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RE-MAKING THE TRUTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE Parrhesia and Human Interest

Abstract

This paper address the remaking of truth in the digital age. This remaking is problematic because the function of truth seems to have shifted from that of a common ground for the competition over the control of society to merely a stake in the same competition. I express this state of affairs in terms of a double crisis, political and epistemic, that ultimately supports ideas and practices with oppressive implications. My main point here is that the problematization of truth in relation to alternative forms of power/knowledge is crucial when dealing with this crisis and its oppressive potential. The conceptual coordinates of my argumentation are Habermas' notion of 'knowledge constitutive interest' and Foucault's analysis of 'parrhesia'.

Keywords

Parrhesia; truth; knowledge constituting interest; neoliberalism; the digital age.

1. THE PROBLEMATIZATION OF TRUTH, KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In politics, as well as in other domains of life, people can tell lies or communicate distorted and manipulative interpretations of facts to pursue political or personal interests. The practical possibility of lying, however, depends on a distinction between truth and non-truth. This distinction is important on conceptual level even if, in practice, truth and untruth can be difficult to distinguish. The notion of 'post-truth' instead, is a new term that erodes even the conceptual possibility of this distinction and, therefore, the practical possibility to distinguish what is true from what is not. This distinction is important not only on epistemic grounds, e.g. to distinguish reliable from non-reliable knowledge, but also on moral and socio-political grounds. In a regime of post-truth – a regime in which the difference between truth and untruth is effaced – inequalities, oppression, injustice, poverty, exclusion, exploitation and other effects of an oppressive social order are just a matter of standpoints. This misconstrued relativism, fatally weakens the demand of social change and the possibility to legitimize action against oppression. This is how the erosion of truth have implications on knowledge and political power – and ultimately supports oppression. This paper addresses this problem in its epistemic and political implications.

My starting point is that 'post-truth' is a notion that signals a new 'problematization

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of truth' where by this I mean the same phenomenon discussed by Michel Foucault in relation to the crisis of 'parrhesia'. Foucault defined parrhesia as:

a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In parrhesia, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy¹.

As Foucault suggested, the crisis of parrhesia is a phenomenon with profound socio-political implications, which 'gives rise to a problematization of some hitherto unproblematic relations between freedom, power, democracy, education, and truth in Athens at the end of the Fifth Century'².

A useful approach to capture these implications is Jürgen Habermas' systematization of the relation between epistemologies and the purposes of knowledge and his notion of 'knowledge constitutive interest'. This notion links the question 'how is reliable knowledge possible'³ with the nature of the interests that originates the need of reliable knowledge. According to Habermas, there are three main epistemologies to which correspond three fundamental purposes: the epistemology of natural sciences and the purpose of control; the epistemology of hermeneutics and understanding; the epistemology of the social sciences and emancipation.

In this perspective, the current crisis of truth and the need of 'remaking truth in the digital age' is a competition between social forces inspired by antagonistic purposes. The arena of this competition is located on the junction between knowledge and power, and involves digitalization in ambivalent ways.

Following Foucault, therefore, I suggest that the notion of post-truth is a sign of this problematization and the fact that 'hitherto unproblematic relations between freedom, power, democracy, education, and truth' has become problematic. Following Habermas, I also suggest that the role of epistemic 'revolutions' brought about by social-constructionism in the late 60s, postmodernism in the late 80s, and digitalization in the last two decades, should be interpreted in relation to the competition between control and emancipation as antagonistic forces in society.

The goal of this preliminary analysis is explicitly normative: it seeks a form of understanding of the present problematization of truth that could support what Habermas called 'emancipatory knowledge constitutive interests' and the social forces associated to those. While necessarily limited in scope, I hope this analysis will support the reflection on educational and pedagogical practices that, based on the notions of parrhesia and knowledge constitutive interests, can address the remaking of truth in the digital age from the normative standpoint of emancipation.

¹ M. Foucault, "Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhesia", February 18, 2017, 6. [Online]. Available: <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/>.

² *Ibid.*, 31. [Online]. Available: <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/>.

³ J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, tit. or. *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1971 (1968), 3.

2. THE CRISIS OF TRUTH: FROM THE BREAKDOWN OF 'POST-WAR CONSENSUS' TO THE 'POSTMODERN CONDITION'

To anticipate the main point, and following the conceptual coordinates described above, I suggest that since the end of WW2 we had at least three fundamental epistemic changes or 'revolutions' in the problematization of knowledge, associated to three main 'knowledge constitutive interests'. The first of these epistemic revolutions was social-constructionism and its purpose was emancipatory or inspired by the need to remove unnecessary constraints to the possibility of social change. The second was Postmodernism and its fundamental purpose was hermeneutic or inspired by a need of understanding the political failure of progressive movements and the Neoliberal success in reorganizing socio-political order on a global scale. The third was digitalization, here interpreted as an epistemic change (a change in the problematization of knowledge), inspired by the systemic need of control. As I will argue in the conclusion, this analysis suggests that in the process of re-making truth, epistemic purposes and political effects should not be confused since, while purposes depends on the nature of (socio)cognitive needs, effects are dependent on relations of power that cannot be ignored.

2.1. *The first 'revolution': social constructionism, emancipation and the politicization of reality*

The first epistemic change came with social constructionism in the late 60s. Emancipatory interests inspired the idea that social reality is constructed by communicative practices. On political grounds, however, the same idea contributed to the politicization of the social construction of reality that accelerated the decline and the eventual dismissal of the so-called 'post-war consensus'. This notion describes a structural feature of Western European political systems from the end of WW2 to the crisis of the 70s and the rise of Neoliberalism in the 80s⁴. The core features of this consensus were a mild reformism at home and integration in the 'Western bloc' abroad: welfare, mixed economy and nationalization of large companies in strategic sectors, promotion of consumer goods, support for public education and egalitarianism, decolonization, integration in supranational structures such as NATO and Common European Market and later EU. On epistemic grounds, this consensus rested on at least two ideas concerning the socio-political problem and tentative solution associated with capitalism. The first idea, from Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*, was that the efforts to build a socio-political order based on the 'self-adjusting market utopia' annihilate 'the human and natural substance of society' and strengthen authoritarian tendencies, which eventually lead to fascism⁵. The second idea, inspired by the work of Maynard Keynes⁶, was that the dis-

⁴ P. Addison, *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War*, London: Random House, 1994 (1975); D. Dutton, *British Politics since 1945: The Rise and Fall of Consensus*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991; D. Kavanagh, P. Morris, *Consensus Politics Attlee to Major 2a*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994; P. Kerr, *Postwar British Politics: From Conflict to Consensus*, London: Routledge/PSA Political Studies Series, 2001; B. Pimlott, "The Myth of Consensus," in *The Making of Britain: Volume 5: Echoes of Greatness*, London: Macmillan, 1988.

⁵ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001 (1944), 3-4.

⁶ J.M. Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*, London: Macmillan, 1936; A.P. Lerner, "Functional Finance and the Federal Debt (1943)", in *Selected Economic Writings of Abba P.*

ruptive effects of capitalism on society and the risks of authoritarian involution could be avoided with intervention policies influencing the aggregate demand through increased government expenditure and low taxation. On these epistemic grounds, capitalism and democracy could appear as two sides of the same coin: the Western way to ‘development’ to achieve both prosperity and social justice, in opposition to Soviet communism that, in the effort of sacrificing the former to the latter, failed to achieve both.

A common explanation for the breakdown of the post-war consensus is the end of the post-war economic boom and the worsening condition of international capitalism that ultimately made “social democracy [...] too radical and expensive a political option”⁷. On epistemic grounds, however, an influential element in the crisis of the post-war socio-political order was social constructionism⁸, a new approach that provided an anti-essentialist analysis of social life and popularized the idea that ‘reality is what we make of it’.

The anti-essentialism of the social constructionist ‘turn’ had subversive effects within the discipline of Social Psychology⁹, but also of the relationship between knowledge, truth and society that were the grounds of the ‘post-war consensus’.

By unveiling the constructed nature of reality, anti-essentialism de-objectified the political reality of those days and pointed to the possibility of ideological appropriation of the real as the result of the effective control on social practices. This idea had different implications on the parties involved in the post-war consensus. For the forces that accepted a moderate form of capitalism as a lesser evil and a more or less temporary solution toward more egalitarian forms of democracy, this idea meant the possibility of further progress toward emancipation. For their antagonists, the forces that accepted the limitation of the free market only as a way to preserve capitalism and avoid class conflict in the condition of the Cold War, the same idea signalled the possibility of a social mobilization out of control.

To the extent that it fostered the awareness about the relative impermanence of the real and the indeterminacy of social change, the anti-essentialism of social constructionism contributed to the politicization of the process identified by Berger and Luckman. It conceptualized the de-objectifications of the common ground/truths supporting the post-war consensus and the political mobilization on both sides in the competition for the control of the social construction of the real. In this perspective, the increased social mobilizations toward the end of the 60s that culminated with the ‘revolutions’ of 1968 on both sides of the Iron Curtain signalled to the parties involved in the post-war consensus that the political ground for that compromise was rapidly vanishing.

2.2. *The second epistemic ‘revolution’: postmodernism and the hermeneutics of power*

The second epistemic change came with Postmodernism. The word ‘postmodernism’ describes two different concepts: an intellectual tradition and a state of affairs. Here

Lerner, New York: New York University series in selected economic writings. Available at <http://k.web.umkc.edu/keltons/Papers/501/functional%20finance.pdf>, 1983, 38-51.

⁷ T. Eagleton, *Why Marx Was Right*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

⁸ P.L. Berger, T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Penguin, 1966.

⁹ K.J. Gergen, “Social Psychology as History,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 26 (1973): 266-320.

I will refer to the intellectual tradition as ‘Postmodernism’ and to the state of affairs as ‘postmodernism’ or ‘postmodern condition’.

The intellectual tradition of Postmodernism is a radical problematization of truth inspired, by frustration with the political failure of the emancipative movements of the 60s and 70s and the epistemic standpoints that, according to some of these intellectuals, were responsible for these failures¹⁰. This critique is inspired by a ‘knowledge constituting interest’ fundamentally hermeneutic in kind: understanding what went wrong and why ‘reality became what somebody *else* made of it’. The postmodern ‘condition’, instead, is a state of affairs resulting from this political failure and the reorganization of capitalism in the Neoliberal project: a ‘condition’ affecting not only relations of power but also and more fundamentally relations of meaning.

Jean-François Lyotard, for example, defines the postmodern condition as ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ which brings about the obsolescence of the ‘apparatus of legitimation’ together with “the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it”¹¹.

For Fredric Jameson, postmodernism is the ‘cultural logic of late capitalism’ or, more precisely, “the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death, and terror”¹².

For Zygmunt Bauman the main feature of postmodernism is a structural impermanence or ‘liquidity’ of fundamental institutions in the private and public lives of individuals. The effects of this impermanence is a growth of insecurity supported by a mystified notion of freedom¹³.

For one of the most radical exponents of this tradition, Jean Baudrillard, postmodernism is the condition in which the representations of the real have replaced the real itself – what he called “the perfect crime”¹⁴ – creating a regime of simulation or “the era of events without consequences (and of theories without consequences)”¹⁵. The substitution of the real by its representations is an idea formulated to address the effacement of genuine political competition and the possibility of real social change in so called ‘democratic regime’ transformed in regime of simulation. On political grounds, however, this idea can serve completely different purposes and to claim that we live in a regime of simulation, can be easily part of a discourse aiming at justifying precisely the state of affairs that Baudrillard was criticising, i.e. the irrelevance of democratic politics.

The main epistemological tenets of Postmodernism, anti-foundationalism and anti-representationalism, are epistemic standpoints developed as a critique of the epistemic and the political implications of the post-war consensus. Anti-foundationalism seeks the emancipation of knowledge from power on the argument that problems of knowledge framed within the terms of a discourse based on the authority of tradition, can only reach solutions that are compatible with, and supportive of, the established forms of power as-

¹⁰ P. Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity*, London: Verso, 2006 (1998); C. Norris, *What's Wrong with Postmodernism?*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990; Eagleton, *Why Marx Was Right*.

¹¹ J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982 (1979), XXIV.

¹² F. Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991, 5.

¹³ Z. Bauman, *Community*, London: Polity, 2004 (2001), 48.

¹⁴ J. Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, New York: Verso, 2007.

¹⁵ J. Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. Translation by S. Faria Glaser, 1994, 164.

sociated to that discourse and tradition. In authors like Baudrillard this epistemic critique is directed primarily against the influence of Marxism in the critique of consumer society¹⁶. In this perspective, epistemic foundationalism (the approach to knowledge based on the authority of tradition) can appear dysfunctional to the formulation of strategies that seek to subvert the relations of power associated to knowledge. Anti-representationalism seeks the emancipation of knowledge and meanings from the distortions of hegemonic power enforced in the move from reality to its representation. Additionally, it seeks the recovery of interpretations or meanings that disappear in this process and the possibility of identifying and subverting relations of power through the interpretation and re-interpretation of meaning (something also known as critical hermeneutics).

On political grounds, the 'postmodern condition' results from the reorganization of capitalism under the Neoliberal project. The paradox here is that, on practical grounds, the radical critique of Postmodernism may have facilitated, rather than hampered this reorganization— a fact that for example Christopher Norris describes as “a point where theory has effectively turned against itself”¹⁷.

The Neoliberal 'revolution'¹⁸ was based on at least four main ideas. First, the failure of the policies inspired by the post-war consensus was construed as a proof of the ethical and epistemic limits of the collectivist aspects of Keynesian political economy. In line with the works of Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman, Neoliberalism re-evaluated the free market as the legitimate organizing principle of the socio-political order. Second, where the post-war consensus pursued social order through the reduction of insecurity, the Neoliberal 'revolution' is based on the idea that insecurity is politically productive. Since the 80s, Neoliberalism has relied on the 'politics of fear' (e.g. the 'balance of terror', terrorism, social exclusion, economic deficits, etc.) to legitimize the dismantling of the welfare system, the restriction of civic liberties and the consolidation of economic inequality. Third, the idea that, if and when democracy and capitalism collide, the latter should be prioritized over the former. The starting point of this idea was the interpretation of the 'crisis of democracy' in the 70s as a crisis of complexity or 'overload'¹⁹. Finally, Neoliberalism re-interprets the processes of globalization in terms of “a programme for destroying collective structures which may impede the pure market logic”²⁰ worldwide.

The epistemic subversions of Postmodernism and the Neoliberal 'revolution' combined in discrediting Marxism and undermining its potential for social criticism and political mobilization but it also created an intellectual and political vacuum that revitalized non-Marxist forms of dissent and resistance to the Neoliberal project. The incredulity about the great narratives of modernity, for example, undermines some aspects of Marxism but it does not seem to significantly affect religious fundamentalisms, the appeal of ultra-right and xenophobic movements nor the credibility of free-market utopia itself. The influence of these dissenting forces often depends on knowledge, visions, values, representations, etc. that appear at odds with the 'postmodern condition', as if the Postmodernist critique of truth had weakened certain knowledge/power but not others.

¹⁶ J. Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structure*, ed. or. *La société de consommation*, London: Sage, 1998 (1970).

¹⁷ C. Norris, *What's Wrong with Postmodernism?*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990, 4.

¹⁸ G. Duménil, D. Lévy, *Capital Resurgent. Roots of Neoliberal Revolution*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

¹⁹ M. Crozier, S.P. Huntington, J. Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy. Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission*, New York: New York University Press, 1975.

²⁰ P. Bourdieu, “The Essence of Neoliberalism”, *Le Monde diplomatique*, December 1998.

2.3. *The third 'revolution': digital turn, resistance and control*

The third epistemic change I discuss here is digitalization, or the social effects of digitization defined as “the conversion of text, pictures, or sound into a digital form that can be processed by a computer”²¹. As I shall argue shortly, a fundamental need of control associated to the Neoliberal project fosters this epistemic change.

Colin Lankshear, for example, argues that digitization of daily life changes the world to be known, the conceptions of knowledge and processes of coming to know things, the nature of knowers, and the relative significance of different modes of knowing

If the ‘digital turn’ is in fact an epistemic ‘turn’, the idea that control is the fundamental purpose associated to it may seem too radical because digitalization is still an unfinished project. As Robert McChesney has noted, however, the discussion on the impact of this technology neglects the ideological influence of capitalism in our understanding “not only the Internet, but most everything else of a social nature, including politics, in our society”²². There are, however, at least two lines of argument supporting the idea that this epistemic turn supports control, more than emancipation.

In the first line of argument, digital technology is ideologically indeterminate and the socio-political effects of digitalization ambivalent. This ambivalence, however, is resolved on political grounds, by the relative strength of the social forces competing for the control of the socio-political affordances of new technologies – what Brian Winston called ‘the law of the suppression of radical potential’ of new media technology²³. From a different line of argument, and one more in line with the critical theory of technology, technological development participates to the competition for the control over the distribution of values in society and it is not ideologically neutral²⁴. This argument debunks the idea that technological properties are ideologically neutral since the user is responsible for the nature of purposes for which technology is used. Furthermore, it opens up digitalization to a critique dating as far back as the 80s and the debate about the ideological implications of what was then called the ‘information revolution’²⁵.

Despite different starting points, these arguments point to the distinctive functionality of digitalization for the Neoliberal project: to remove the social impediments to the ‘free market’ and to enforce surveillance against the reactions to this removal; to foster globalization and to thwart the resistance to it. In this perspective, digitalization and globalization are mutually supporting processes, each addressing the destabilizing effects of the other. Digitalization provides the technological infrastructure to control the risk of violence in response to socio-political effects of globalization. Globalization generates the combination of capital and socio-technological knowledge that is necessary to support digitization as a global epistemic force. In this perspective, the State and the Corporation participate, with different roles but compatible control-interests, to the

²¹ ‘Digitization’, 24 April 2017. [Online]. Available: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/digitization>.

²² R. W. McChesney, *Digital Disconnect: How Capitalism is Turning Internet Against Democracy*, New York, NY: The New Press, 2013, 12-13.

²³ B. Winston, *Misunderstanding Media*, London-New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

²⁴ H. Marcuse, “Some Implications of Modern Technology,” in *Technology, War, and Fascism*, London: Routledge, 1998 (1941); A. Feenberg, *Critical Theory of Technology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

²⁵ M. Traber, ed., *The Myth of the Information Revolution. Social and Ethical Implications of Communication Technology*, London: Sage, 1986; J.D. Slack, F. Fejes, *The Ideology of the Information Age*, Norwood: Ablex, 1987; M. Tehranian, *Technologies of Power: Information Machines and Democratic Prospects*, Norwood: Ablex, 1990.

neoliberal project despite the fact that globalization challenges the sovereignty of the former to the advantage of the latter²⁶.

Table 1 - *Epistemic revolution, knowledge constitutive interests and their impact*

<i>Epistemic 'revolutions', knowledge constitutive interests and their impact</i>			
<i>Epistemic 'revolutions'</i>	<i>Main (ideological/ epistemological) tenets</i>	<i>Knowledge constituting interest</i>	<i>Effects</i>
Social constructionism	Anti-essentialism 'Reality is what we make of it'	Emancipation	Politicization of the social construction of reality and crisis Crisis of the post-war consensus and re-organization of international capitalism
Postmodernism	Anti-foundationalism Anti-representationalism Deconstruction	Understanding (the strength of capitalism)	Crisis of the 'old economy of truth and representation (Norris, 1990, 64). Crisis of truth Crisis of the real: the 'perfect crime': the virtual as the new real Crisis of Marxism and social theory
Digitalization	Technocentrism Technological determinism and its myths 'Virtual is the new real'	Control over the processes of globalization the risks associated to disruptions produced by capitalism the digital construction of reality	Digitization: reality is de-composed and re-composed as 'digital reality' Post-truth Politics turned into administration Terrorism as response to the crisis of the political

Notwithstanding its shortcomings, Postmodernism is quite important to understand some fundamental aspects of the socio-political order of the digital age, and the reasons why Neoliberalism needs control. Digitization is the process that leads to Baudrillard's

²⁶ J.M. Roberts, *New Media & Public Activism. Neoliberalism, the State and Radical Protest in the Public Sphere*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2014.

‘perfect crime’, Lyotard’s ‘performativity’, Bauman’s ‘liquidity’. The ‘digitization of the real’ is the notion I would suggest to describe the strategy deployed by Neoliberalism to maintain control of the ‘social construction of the real’. The main rationale of this strategy is *to confine the ‘social’ into the ‘digital’*.

As a final point one may note that Postmodernism and Neoliberalism are locked into a self-feeding spiral of opposite knowledge constitutive interests or simply ‘needs’: emancipation and control. Digital epistemology and ‘global surveillance’ are responses to the social constructionist de-objectification of social reality and the subversive effects of Postmodernism on the structures of knowledge/power of late capitalism. However, these responses are temporary fixes since the same epistemology and surveillance increasingly feed a global demand for emancipation.

By digitizing the real, Neoliberalism try to handle the chronic crisis of legitimation of capitalism and enforce the possibility of techno-administrative control over the social construction of reality. The resiliency of social criticism, however, disrupt the linearity of this process and increases its social entropy, possibly leading to what Baudrillard discussed in terms of ‘saturation’ and ‘implosion’²⁷.

If this analysis is correct, the core question of re-making truth in the digital age can be re-interpreted in terms of the possibility to restore the social construction of reality as an open-ended, socio-political process inspired by emancipation, rather than a deterministic, techno-administrative process inspired by control. As I shall argue in a moment, the role of education is key to this goal and the notions of parrhesia and knowledge constitutive interests are important to understand why.

3. DEALING WITH NEW TYRANTS: KNOWLEDGE, PARRHESIA AND EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The main point of the analysis above is that the remaking of truth is a process that, despite the appearance of chaos, can be interpreted in terms of a competition between the forces of control and those of emancipation. This competition, however, develops on at least two main dimensions: epistemic and political. A critical approach combining Foucault’s problematization of truth and Habermas’ systematization of the relationship between epistemology and socio-political interests is useful to understand the linkage between these two and the resulting complexity.

In the current situation, the forces of control – the ‘new tyrants of the digital age are’ – are perhaps in a better position to exploit the affordances of digital technology. This state of affairs, however, may not last forever and a critical reflection should prepare the ground for change. Education bears the responsibility of forming the people that will eventually decide the outcome of this competition. My conclusive point here is that, if we are serious about antagonizing these new tyrants, we need to rethink democratic education, its epistemic grounds and its pedagogical ideals in terms of (critical) social theory and parrhesia, respectively. Social theory is necessary to oppose the technological determinism that wraps up the neoliberal project and to nurture forms of knowledge more compatible with emancipatory interests. The problematization of truth is a core element of the critical pedagogy project: one that reevaluates the parrhesiastes as an ideal-typical form of democratic citizenship requiring both the intellectual compe-

²⁷ Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structure*; Id., *Simulacra and Simulation*.

tences and the moral strength to support emancipatory politics through parrhesia, a form of democratic participation that Foucault described as:

[...] a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself)²⁸.

²⁸ Foucault, "Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhesia", 6.