pain and fright, one's own somaesthetic rhythms become deformed and managed in accordance with the aggressive penal rules of the game. In another text on body-politics, *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault refers to structurally comparable processes of forging governable subjects in terms of

“docile bodies.”³¹ Like Freud before him,³² Foucault also underscores the intimate link between mania and its cold counterpart, melancholia. Incidentally, it is unsurprising that, since neo-academic culture encourages to extract everything one has in mind and more, students and staff today, band-aided by free counselling and fitness services, are threatened by the progressing epidemic of affective disorders.³³ “Fear robs us of our freedom,” Lars Svendsen aptly remarks, and “spontaneity is a vital part of our freedom.”³⁴ Would readers not *choose* to work – read, feel, reflect, imagine, write – at their own pace? Is its form continuous? Am I educated to keep vigilant to the current natural flow of thought, one that fosters health against all odds?

My style is rather explosive, and we hope it will pass; at heart, it is impressionistic and slow-burning. Foraging on a blazing evening in the wooded umbra, – sunrise and moonset, – love-making among ants on the erg. But enough of writing in water. To sum up the foregoing, shall we try this?: Deep inside, academic life is akin to fucking a stranger with a condom on – the older you are, the less it makes sense, comrade!

SCENIUS

In closing, to dramatise our setting, let us recall luminary Pythagoras, lamenting:

What mind am I supposed to bring to the secrets of the heavens, having death and slavery ever present before my eyes?³⁵

What will keep Foucault’s body of work significant is this engagement with perennial errors afflicting all of us, our lifestyles, objects of our fears and desire, and our institutions. During the *parrhesia* lecture series, delivered just before his death, Foucault must have been growing aware of his incurable condition, as intimated by his partner Daniel Defert.³⁶ A busy way of life is prone to swathe one in a veil of distance from death, and yet it can strike us down literally at any point, right? Given the pervasiveness of preventable crimes around the corner and in the media today, one can’t help but to be embedded in morbid events. What

mind? What education? Perhaps Foucault's radical pedagogical tone can be in part explained by the proximity of his own demise. It is therefore not too eccentric to suppose that in the context of "the same events occur[ing] again,"³⁷ to return to Pythagoras, had one considered their current cycle of research as their last, not only their approach to it, but also its subject, would be seriously affected.

Having no intention to impugn Foucault's glory, regarding contemporary *parrhesiastic modi operandi*, I can't resist siding with a master of graphomancy and other arts, Toni Morrison, insisting late in her life that, "We don't need any more writers as solitary heroes," that to live up to the present challenges, "We need a heroic writers movement: assertive, militant, pugnacious."³⁸ In solidarity, let me foreground a gnotion recently formulated by Brian Eno, namely "scenius," which stands for "the creative intelligence of a community."³⁹ As a collective form of intelligence and intuition emerging within a cultural scene, as a material possibility, scenius is juxtaposed with the obsolete category of "genius." In a somewhat pluralist manner, relying on his own wealth of experience in diverse circles, from the avant-guard to radical politics across five generations, Eno emphasises that "everybody has a particular and unique set of gifts and talents" and "secondly, that intelligence is generated by communities."⁴⁰

Here is one journalistic initiative, which may appear as an instance of scenius between philosophers and journalists, though it is a snippet of polyester capitalism, as our findings suggest. Precipitated by the COVID pandemic, it is called "An Open Letter on the Importance of Protecting Philosophy" (2020), published in Religion & Ethics section of ABC in the wake of "massive fee increases for HASS students," leading to severe financial shortages in the humanities.⁴¹ Targeting "the government's misguided approach to the funding of undergraduate education," this letter is signed by over a hundred Australia-based philosophers. So far, so good. Characteristically, however, the authors are more proud of the Australian thinkers who made it to the stardom (Princeton, Cambridge), rather than, say, their sessional colleagues, who characteristically live in precarity. In any case, this letter is not *parrhesiastic* not only because some of its speech acts incorporate the

familiar business jargon, e.g. “teaching and research excellence,” but primarily because, as such, it poses no danger to the signees addressing the abstract body of the government, the members of which probably never read it. Put differently, it is a simulacrum of *parrhesia*, like a barely moving plastic globe. For an initiative like this one to qualify as *parrhesiastic*, thinkers with deep institutional ties would need to go out of their ways to come to terms with the wider intellectual and artistic scenes and invest in work with various communities for mutual enrichment. It is the right time for great generosity! Ultimately, “The Open Letter” falls short of a *parrhesiastic* work because it is generated by a transient professional grouping more concerned with protecting their jobs and piety than with showing philosophy’s healthy teeth in the face of bigotry. If philosophy’s reputation today is so pale that it requires a prosaic apology, intended for the masses systematically voting in demagogues and proto-fascists with no adequate training in the subjects of governance, perhaps it is the time to defend the mother of inquiry at the social and grass-roots levels.⁴² To this end, in lieu of condescending indifference, thinkers, artists, and activists having skills and passion to mediate public projects are to be acknowledged appropriately, as a matter of choice.

By way of conclusion, the authors in this volume position their research in a great range of inter-related contexts: the mass media carcass and punitive social traps, capitalist imperialism and theocracy – all have a hand in schesmatizing the world. Our special volume introduces readers to various forms of kinship as courage: friendship (Carvalho), *irenic parrhesia* (Schwartz), collective *parrhesia* (Heidari), shamanic *parrhesia* (Hall), loving *parrhesia* (Roebke & Maldonado-Torres); and pays tribute to our bonds with war and surveillance victims (Xhignesse and Baumann, respectively), as well as with racialised and criminalised subjects (Baumann; Elliott-Cooper & Maher). Even minimal *truth-telling* efforts may set in motion significant changes, visible and invisible, as we know it through stories and personal experience. Our readers are unanimously encouraged to stage context-sensitive and provocative conversations and events, to learn and play a hunch. In line with Foucault’s orientation of thought, concomitant with these acts of dissent

are diverse open-ended practices spiralling around mutual duty and care. “The target of this new *parrhesia*,” Foucault reminds us, is a matter “of changing one’s style of life, one’s relation to others, and one’s relation to oneself.”⁴³ In short, it is about changing one’s life, simple things, even if it is too late.⁴⁴

NOTES

1. Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*. Ed. by Joseph Pearson, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001, 13. The Pearson edition is the author's taste preference, in part due to the rawness of the material and intimacy of the classes at Berkeley. The Collège de France lectures were gloriously crammed, whereas, as John Carvalho relates, the earlier "course at Berkeley was attended by a group of between fifteen and twenty auditors," which makes a great difference, pedagogically speaking.
2. Here, perhaps the most misunderstood today are the Cynics. Taking root in Socrates' student Antisthenes, in Diogenes the Dog, who offers riveting accounts of city life, the line runs through the likes of Lucian and Rabelais, Diderot, Nietzsche and Bakhtin, recently erupting in Sloterdijk's *Critique*. Interestingly, Foucault's interpretation of cynical parrhesia is emblematic of this misunderstanding. He doesn't seem to get the joke as a weapon of wisdom (a courage to laugh), unable to resist the urge to dismantle it. See: *Fearless Speech*, 119-133.
3. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920, 156.
4. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. New York: Minor Compositions, 2013, 140-41.
5. Kenneth Goodman, "Journalism and Philosophy." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophy* 83:1 (September 1989, 35).
6. Tom Wolfe, Hunter S. Thompson, Joan Didion, and many other experimental writers are notorious for illuminating counter-cultural and underground matters, not least because such matters are not susceptible to reveal themselves to the standard forms of inquiry.
7. Also exemplified by Feodor Dostoevsky, Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, Herman Hesse, and most recently, by Toni Morrison and Claudia Rankine.
8. This trend is illustrated by numerous texts, e.g. David Berry, *Journalism, Ethics, Society*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2008; Christopher Meyers. *Journalism Ethics: A Philosophical Approach*. Oxford: OUP, 2010; Aaron Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism*. Berlin: Springer, 2018; Tony Harcup. *What's The Point of News?: A Study in Ethical Journalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
9. There is only one more work worth mentioning in the context of relevant literature, *Philosophy and Journalism*. New York: Longman, 1983. Authored by John C. Merrill, a journalism professor, and C. Jack Odell, a philosophy professor, the book shows the differences and parallels between the disciplines and approaches. Today, it seems more important to design new critical methods and techniques, rendering both differences and commonalities mutually expedient, which is our concern here.
10. See: Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. London: William Heinemann, 1925, 6.24-6.26, 6.40-6.41, 6.53, 6.58.
11. Curiously, a witch of philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, was in the habit of taking "massive and regular doses of drugs, including chloral hydrate, bromide, opium, hashish, and a mysterious 'Javanese preparation'" – the latter suggests his familiarity with non-Western ways to access ontological spheres. See: Daniel Breazeale, "Ecce Psycho: Remarks on the Case of Nietzsche." *International Studies in Philosophy* 23:2 (1991, 19). Also, Camus: "It is said that Nietzsche after the break with Lou Salome, in a period of complete solitude, crushed and uplifted at the same time by the perspective of the huge work he had to carry on without any help, used to walk at night on the mountains overlooking the gulf of Genoa and light great bonfires of leaves and branches which he would watch as they burned" (*Create Dangerously: The Power and Responsibility of the Artist*. Trans. Sandra Smith, New York: Vintage Books, 2019, 15).

12. A loving friend of Michel de Montaigne, responsible for the posthumous publication of *The Discourse on Voluntary Servitude* (1577).
13. Nazgol Ghandnoosh, "One in Five: Ending Racial Inequity in Incarceration." *The Sentencing Project*, October 11, 2023, <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/one-in-five-ending-racial-inequity-in-incarceration/>
14. Giulia Bertoglio and Briana Shephard, "An Indigenous Australian is 14 times more likely to be incarcerated than a non-Indigenous Australian." *ABC News*, October 3, 2023, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-04/hopes-voice-could-bring-certainty-community-justice-wa/102922506>
15. Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*. Trans. M.A. Screech, London: Penguin, 182.
16. Justin Clemens, "Boom Boom." *Australian Humanities Review* 58 (2015, 116-17); Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Richard Philcox, New York: Grove Press, 2004, 11.
17. Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 18.
18. *Ibid.*, 12.
19. Not to mention a deep-rooted problem stemming from the dictatorial ontology of whiteness raised above. See, for example, Nayoung Aimee Kwon, "Decolonizing Our Institutions." In a decolonial manual, ed. Valery Vino, Santa Barbara: punctum books (in press); Sarah Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012; and Teresa Córdova, "Power and Knowledge: Colonialism in the Academy." In *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Carla Trujillo, Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1998, 17-45.
20. Latin *secta*, fem. past participle of *secare* "to cut." Keep an eye out for our collaboration with Ian Hunter that ascertains the distinctions between philosophy and sectarianism. Meanwhile, see: Ian Hunter, "Heideggerian Mathematics: Badiou's Being and Event as Spiritual Pedagogy." *Representations* 134 (Spring 2016, 116-156); and also his "The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher." *Modern Intellectual History* 4:3 (2007, 571-600).
21. Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "From Decoloniality Light to Combative Decoloniality: Personal Reflections on a Decade of Decoloniality Schools in South Africa." In a decolonial manual, ed. Valery Vino, Santa Barbara: punctum books (in press).
22. Tommy J. Curry, "The Anti-thesis of the Claim A Reflection on the Practices of Decolonization from both Sides of the Atlantic." In a decolonial manual, ed. Valery Vino, Santa Barbara: punctum books (in press).
23. Dilar Dirik, "A Self-Critique." *The Shedding* (November 2024). Available from: <https://dilaridirik.substack.com/p/a-self-critique>; also see her *The Kurdish Women's Movement: History, Theory, Practice*. London: Pluto Press, 2022.
24. Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 12-20.
25. Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 172.
26. The role of the rogue Diogenes the Dog in making a lifestyle out of parrhesia, and in influencing Foucault, cannot be overstated. See: Darren Gardner, "Cynicism as Immanent Critique: Diogenes and Philosophy of Transvaluation." *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought* 39:1 (2002, 123-148).
27. Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 19.
28. Adam Thirlwell, "We're Gripped by Graphomania': Why Writing Became an Online Contagion and How We Can Contain It." *The Guardian*, August 12, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/aug/12/were-gripped-by-graphomania-why-writing-became-an-online-contagion-and-how-we-can-contain-it>
29. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard, New York: Vintage Books, 1988, 97.

30. Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation*, 122.
31. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: Vintage Books, 1995, 135ff.
32. Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia." In *The Complete Psychological Works Volume XIV*, trans. James Strachey, London: The Hogarth Press, 2001, 243-258.
33. See, for example: Kasey Meeks, Amy Sutton Peak, and Adam Dreihaus, "Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Among Students, Faculty, and Staff." *Journal of American College Health* 71:2 (March 2021); Gabriel X.D. Tan, Xun Ci Soh, Andree Hartanto, Adalia Y.H. Goh, and Nadyanna M. Majeed, "Prevalence of Anxiety in College and University Students: An Umbrella Review." *Journal of Affective Disorders* 14 (December 2023); and Mary Ellen Flannery, "The Mental Health Crisis Among Faculty and College Staff." *NEA Today*, March 7, 2024, <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/mental-health-crisis-among-faculty-and-college-staff>
34. Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Fear*. London: Reaktion Books, 2008, 127-28.
35. The origin of this quote in classical literature is indistinct. Montaigne cites it off the top of his head in "On Education of Children," advising that here Pythagoras addresses Anaximenes in a letter. However, there is no reference to this line in either Diogenes Laertius' account of Anaximenes' or Pythagoras' lives (as indicated in M.A. Screech's seminal translation). Montaigne may have dug it up elsewhere, and we trust him.
36. James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993, 21-26.
37. Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras*. Trans. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, §19, https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/porphyry_life_of_pythagoras_02_text.htm
38. Toni Morrison, *What Moves at the Margin: Selected Non-Fiction*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008, 163.
39. "Brian Eno on Scenius." Posted on September 28, 2021, by Peter Macdonald, YouTube, 1 min., 35sec., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77mbz2HbY5Y>; see also Brian Sterling, "Scenius or Communal Genius." *Wired*, June 16, 2008, <https://www.wired.com/2008/06/scenius-or-comm/>
40. "Eno on Scenius."
41. Australia-based Philosophers, "An Open Letter on the Importance of Protecting Philosophy." *ABC Religion & Ethics*, August 3, 2020, <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/open-letter-on-the-importance-of-protecting-philosophy/12517642>.
42. In 2020, in partnership with my friend Soreti Kadir and Brimbank City Council, our donor, we were planning to launch Project A, designed to bring together a team of academics to teach a special curriculum to disadvantaged adolescents from migrant and refugee backgrounds on the outskirts of Melbourne. The ensuing global pandemic interrupted our plans. However, it is noteworthy that an overwhelming majority of academics we reached out to politely rejected the invitation due to lack of time, with the exception of several discerning pedagogues, including one of the founding editors of this Journal, Jon Roffe: bless him.
43. Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 106.
44. We owe a debt of gratitude to Bobby Shumoail-Albazi (*PUFF DOWN: Underground Hip-Hop Zine*) for his meticulous proof-reading of the entire volume; to Seraphim, my copy of Alpha & Omega, and to Vivijan, my Aboriginal blondie; to Majid Heidari, Joshua M. Hall, and Gwendalynn Roebke for their supportive reviews of this essay; and to the Journal's editorial team for their patience and patronage.