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FOUCAULT: THE CARE OF THE SELF AND ETHOPOETIC KNOWLEDGE

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**Foucault: The Care of the Self and Ethopoetic Knowledge**

**Foucault: Kendilik Kaygısı ve Etopoetik Bilgi**  
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- 1) Subjectivity
- 2) Governmentality
- 3) Ethics
- 4) Cartesian Moment
- 5) Care of the Self

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                 |          |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.....                          | iii      |
| ABSTRACT.....                                   | v        |
| ÖZET.....                                       | vii      |
| INTRODUCTION .....                              | 1        |
| <b>1.ALCIBIADES.....</b>                        | <b>4</b> |
| 1.1 Platonic Psyche Analysis .....              | 6        |
| 1.2 Second Alcibiades.....                      | 7        |
| <b>2.CHAPTER TWO .....</b>                      | <b>9</b> |
| 2.1 STOICS .....                                | 9        |
| 2.2 Globalization of Care of the Self.....      | 10       |
| 2.3 Philosophy, Medicine and Stoic Belief ..... | 12       |
| 2.4 Matthew 22:14.....                          | 15       |
| 2.5 Relationship with the Other.....            | 16       |
| 2.6 Stultitia .....                             | 17       |
| 2.7 Counselor of Existence.....                 | 19       |
| 2.8 Notion of Salvation .....                   | 22       |
| 2.9 Epistrophe, Metanoia.....                   | 23       |
| 2.10 Ethopoetic Knowledge .....                 | 29       |

|           |                                                                |           |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2.11      | Stoic Knowledge of the Self.....                               | 34        |
| 2.12      | Marcus Aurelius .....                                          | 38        |
| 2.13      | Mortification (Suffering), Askesis and Telling the Truth ..... | 43        |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>CARTESIAN DOCTRINE.....</b>                                 | <b>48</b> |
|           | <b>CONCLUSION.....</b>                                         | <b>54</b> |
|           | <b>REFERENCES.....</b>                                         | <b>58</b> |

## ABSTRACT

“I have, alas, studied philosophy,  
Jurisprudence and medicine, too,  
And, worst of all, theology  
With keen endeavor, through and through  
And here I am, for all my lore,  
The wretched fool I was before.” (Goethe, 1961)

The excerpt above, quoted from the introduction of the *Faust* is an ample abstract of the major axis of this research: The contradiction lasting more than a millennium between two types of knowledge, which Michel Foucault defines as spiritual knowledge and intellectual knowledge, and the impact of this contest on the character of the subject. Pursuing that, this research will thoroughly investigate the contest between “*gnothi seauton*” and “*epimeleia heautou*”. *Faust*, who nearly absorbed all the jurisprudence, medicine, and philosophy, was sitting at his table resembling a stupid because he couldn’t acquire his aim, the truth, despite all this information. This research will follow Foucault’s path to investigate the relationship of the subject with truth respectively in Ancient Greece, Rome, and Christianity except for occasional flashbacks. After that, this research will endeavor to show how the relationship between the subject and the truth turned in the opposite direction after the era which Foucault ironically defines as Cartesian Moment. The research will gravitate around the question: Why the subject as it is, which was not capable of reaching the truth without performing certain practices to itself before Cartesian Moment, became capable of reaching the truth after Descartes? And why this subject capable of knowing everything became eviscerated like in *Faust*? In this context, it is critical to ask a question that everybody witnessing Foucault’s last period should answer: Is it possible to build a new subjectivity or to create a new ethical concept as a response to the modern state’s restraining us with identification and subjectivation?

**Keywords:** Epimeleia heoutou, gnothi seauton, ethics, cartesian moment, knowledge, power, subjectivity, governmentality, askesis

## ÖZET

‘‘I have, alas, studied philosophy,  
Jurisprudence and medicine, too,  
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Yukarıda Faust’un girişinden alıntıladığım kısımda bu çalışmanın ana ekseninin güzel bir özeti görülmektedir: Michel Foucault’nun ruhani bilme ile yine bilgi bilmesi olarak adlandırdığı iki bilme türünün bin yıldan fazla süren çatışması ve bunun öznenin karakterinde yarattığı etkiler. Daha sonra esaslıca üzerinde duracağım gnothi seauton ve epimeleia heautou kavgası. Felsefeyi, hukuku, tıbbı, teolojiyi adeta sömüren Faust masasının başında amacı olan hakikate bir türlü erişememiş tüm bu bilgilerin ağırlığıyla bir aptal gibi oturmaktadır. Bu çalışmada Foucault’nun izinden gidilerek sırasıyla (zaman zaman olması muhtemel geri dönüşler dışında) Antik Yunan, Roma ve Hristiyanlık döneminde öznenin hakikatle ilişkisi incelenecek ardından Foucault’nun alaycı bir şekilde Cartesian Moment dediği andan itibaren öznenin hakikatle ilişkisinin nasıl da tam tersi bir seyir aldığı gösterilmeye çalışılacaktır. Çalışmanın etrafında döneceği soru her zaman şu olacaktır: Kartezyen an diyebileceğimiz döneme kadar özne olduğu haliyle, kendi üzerinde bir takım pratikler uygulamadan bilgiye erişmeye muktedir değil iken neden Descartes ve sonrasında özne olduğu haliyle bilgiye erişmeye muktedir hale gelmiştir ve her bir şeyi bilmeye muktedir olan bu öznenin içi Faust’ta da gördüğümüz gibi neden boşalmıştır? Foucault’nun özellikle son dönemlerine aşina olan herkesin cevap vermesi gereken bir soruyu da burada sormak gerekir: Modern devletin bizi hapsettiği kimliklendirme ve özneleştirme teknolojilerine cevap olarak yeni bir öznellik kurmak, yeni bir etik alan yaratmak mümkün müdür?

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Epimeleia heoutou, gnothi seauton, ethics, cartesian moment, knowledge, power, subjectivity, governmentality, askesis



## INTRODUCTION

One can assert that contemporary philosophical discourse is apart from the era when philosophy was considered as the art of life (*techne tou biou*) except Nietzsche, Foucault, Derrida and some other following philosophers who neither entered the canon (mainstream) nor received the deserved interest (remember Derrida's statement; "Foucault is still alive in France"). In history, philosophy was always expected to discover the absolute truth available near somewhere. For sure, this perception continued in Ancient Greece as well. However, this absolute truth never disconnected from ethics. Contemporarily, it is generally recognized that there is no absolute truth. For centuries, philosophy lingered over methods leading to the truth, strived to reach the absolute knowledge without even knowing what to do with it when acquired, and never gave up to become a field of science as some Marxists struggled to achieve relentlessly. Foucault's reply to the Marxists is rather noteworthy. Foucault insistently queries which unscientific statements the Marxism try to silence by becoming a field of science. In light of Nietzsche, this research claims that the truth is nothing more than a matter of perception, and neither philosophy is a practice to show us the truth. In fact, the philosophy is considered as a study of selfhood. But if we are convinced that the truth is nothing more than an issue of perspective in light of Nietzsche, philosophy should not be a practice for us to show the truth. We may define philosophy as a selfhood study whose object is the self. Let's probe the "Modifications" chapter in the second volume of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*.

"There is always something ludicrous in philosophical discourse when it tries, from the outside, to dictate to others, to tell them where their truth is and how to find it, or when it works up case against them in the language of naive positivity...The essay-which should be understood as the assay or test by which, in the game of truth, one undergoes changes, and not as the simplistic appropriation of others for the purpose of communication- is the living substance of philosophy,

at least if we assume that philosophy is still what it was it time past an ascesis, an exercise of oneself in the activity of thought.” (Foucault, 1992)

Some studies are conducted to reiterate philosophy as an “art of life” after Foucault’s especially last period studies, College de France lectures and second and third volumes of History of sexuality which were published 8 years later. Alexander Nehamas is only one example among all in this context. Nietzsche’s “eternal recurrence” concept is not a cosmic issue, despite common understanding, but is nothing short of a matter of ethos as claimed in Nehamas’ manuscript “Nietzsche: Life as Literature”. In this discussion, it won’t be fair to disregard Pierre Hadot who is of great importance to Foucault although he claims that Foucault misunderstood him. Yet, Foucault frequently declares the importance he gives to Pierre Hadot and Paul Veyne in his College de France lectures. In light of Foucault’s “Hermeneutics of the Subject”, the collection of his lectures at the Collège de France (1981-1982), this research will try to re-examine the era when the role of philosophical knowledge or the plain knowledge in changing human character was dominant. In some schools of this era such as Stoicism, knowledge is considered to have a role solely in this manner. This research focuses on this matter reckoning; what is the use of philosophy if it does not transform the human character and shed light on his way to form new subjectivity models? What is the worth of turning philosophy into a science consisting of true propositions and self-evident truth as Descartes did? In this research, such efforts are considered in vain. A quote from Rüdiger Safranski will be pursuant at this point: “Surely, science is not so important that anything it misses must, therefore, be ennobled”. (Safranski, 2002).

In this research, we will use Descartes’ method to discuss the issues such as “how philosophy was a matter of self-concern and caring for the self in Ancient Greece except for philosophers fervent to know everything (also known as bigmouths)”; “how an individual becomes the subject of his own truth and the which practices are required for this”; “how ‘caring for self’ spread to nearly everybody in Ancient Greece while it was just a practice special to young administrators ruling

the city”; “philosophy once was a practice to prepare people to the challenges of the future life and served people as a well-prepared (paraskeue) subject and then how it is isolated from all this and became just a simple practice to find the right knowledge”; and “how wisdom was downgraded to knowing much and nothing more”. “Why life can not become a work of art?” is a question that charms Foucault, so to say.

## 1. ALCIBIADES

The maxim “know yourself” (gnothi seauton) inscribed on the forecourt of the ancient Temple at Delphi also appears in Plato’s Alcibiades dialogue. Alcibiades is required to know himself before he assumes the ruling of the city in the future to foresee his governing attitudes. I will touch on what “himself” implies in this statement in later discussions. The real issue here as Foucault states is to combine this “know yourself” aphorism with commonly associated and accompanied “self-concern” concept. We can easily realize this in Apology where Socrates states that Gods ordered him to exhort everybody they meet -young or old, citizen or non-citizen- to care for themselves. With this perspective, Foucault assumes that the “know yourself” order and “self-concern” notions (gnothi seauton, epimeleia heautou) are intertwined. Similarly, he believes that self-concern (care of the self) should be freed from the hegemony of gnothi seauton.

“ The care of one-self is a sort of thorn which must be stuck in men’s flesh, driven into their existence, and which is a principle of restlessness and movement, of continuous concern throughout life. So I think this question of the epimeleia heautou should be rescued from the prestige of the gnothi seauton that has somewhat overshadowed its importance.” (Foucault, 1981)

So, why it is necessary to rescue the “care of the self”. Since the “self-concern” notion implies concepts such as character change and reconstruction, it should be granted the importance it deserves. Let’s now revisit Alcibiades and probe the dialogue closely. Socrates reminds Alcibiades, who desires to take the ruling of the city by exploiting his status, that he has two enemies. The first enemies he would encounter would be his inner-rivals claiming the rule of the city as he was not the only contender, and the later would be the outer-rivals he would encounter after earning the rule of the city. Socrates warns Alcibiades that he can’t match the wealth of the Persian King no matter how rich he becomes. He also adds that the Alcibiades’ education level was lower than the Spartans and Lacedaemonians. This point I should remind that pedagogical practices have always been a problematic area in ancient Greece. Generally, most Ancient Greek

philosophers criticize the education that the young receive. Alcibiades' custodian Pericles consigned his education to an extremely illiterate tutor, Zopyrus the Thracian. At this point, Socrates advises him to compare himself with his rivals, think about himself, and to know himself (gnothi seauton). The maxim "gnothi seauton" had a plain meaning those days compared to the rich meaning it encompasses today. With all these efforts Socrates tries to show Alcibiades that he lacks the capability and "techné" to rule the city when compared to his rivals. The remarkable aspect of the dialogue as Foucault also states is the reality that the necessity of the "care of the self" is related to the governing power applied to the others. People unable to manage themselves are not capable to manage the others. They cannot transform inherited privileges into a rationalistic action. We aforementioned the connection between the necessity of "care of the self" and the lack of education. Last but not least the necessity of "care of the self" for love and eros. Alcibiades' followers were not the men to advise him "care of the self". The proof of this proposition is the disappearance of them just after Alcibiades starts to lose his youth. Eros was always concentric with pedagogy or at least was supposed to be in Ancient Greece but this rule was not valid for Alcibiades. Another remarkable point in the dialogue is that the necessity of "care of the self" and self-concern occurs only at a certain time after his first youth and before he starts politics. In the following chapters of this study, we will see that especially the Stoics believe that "care of the self" (epimeleia heautou) should cover all life and include certain practices. What is "self" that Socrates refers to when stating that "care of the self" is necessary? What is self-self (auto to auto)? The one who cares about himself will also care about the one similar to himself. The subject is the self. If we leave the chronology of the Alcibiades dialogue aside, in the act of "care of the self", the self is obviously the soul. However, this soul is not the substance-soul of Plato but is the subject-soul as Foucault states.

“ Taking care of oneself will be to take care of the self insofar as it as the ‘subject of’ a certain number of things: the subject of instrumental action, of relationships with other people, of behavior and attitudes in general, and the subject also of relationships to oneself.” (Foucault, 2006)

The dialogue reveals the fact that one should know oneself to be able to care for the self. We can deduct from this statement that “*gnothi seauton*” becomes a prerequisite for “*epimeleia heautou*”. In the words of Platonic epistemology, it is necessary to look at oneself in an element similar to the self in order to know oneself. It is necessary to look at that element, the source of knowledge and cognition, which is, in fact, the divine element. One should acquire the divine to know oneself.

“To care for the self one must know oneself; to know oneself one must look at oneself in an element that is the same as the self; in this element, one must look at that which is the very source of thought and knowledge; this source is the divine element. One must know to the divine in order to see oneself.” (Foucault, 2006)

### **1.1 Platonic Psyche Analysis**

We should visit Plato’s psyche analysis to furnish up the promise Alcibiades gave to Socrates at the end of the dialogue. As known, when the discussion about the definition of the soul in Plato’s Republic gets muddled, Socrates finds a solution by making an analogy between soul and city-state. Plato categorizes the desires of the mind into two as rational and irrational. The rational desires are the desires of the mind but the origin of the irrational desires is completely different. The rational desires always seek for the just and the good, in other words, desire the *dikaioi*. Plato makes an analogy between the human psyche and the city-state of residence. Both the psyche and the city-state consist of three elements that are equivalent to each other. Since guardians aspire the good for the city-state the rational aspect of the soul corresponds to the guardians. The rational layer of the soul always desires the good (*boulesis*). The courage (*thymos*) that protects the human himself normally corresponds to the soldiers (*auxilia*) who are supposed to be courageous by default. The appetite and desires of the human normally correspond to the traders (*money*makers). Meanwhile, this is the irrational aspect of the soul. Although they all have a unique virtue, the human soul should be driven by the rational aspect of the soul which desires the *dikaioi*. The soul

desiring the good already desires the dikaioi. So it will become dikaioi (Plato, 2003). Let's return to the dialogue of Alcibiades now.

## **1.2 Second Alcibiades**

So, what is Alcibiades' reply to Socrates at the end of this dialogue where he is exhorted to care for himself? He tells he would deal with justification (dikaioiune). This statement invokes a sense of problem but in fact, there shouldn't be any problem because in the Platonic discourse the fundamental constituent of wisdom is justice (dikaioiune). Since the divine element is apparent when the core of the wisdom is explored and the divine element is actually the self, caring for the self also means caring for justice. So, there is no inconsistency in Alcibiades' promise to Socrates to care for justice at the end of the dialogue. As aforementioned, Alcibiades who desires to become the ruler, the guardian, tells Socrates he would master dikaioiune. In other words, he means the rational aspect of the soul. As understood, in the Alcibiades dialogue and its era, only the guardian candidates and policymakers in the city-state are guided for "care of the self". By the time after that self-concern would become a public maxim for everyone. However, there is still a limited audience for this concept. Care of the self requires cultural background, power, leisure time, and similar conveniences. We can deduct that the maxim "care of the self" still addresses the elite. Care of the self needs one to elude the commonality (hoi polloi) of daily life. For sure, this distinguished convenience is not available to everybody.

Until now, this study exhibited the direct relationship between pedagogy and the discourse of Socrates and Plato. In this context, we can state that one should have a self-concern due to inadequate pedagogy. We will present some examples showing a shift not only in general but also specific to the aging. One should always have a self-concern regardless of the inadequate pedagogy or youth. We can observe from the life that self-concern embraces all periods of life. By aging, the self-concern of the youth about becoming a manager diminishes

leaving the stage to the self-concern of an adult about preparing to elderliness. Preparing for elderliness as the last step of life before completing a lifetime is completely different from the self-concern about becoming a manager. We should indicate that in Platonic and Neo-Platonic tradition, the main constituent of self-concern is found in “knowing yourself” notion which paves the way to reach the truth. The acquaintance of the truth also enables one to see the divine element in the self. Summing up, knowing the self equals to knowing the divine in the self. Definitely, we can not categorize Platonic discourse in spiritual knowledge. Platonism is the atmosphere free from spiritual provisions where absolute knowledge fosters. For Plato, if one wishes to reach the truth, he should care for himself and know himself (gnothi seauton). In other words, he should recognize the truth inside, the divine element. The subject of the concern in the dialogue of Alcibiades is selfhood which is equal to the soul from this perspective. However, the goal is the city-state where selfhood is just an element. On the contrary, in the imperial period, the goal of the self-concern was solely the selfhood. In the following passages, this research will focus on the notion of caring for the self instead of the city-state in philosophers of the imperial period.

“Now I think we can say- and I will try to show you this-that in the form taken by the care of the self-developed by neoclassical culture in the bloom of the imperial golden age, the self appears both as the object one cares for, the thing should be concern about, and also, crucially as the end, one has in view when cares for the self. Why does one care for the self? Not for the city-state but for oneself.” (Foucault, 2006)



## 2. CHAPTER TWO

### 2.1 STOICS

First, we should examine the connotations of “epimeleia heautou” which this study orbits around. Epimeleia heautou means to care for the self, to involve in the self, or to concern about the self but it is not only a mental attitude, watching the self or remembering important events or items. The etymology of the expression refers to a series of words like *meletan*, *melete*, *meletai* where *meletan* means to exercise. As Foucault states, epimelesthai refers to practice with certain rules rather than a mental state. We should emphasize this to make the distinction from the Stoics who don’t separate self-concern from the daily activities or special exercises. The diversity of the connotations of this expression proves that self-concern expands to all life and the practices of life, unlike Plato’s understanding of absolute knowledge. In movements after Plato self-concern became an inseparable part of life. Nowadays, self-concern is not an aphorism limited to the problematic period between adolescence and adulthood but rather became a necessity for all the periods of life. Yet before Stoics Epicurus also demonstrates the same attitude. Foucault quotes Epicurus’s Letter to Menoeceus.

“Let no one be slow to seek wisdom when he is young nor weary in the search thereof when he is grown old. For no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul. And to say that the season for studying philosophy has not yet come, or that it is past and gone, is like saying that the season for happiness is not yet or that it is now no more. Therefore, both old and young ought to seek wisdom, the former in order that, as age comes over him, he may be young in good things because of the grace of what has been, and the latter in order that, while he is young, he may at the same time be old, because he has no fear of the things which are to come. So we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if that be present, we have everything, and, if that be absent, all our actions are directed toward attaining it..” . (Epicurus, 2017)

As seen in this passage, unlike Plato, Epicurus brings no age limitation for self-concern, caring of the self, and practicing philosophy. He claims that youngs should practice philosophy to stay strong against the future like an elderly. We should arm and equip ourselves against the befallings of life. Stoics give great importance to this understanding of being equipped against the future (*paraskeue*). Likewise, if we practice philosophy when old, remembrance -an important element of Epicureanism- can remove the individual from the current time and reverse the flow of time. This practice is, of course, enabled with the help of memorization.

## **2.2 Globalization of Care of the Self**

If we probe into some Stoic scripts (Rufus, Seneca, Serenus), we can easily realize how caring for the self and self-concern expanded through all life. As an example, Musonius Rufus claims that one should keep constantly treating the self to be freed which implies that caring for the self means caring for life as a whole. Yet we can state that self-concern became an adult event and then expanded to all life. In Stoics, we can observe adults and even elderlies practicing selfhood either individually or collectively rather than the humans transitioning from childhood to adolescence. Serenus, who requested Seneca to become his soul doctor and asked for his advice, was certainly not an adolescence like Alcibiades. Serenus was a distant relative to Seneca and earned a political carrier in Rome after his arrival. He had joined the political time for a long time. Lucillius, who constantly exchanged letters with Seneca since he was 62, was at the age of mid-fifties.

Epictetus is a regular philosopher, not like Seneca, and he owned a school of himself. He inevitably had young people attending his classes for formation among his students. However, as we can learn from Arianus's collection of conversations, Epictetus was arguing these youngs who only aimed to shine in a high position despite they convinced their parents for having a decent philosophy

education. Besides, we are aware of many students who were eager to learn at the beginning, but rather than leaving the school due to this shining expectation, they could not endure Epictetus's ethical demands and left the school. Therefore, we know that Epictetus lectured young people in his boarding school. However, this school was also open to the adults and even a tax collector and an inspector was reported in the Conversations. Epictetus asked a question to his students no matter young or old: How do you live? How do you care for yourselves?

In his lecture on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1928, Foucault presents a passage from Lucian as an example. This passage is a decent example stating that philosophy, self-concern, and care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*) should continue during all lifetime.

“Hermotimus is walking in the street. He is, of course, mumbling to himself the lessons he has learned from his master and he is approached by Lycinus, who asks him what he is doing- he has either left his master or is going to him. How long have you been going to your master? Lycinus asks Hermotimus, who answers: Twenty years now. For twenty years you must have given him a lot of money. But won't this apprenticeship in philosophy, in the art of living and happiness soon be at an end? Oh yes, Hermotimus answers, of course, it won't be long! I reckon to have finished in another twenty years.” (Foucault, 2006)

The center of the self-concern shifted from adolescence to adulthood which will cause a series of results. Such results might be: the criticizing aspect of self-concern will become more prominent; the selfhood practices will gain a reformatory role in addition to the educational role; these practices will maintain the reformatory without sacrificing the educational role. Let's remind the dialogue of Alcibiades where self-concern was a necessity referring to the ignorance of the related people. In the dialogue, Alcibiades didn't even know the fact that he did not know how to rule the city-state and this fact was demonstrated by using the Socratic Elenchus method. However, the selfhood practice of the Hellenistic and Roman era includes education, raising, and an aspect that prepares people to life. But this preparation does not include vocational training. Instead, it equips people

against unhappiness, accidents, downfalls, and embarrassments that might happen in life. We can liken this practice to a security mechanism that ancient Greeks called “*paraskeue*”. Seneca translates this word as “*instructio*”. The self-concern will evolve in the direction of liberation and reformation instead of education. Age is not a concern anymore to reform oneself or to reshape the character but, of course, it is easier in the youth. However, Stoics believe that age has definitely no effect on reforming or reshaping the character. For Stoics and Seneca, gaining virtues means to remove the bad habits from the mind. For this, acquired habits, mistaken education, and even the environment should be abandoned. First of all, childhood, fairy tales abrading the mind, and habits should be abandoned. Seneca criticizes even the family training believing that self-concern reverses the values imposed by the family. In one of his letters to Lucilius, Seneca writes that his requests from Lucilius were completely different from the ones of his family. (Seneca, 1969)

### **2.3 Philosophy, Medicine and Stoic Belief**

The close relationship between philosophy and medicine is another significant aspect of Stoics. Stoics associate the effect of a philosopher on the soul with the effect of a physician on the body. Yet for Plutarch, medicine and philosophy are considered to share the same area. This thought originates from the *pathos* notion which may also be perceived as *pathos* passion. It might not be easy to realize the disease in this understanding. But for Stoics, the human is inactive in the *pathos* mood and *pathos* takes control over the human. We can easily see the connection between “passion” and “passive” if we have a look at the etymology. We should briefly examine the Stoic mindset to understand why they define passions and desires as diseases. Stoic philosophers mostly believe that nothing irrational remains inside the human after he completes adolescence and becomes an adult. (I think this mindset explains why Stoics consider self-concern and care of the self as an adult practice despite Ancient Greek discourse). It also explains why they think that childhood is an era to get rid of. The soul consists of

the mind thus all mental processes are cognitive. These are all defined as beliefs but we mistakenly name some of them as desires. A thorough analysis will prove them all to be beliefs. So, how beliefs form? Stoics think there are some impressions reaching us from the exterior world. Human beings assent to some of these impressions where they do not assent to some others. How can we describe the assent? Let's assume a door in front of us. The exterior world sends us the impression that there is a door in front of us. The human approves the existence of the door by his assent. In other words, he believes that there is a door in front of him by assenting to this impression. Therefore, we are revisiting the belief notion. Human beings are selective when assenting to impressions. Stoics categorize impressions into two groups as ordinary and impulsive. When people assent to an impulsive impression, they activate their organisms. For example, when we stare at a meal, an impulsive impression arrives at us and activates the organism to eat the meal. Stoics developed a series of askesis practices to discipline these impulsive impressions. Therefore, the feelings defined as desires are actually impulsive impressions. They may also be the beliefs raised by giving assents to impulsive impressions. The feelings we name as emotions, desires, fear, liking, and love are examples of belief which are created by giving assent to certain impressions. Like Socrates, Stoics believe that the wrong beliefs and righteous beliefs should be disconnected. In this context, we can clarify why Stoic philosophers consider pathos as an unwanted condition to be avoided. Therefore the school of philosophy is a kind of clinic (iatreion). The school of philosophy is not for learning to compare the things, learning the process of discussing, or "making philosophy" in the sense we perceive today. People go to the philosophy schools for healing, healing of the soul (therapeutesomenoi). People should leave the philosophy school with agony rather than with pleasure after completing the practices. The process of healing the soul does not please the student. Yet nobody goes to philosophy school since they are healthy.

After stating the self-concern that shifted from youth to elders with the transition from Ancient Greece to Stoics of the Imperial period, this research should cover the elderliness title to some extent. In Ancient Greek Culture,

elderliness has an accepted social position with the wisdom and experience it carries. However, it brings inactiveness in daily and political life and also a weakness. They give advises and counsel the people but still, it is the youth protecting the city-state and the old people. Even elderliness is honored and respected in Ancient Greece, it is not desired. But for Stoics, since the self-concern notion shifted to the elderliness period, the results of this self-concern will normally emerge in elderliness. Therefore, the award of the self-concern and the peak benefits of it will shine absolutely in elderliness. Old people are the ones who are liberated from the desires of the flesh, eluded the political ambitions, and gained all the possible experiences. Besides old people are self-possessed and self-satisfied. Old people do not expect satisfaction from bodily pleasures which are beyond their capability but are pleased with themselves. Therefore, if the old people practiced decent selfhood and “care of the self”, elderliness will be a point where they are complete within themselves and have a perfect relationship with the self. In this new era, elderliness is something admirable and desirable period of life or it should be like that. If elderliness is a desirable period, it should not be considered as the end of life. Elderliness does not imply the depletion of life but it is an objective, an aim of existence. However, this does not invalidate the fact that we should live all the periods of life without any expectations. We should avoid expectations when we are young just like we live without expectations when we are old. In his 32<sup>nd</sup> letter to Lucillus, Seneca states “Consummare vitam ante mortem” which means completing the life before death. Completing life before the moment of death refers to reaching a thorough satisfaction with the self which should be accomplished. We should also emphasize that in this new era, self-concern and caring for the self are not privileged exhortations given to certain individual groups and these aphorisms have no goal anymore. People are not exhorted as Socrates did to Alcibiades in the dialogue in this new era. That is, people are not advised to care for the self to care for others. The new maxim is “just care for yourself”.

## 2.4 Matthew 22:14

Although this research states that self-concern (*epimeleia heautou*) notion was globalized in the mentioned new era, we should admit that it still addresses somewhat a limited amount of people or obviously it has to. Care of the self requires leisure time or requires “*otium*” as defined in Latin culture terminology. For sure, it is not possible for a person to care for the self if he does not have the luxury of leisure time. Therefore, even self-concern was considered to become global during the imperial period, it was not thoroughly global neither in Ancient Greece nor in the Roman Empire no matter the individuals’ lifestyle was. Bu this statement does not imply that self-concern was a notion only for the aristocracy. We can categorize the venue of the self-concern notion into two groups; the public type and the remote type. Public type includes theoretically a rough group with religious and cultic bonds where the remote group is mostly individualistic or friendship-based. Therefore, we can claim that self-concern develops among certain and separate groups, networks, and sects. In spite of the order in Ancient Greece, the difference that distinguishes the people from the belonged group is not inherited privileges anymore. The distinguishing difference originates from selfhood, type of relation with selfhood, and the level of the individual’s ability to shape himself as the object of the subject. The maxim “care for the self” is announced to everybody but only some of them can manage to care for the self. The salvation notion comes to mind at this point, but we should state that in philosophy, salvation occurs in the current world rather than in the “other” world like in Christianity. The salvation arises from the satisfaction of the self that comes from reaching the goal in the elderliness. In brief, the selfhood practice is intertwined with its ancient code for the art of life, “*techne tou biou*”. The selfhood practices today are not meant only for the beginning period of adulthood instructed by the pedagogs. The self-concern practices are spread to all periods of life that should continue through all time of existence and reaches its goal in the elderliness. We can deduct that the purpose of “self-concern” and “caring for the self” is the elderliness which is the peak of the relationship with the self and the completion of the privileged subject (not youth). The selfhood practices also help

to prepare for the elderliness yet we can also state that you should get old to become the subject.

Now it is time to discuss the role of the others in selfhood practices and caring for the self. After all, we have seen that self-concern is a maxim for everyone without any restriction, position prerequisite, or vocational/social teleology. In this sense, preparing for politics does not require to “care of the self” and its practices anymore. The selfhood practices are unconditional but still address a limited population. Although selfhood practices are available to everybody, only some people have the privilege and leisure time to apply selfhood practices because only some people are self-possessed. In any case, the relation with the selfhood is the objective, the goal, of selfhood practices. This goal is the ultimate purpose of life and also a type of existence. The ultimate purpose of life is an invitation announced to everybody but for some people, salvation is the only option. Here we can sense an indication of the post-historic salvation notion of Christianity. Remember Matthew 22:14. “For many are called, but few are chosen”.

## **2.5 Relationship with the Other**

The perspective of others is inevitable if one wants to make a complete connection with the self. In Socratic and Platonic dialogues, we can identify three methods of teaching labeled with either positive or negative values. First, let’s discuss teaching by setting examples. In this type of teaching, the “other” is an indispensable model transferred or advised to the young for the formation of him. These models are the heroes or glorious people that we acquire some information about them from the myths, epics, and narratives. This teaching method also comprises the respected figures and experienced elders of the city. The lovers, who are very close to the young student and are expected to have a pedagogic role, also serve as a model for this teaching method in Ancient Greece. The second teaching method is didactic in which the knowledge, skills, and abilities transferred to the young. The third method of teaching is based on exploring so to



say embarrassing. This method focuses on expelling the young from his ignorance. Philosophers should teach the young the things he doesn't know and even the things he is unaware that he doesn't know when appropriate. Until now, we understand that the relationship with the "other" in the Roman period was as necessary as in the Hellenistic period but of course in different forms. But in later periods, the wrong education, inadequate education, immorality, and bad habits are more emphasized rather than the ignorance of the subject. The significant problem as this study tried to enlighten in the Stoic belief analysis is the individual's inability to gain the rational will characterizing the subject, righteous moral behavior, and the relation with nature. It is not learning the new knowledge in place of ignorance that the subject should stretch for. The individual should seek or be guided for a brand new position of the subject. The individual should set himself as a subject where the "others" engage in the game. The instructor is not a teacher who gains the knowledge that the "others" do not possess and transfer it to the "others" anymore. He is not even the figure who shows the students they don't know or the things they are not aware they don't know like in the case of Socrates. Now, the instructors are responsible for building the individual as a subject and reformation. The reforming of the individual as a subject is the tool for the relationship of the individual with the self. This study considers the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>-century philosophers, the conscience guides, under this definition.

## **2.6 Stultitia**

Seneca offers a notion named "*stultitia*" which defines the human who is never satisfied or finds peace. Seneca believes that nobody can avoid this stultitia with personal efforts. The "other" is required to give a hand and pull him out of this condition. When people do not care for the self or concern for the self they become stultus or enter status stultus. We can infer that stultitia is the opposite of selfhood practices. Stultus is welcoming every incentive arriving from the exterior world without analyzing, investigating, or applying any filter. Stultus is open to the exterior impacts to the extent he allows the outsider incentives to merge with

desires, feelings, and ambition of his mind. Roughly saying, stultus can not discriminate (*discriminatio*) the outside incentives from the objective elements against these incentives. We can define the stultus as a person who lets the life slide, memorizes only the required, can't recognize anything, can't guide his life to unity or completeness, and can't steer his will and attention a goal. Therefore, stultus has a fluctuant lifestyle. Of the well-known discourses, Plutarch divides life into three periods but Seneca believes that it is harmful to change the lifestyle frequently. Remembering that the goal of the self-concern had shifted to the elderliness, inversely, stultus is ignorant to it without apprehending the reality that life will complete himself in old ages. Stultus frequently changes his lifestyle and doesn't have free will. How come he has no free will? Actually, he can't freely to desire anything without any incentive or determination. Desiring something freely means to desire without any determination but stultus is pre-determined with the effects of both outsider and insider incentives. So, what should be the goal of the free and absolute will without the effect of outsider and insider determinations? It is, for sure, the selfhood and unmediated relationship. The thing that can be desired without an unmediated relationship is the selfhood but stultus is unable to accomplish this. Stultitia is defined as a kind of disassociation with the self so the necessity to the "other" appears at his point. Stultus is not able to avoid the stultitia status alone. The "other" should engage to enable the transition from the self-neglecting individual to an individual completely satisfied with the self because the will of stultus is unable to desire the self-concern. Thus we understand that the engagement of the other is obligatory under these circumstances. The "other" is not necessarily an instructor teaching the truth, facts, norms, etc as generally perceived. The other (*educere*) is expected to reach the aided individual and take him out of the current living conditions. This requires an operation and action over the aided individual. This is all and only a deed related to the existing way of the object. It is certainly not a transfer of knowledge, theory, etc. in place of ignorance. Who is the "other" that will make the individual demand the self, control the self, reach the self, and finally overall ascesis which will bring happiness? The answer is undoubtedly a philosopher. The philosopher is a guide (*hegemon*) who directs all the people to what is proper

to their nature. There should be strong bonds between the guide and the guided which can also be a friendship. The narrative style and frankness that a guide should possess are rather important and are considered within the relationship between the guided and the guide as this study will further explore. For the followers of Epicurus, frankness is the most significant conditional of the guidance together with the friendship.

## **2.7 Counselor of Existence**

The practice of guiding the conscience seems somewhat covert in Stoics. It seems less connected to a group living in a communal existence or the existence of this group. Let's discuss a notion called school before exploring the title of "counselor of existence". The school of Epicurus sets a good example for this purpose. First of all, this school was not a place to exist together but a place of assembly for frequent meetings and as aforementioned it was a boarding school. The students were in the city all day but were not allowed or hardly allowed to interact with daily life. As we learned from the conversations reported by Arianus, there were multiple student categories in this school. The first category to mention is the regular students which is also divided into two. These students attend the school to complete their formation before starting the citizenship or entering political life. Epictetus thinks that the moment that the students would be presented to the Imperial and they make their choice between flattery and sincerity is the most critical time for them. Thus we can define these students as interns of life. Besides, regular students were not coming only for completing their formation but also for becoming a philosopher. For Epictetus, the soul is a kind of balance scale. It weighs either one side or the other. The soul weighs to the side of truth regardless of the desire. Epictetus believes that a student will become a philosopher when he can effect the contest in the other's mind and falsify the misbelief with the art of narration. If the misbelief in the other's mind can not be corrected by convincing with the art of narration, the fault lies with the philosopher, not with the audience. It is never the fault of the audience. This

school also has some bystanders. Foucault gives an example of this incidence in his lecture dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 1982.

“For example, in discourse 11 of book I, there is a man in Epictetus’s audience who has some official responsibilities and so seems to be a notable of the town or surrounding area. He has family problems. His daughter is ill. Epictetus explains to him the value and meaning of family relationships. At the same time, he explains that we must not be attached to things we cannot control or master but must attend to our representation of things. For this is what we can really control and master what we can use (*khrestai*). The discourse ends with this important note: To be able to examine your representations in this way you must become *skholastikos*. (that is to say, you must go through the school.) This clearly shows that Epictetus suggests a period of training and philosophical formation at school even to a man already established in life with responsibilities and a family.” (Foucault, 2006)

It is time to explore a Roman type school which is opposite to this improved Epictetus example of Hellenic school. In the Hellenic example, the students come to school to appeal admittance. On the contrary, in the Roman example of special counselor application, an aristocrat family and its leader invites the philosopher to his home and host him there. The Republican and Imperial Roman era has many similar examples of this application. Foucault gives a good example of Demetrius the Cynic.

“Demetrius, for example, accompanied Thrasea Paetus for an entire period of his life, and when Thrasea Paetus had to kill himself, like many people of this epoch he naturally staged his suicide in a very solemn manner. He called his entourage around him, his family etc. Then bit by bit, he dismissed everyone. The last remain with him, when he was closest to death, the only one who kept watch beside him was precisely Demetrius. When the poison took effect and he began to lose consciousness, he turned his eyes towards Demetrius, who was therefore the last person he saw. Of course, the final words exchanged between

Thrasya Paetus and Demetrius concerned death, immortality, the survival of the soul etc. ( a reconstruction, as you can see, of the death of Socrates, but a death in which Thrasya Paetus was not surrounded by a crowd of disciples, but was accompanied solely by his counselor.) (Foucault, 2006)

As recognized, the role of Demetrius here as a counselor is not relevant to the role of an instructor. Actually, it is not even the role of a confidant. He mostly resembles a counselor of existence advising under certain conditions. In this epoch, generally, there is no philosopher in the sense we understand. Instead, there is a person whom we can name as cultural guides. In the early Imperial period, this cultural guide informs his audience to make an important choice between modest monarchy, hereditary monarchy, or demands for a republic instead of the despotic monarchy. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, These philosophers played a significant role in political life, great disputes, executions, and revolts. After the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD when the crisis was re-staged, the philosophers appear again but in a weaker role. The kind of philosopher mentioned above loses its exterior function as he can't reduce its indigenous function to daily life and political life. Rather he coalesces with advising and counseling politicians. Philosophy loses its character as a profession to the extent it gains importance. The more the individual needs a counselor, the more he consults to the "other" which improves the necessity for a philosopher. Likewise, the philosophic function of the philosopher becomes more ambiguous as the necessity to a philosopher consolidates. Philosophers became more like a counselor of existence advising about everything or nothing, private life, family behaviors, political behaviors, cautions, and some details instead of introducing general models like Aristotle or Plato would suggest. Philosophers get involved in daily existence.

## 2.8 Notion of Salvation

As we can recall from Plato's Republic, the basis and the award of the self-concern is the safety (salvation) of the city. Human or the citizen is saved to the extent the city is saved. Caring for the self will help the city to save itself and that will save the individual in return. We can observe this mutual relationship through all scripts of the Republic. In the Imperial period, selfhood techniques or the self-concern as Plato defines become a self-sufficient goal instead of serving the concern for the others as a guide to the ultimate goal. The selfhood concerned or should be concerned was not a tool for the self anymore. It is not either a transition element for the others or the city. Selfhood was the ultimate and final goal or objective of the self-concern. This activity is all and only selfhood centered. The completion, finalization, and the resulting satisfaction of this practice are provided by the selfhood and the practices applied to the self. The self-concern should be driven for the selfhood and the self. This self-concern finds its award within the self-concern itself. In the context of self-concern, the goal and the subject of the self is the human itself. If the self can be handled as a subject of the concern, the identification between the art of life (*techne tou biou*) and the self-concern can be possible. *Techne tou biou* was always arm-in-arm with this question: What to do to live a proper life? What is the knowledge that can show me how to live properly as a citizen, individual, etc? In the Hellenistic and Roman era, the existence of the subject is reformed by the subject itself. This study considers this conception as the most important title which also includes a kind of spiritualism. The important question for this study has been released: How should I reform myself to reach the truth?

Let's continue with the salvation notion now. We never observe terms like death, immortality, or the other world in the manuscripts about salvation notion of the Hellenistic and Roman era. The human can not save or salvage himself by referring to a mediator or a dramatic event. Saving the self (*sozetai*) is a practice for all life and the only mediator is the subject itself, nothing else. Salvation is avoiding the harmful effects of misfortunes and mishaps on the soul coming from

the exterior world unlike Christianity (promises for the other world, etc.). This achievement is only possible with a complete relationship with the self. After reaching the goal and objective of the salvation, the human does not need anybody else but the self. The contact with Ataraxia appears here. Ataraxia is an ascetic status that prevents all disturbances, misfortunes, and troubles coming from outside. It is the point where the award of the salvation practices applied throughout all life is delivered. As we can see, salvation is a continuous selfhood practice that finds its goal and award in a certain relationship established with the subject itself. The award is the protection of the subject against the outsider troubles and the satisfaction and the unmediated relationship within the self. Despite Christianity, the human saves himself for only himself. A human being saves himself to reach the self and to establish an unmediated and complete relationship with the self. We can name this salvation notion as Hellenistic and Roman salvation where selfhood is the executor, subject, and goal of salvation. This is not similar to the salvation notion of Plato in which salvation is mediated through the city. This is also very different than the salvation notion of Christianity which exhorts the man the surrender of selfhood in the first place. In this context, the salvation notion provides a continuous practice over selfhood throughout all life and establishes an unmediated and satisfactory relationship with the self.

## **2.9 Epistrophe, Metanoia**

The principal conceptions we have discussed so far such as care of the self, self-concern, reforming the self as the subject of the truth are significant for this study. Let's discuss the epistrophe conception of Platonic first. This word has the meaning of turning the head or look away from the scenes. A second meaning refers to concerning and caring for the self after realizing the ignorance of the self. The last meaning refers to returning back to the world of essence, truth, and existence that will carry the self to the self-remembering deed. Additionally, the soul should save itself from the body which is defined as a prison or a grave (soma-sema) for the soul. The Platonic epistrophe notion claims that knowing the

self means knowing the truth. Knowing the truth liberates the individual. In Platonic discourse, all these conceptions are linked to the remembrance deed which is the basic form of the knowledge. If we disregard some movements following Plato's epistrophe notion, the returning notion was completely different in the Hellenistic and Roman era. In the Hellenistic and Roman era, epistrophe is not defined with the contrast between this world and other world. Inversely, it is a return to the self-knowledge in the immanence of this world. In Platonic discourse, the epistrophe carries the individual from this world to the other (from the below to the above) but in the Hellenistic and Roman era, the return is a kind of displacement from the self-independent towards self-dependent. This action is liberation, within the axis of immanence, from the things we can not pervade to finally reach the things we can pervade. A new understanding of the return in the Hellenistic and Roman era may arise after this statement. This return implies establishing a holistic, complete, and all-appropriate relationship with the self instead of liberation from the body as seen in Ancient Greece. In other words, the return does not refer to disconnection from the body but refers to establishing an all-appropriate and complete relationship with the self. Here, the knowledge is not as deterministic and basic as it is in Platonic epistrophe notion. In Platonic epistrophe, the main element of the return is the knowledge in the form of remembering. In the Hellenistic and especially in the Roman era, the basic elements of the epistrophe notion were abundant exercise (askesis), practice, and the study over the self. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> and especially the 4<sup>th</sup> century a returning theme also appears in Christian culture. The Christian style of returning is different from the Platonic style of returning. The term metanoia attracts our attention in Christianity. Metanoia means penitence and radical change in thoughts and mind. The returning action in Christianity is an abrupt one. It should be an unprecedented, abrupt, and overthrowing event within or beyond the history that changes the existence of the subject at once (either after a long preparation period or not). In this epoch, a transition is observed during this dramatic overthrow and abrupt Christian metanoia. A transition from one existence to another, from mortality to immortality (eternity), from darkness to light, from the devil's judgment to God's judgment, etc. The most significant point is that the



return is only possible if there is a shift inside the subject. The returning selfhood here is completely different from the one in the Hellenistic and Roman era as the self totally surrenders the self. Surrendering of the self is one of the basic pillars of Christian metanoia. That is, to die to self, and reborn in new selfhood with completely different existence or type of existence, habits or ethos. However, in the Imperial era, there is no disconnection of selfhood from the self, and a reborn completely different than the original. The shift in this era happens in accordance with the surrounding effects. This shift happens just around the selfhood to prevent the occurrence of a slave, restricted, and passive self. In the Hellenistic and Roman era, unlike the upcoming Christian metanoia, there was an attention to direct the shift towards the self. In other words, it was required to steer the eyes towards selfhood. Last but not least factor is a human's journey towards himself like he is moving to his goal. This is not the act of the eyes but the deed of all creatures that wish to move or return towards the self as an ultimate goal. In his lecture on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1928 Foucault defines the problem of returning to self as follows:

“... I think, the tension of this notion, this practice, this practical schema of conversation, inasmuch as I do not think it is ever completely clear or resolved in Hellenistic and Roman thought whether the self is something to which you return because it is given in advance or and object you must set for yourself and to which you might finally gain access if you achieve wisdom. Is the self the point to which you return through the long detour of ascesis and philosophical practice? Or is the self an object you keep always before your eyes and reach through a movement that in the end can only be bestowed by wisdom?”(Foucault, 2006)

This study defines selfhood as returning, or if appropriate to say, a kind of reaching the self that did not exist at the beginning, after a long journey of askesis and philosophical practice. Certain relationships characterizing the final point of the returning action towards the selfhood should be established even it is not characterizing the returning action itself. The relation of the self with the selfhood in this manner may turn into a deed. The selfhood gets armed, equipped, preserved, and protected. This relationship may also turn into an attitude of

selfhood against the self. Selfhood is respected and honored. Finally, these relationships may transform into a manner that we can define as a conditional relationship. The selfhood was mastered, possessed, thus gained satisfaction and pleasure. If a shift and change of selfhood in the self or over-subjectivity is experienced in the Christian and Post-Christian metanoia, it is not the matter of philosophy of the first centuries after AD. This phenomenon is not a basic disconnection in the self or the form of disconnection exerted on the subject by itself. Returning is a continuous and lifetime series of practices that can be defined as subjectivization of the self rather than an over-subjectivity. This study assesses this definition as critical. The self is approached as a goal. How can we establish an all-appropriate, unmediated, and satisfactory relationship between the self and selfhood? This question is critical and the answer is obviously not the Christian metanoia notion.

So, what is the domain the sight should turn towards for this returning action? It is, of course, the self. We should look into the self, turn the eyes on the self, and keep the eyes on it. Turning the look towards the self may resemble like recalling the *gnothi seauton* maxim. But when philosophers such as Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Plutarch advise turning the eyes to the self, they don't mean the subject to consider itself as an element knowledge. Yet, we should be very careful about the images and incentives emerging in our minds as observed in upcoming Christianity. We should interpret all our deeds studiously because these images and incentives might be infected with temptation. Their perspective is not even to discriminate if they are devil originated or God originated. Looking into the self or turning the look towards the self aims neither to find the truth inside us as Plato suggests nor to find the desires of the flesh as Christianity offers. The critical question arises about looking into the self is: From where we should turn our looks to the self?

Overlooking to the self first means to take our looks away from the others. We should take our looks away from the hustle of daily life, world businesses,

and the curiosity that convinces us to mess with other's business. We can clearly see this perspective in Plutarch's "On Curiosity".

"Such a malady of the mind, to take the first instance, is curiosity, which is a desire to learn the troubles of others, a disease which is thought to be free from neither envy nor malice: Why do you look so sharp on others' ills. Malignant man, yet overlook your own?" (Plutarch, 2007)

The Greek version of this script includes the term "philomatheia allotrion kakon" which means the pleasure gained by learning the misfortunes and mishappenings of the others. Plutarch advises us not to be curious and to consider our own mistakes and wrongdoings instead of the others' mistakes.

For Plutarch, it is more beneficial to explore the secrets of nature (aporreta physeos), reading history although there are plenty of misfortunes included (actually this unhappiness already vanished), and to practice memory exercises. The ancient and traditional theme of Antiquity since Pythagoras is reminded here: Not giving up remembering the already learned knowledge existing in the mind. Plutarch offers to postpone curiosity. For example, you should not open and read a letter once it arrives, you should keep it aside.

"Wherefore, as a farther help to check the impatience of our curiosity, it will contribute much to practise such acts of abstinence as these. If a letter be brought thee, lay it aside for some time before thou read it; and do not (as many do) eagerly fall upon the seal with tooth and nail, as soon as ever it comes to thy hands, as if it were scarce possible to open it with sufficient speed; when a messenger returns, do not hastily rise up and run towards him, as if thou couldst not hear what he had to say time enough; and if anyone makes an offer to tell thee something that is new, say that thou hadst rather it were good and useful." (Plutarch, 2010)

The discourse of Marcus Aurelius also advises us to look at ourselves instead of messing with others.

“Don’t waste the rest of your time here worrying about other people- unless it affects the common good. It will keep you from anything useful. You’ll be too preoccupied with that so-and-so is doing, and why, and what they’re saying, and what they’re thinking, and what they’re up to, and all the other things that throw you off and keep you from focusing on your own mind.” (Aurelius, 2002)

The reason to abandon the wicked curiosity and malign look is to enable focusing on the route required to follow towards the goal. The end of this route arrives at the selfhood. This practice does not focus on analyzing the selfhood like in Christianity but to build a healthy and complete relationship with the selfhood. The advice to take the look away from the wicked curiosity doesn’t mean to turn it towards the self to analyze it as a test element. Rather, it is an invitation to a teleological concentration. The subject overlooking the self actually focuses on his own goal. This means to keep a constant eye on the point of interest and to have an alert conscious of the required practices to reach this goal. The alert conscious is paramount for the relationship with the self. We should clear the surroundings. We should focus on the distance between the current self and the objective self. All the attention should be paid for the route from the self towards the future self. Because of the distance between the self and the future self, the self already exists in the self. In other words, the self exists in the self on the route to the future self. This is the object of the look towards the others. The target of this look is not the self as an element of analysis or knowledge. Initially, it should be the subject of a deed that has adequate tools. It also should be under obligation to reach the self. The eyes should be turned towards the self, or the route heading to the future self. The end of his route will undoubtedly meet the subject with the self.

## **2.10 Ethopoetic Knowledge**

At the beginning of this study, we defined two types of knowledge; intellectual knowledge and spiritual knowledge. This section will discuss the effect that spiritual knowledge has or should have on the human character. The connection between the knowledge of the things and selfhood experience is the main topic of this section. We should apprehend the relationship between the knowledge of the things (*savoir*) and the return to the self. Remember that in Phaedrus Socrates was asked to choose between the knowledge of the trees (*connaissance*) and the knowledge of human beings and he chose the latter. Socrates believed that knowing the human was important, not the secrets of the world. The re-occurrence of this theme in Cynic, Epicurean, and Stoic philosophy schools should be investigated.

Let's start with Cynics by studying the information about them transferred to us by some other authors. Diogenes Laertius cited that he taught all the letters to his young students and added that he tried to give an exact summary to avoid forgetting. Thus, we should be skeptical about the old idea that Cynics refused knowledge of the elements of nature. Seneca frequently praises Demetrius and quotes him. In one passage that Seneca quotes Demetrius, Demetrius suggests keeping the wrestler model in mind.

“The cynic Demetrius, who in my opinion was a great man even if compared with the greatest philosophers, had an admirable saying about this, that one gained more by having a few wise precepts ready and in common use than by learning many without having them at hand. "The best wrestler," he would say, "is not he who has learned thoroughly all the tricks and twists of the art, which are seldom met with in actual wrestling, but he who has well and carefully trained himself in one or two of them, and watches keenly for an opportunity of practicing them.” (Seneca, 1899)

What are the requirements to become a successful wrestler? For Demetrius, he is not the one who learned all required and available tricks and techniques to apply during the game. A good wrestler learns the tricks most frequently used in an actual game and masters these tricks. The wrestler should be an expert on these well-known couple tricks to be ready and to be able to apply them sharply when required. We can esteem criteria of benefit from this context. We should remove all unnecessary information from the memory that is useless and have no chance of application in the future struggle for life just like the unnecessary acrobatic tricks in the wrestler example.

Demetrius discriminates the things that are beneficial to know from the things non-beneficial to know. Some of the things that are non-beneficial to know are the cause of the tides, seven-year rhythms believed to segment the life, and the reason for the twin-births. They are labeled as non-beneficial but not because they are not related to the existence of humans. They are considered to be non-beneficial because they are related to the reasons. Unnecessary knowledge is the cause of twin-births, tides, and seven-years rhythm. Nature disguises these causes by using the results of them. Nature's disguising the reason for these facts doesn't necessarily make them unnecessary to know. Nor they are tabu not to transgress. Nevertheless, knowing the reasons for the things does not avail the human or the ethos of human. These kinds of knowledge are considered as ornaments at the most. These kinds of knowledge may be gained without expecting additional satisfaction beyond the satisfaction coming from the discovery, so to say. Likewise, the acquaintance of such knowledge is left to individuals' choice.

So, for Demetrius, what type of knowledge should we know? He suggests the knowledge such as there is nothing to worry about humans; Gods will not send anything to worry about; death never brings evil; we are only a social creature born for the community; The way to virtue is not hard to find. The earth is exactly a common living space. Human beings gathered here to form and continue this corporation. However, Demetrius never tells to focus only on exploring self-identity, own diseases, passions, desires, etc. instead of the

knowledge of the exterior things and he doesn't consider the knowledge of the exterior things as unnecessary. He doesn't even suggest casuistry which is a significant concept for Stoics. He doesn't also advise to turn the look away from the exterior towards the interior. The matter for Demetrius is always the world and the others. The issue is the enclosings of daily life. The critical point in this notion is to know them in a new way, in a new modality. Foucault defines this knowing, this modality as a relational mode of knowledge.

“Well, I think we could call it, quite simply, a relational mode of knowledge, because when we now consider the gods, other men, the kosmos, the world etcetera, this involves taking into account the relation between the gods, men, the world and things of the world on the one hand and ourselves on the other. It is by making us appear to ourselves as the recurrent and constant term of all these relations that our gaze should be directed on the things of the world, the god, and men. It is in the field of the relation between all these things and oneself that knowledge (*le savoir*) can and must be deployed. It seems to me that this relational knowing (*savoir*) is the primary characteristic of the knowledge (*connaissance*) validated by Demetrius.” (Foucault, 2006)

In other words, the thing or things to know or the required way of knowing considers the accepted truth as a direct order. Of course, this consideration addresses the ethos of the human. These kinds of knowledge become the subject's form of existence after acquiring them; grows respect for the self more than the respect for the others; bring humans to a mood of tranquillity that is hard to disturb. These kinds of knowledge bring happiness to humans which absolutely makes them the opposite of ornamental knowledge mentioned above. The ornamental knowledge does not make any change on the subject's form of existence even if it is about the truth or utters the truth. These are the kind of knowledge that will not transform into an order for our existence. Here, we see discrimination within the modality of knowledge. This discrimination is about the effect known things of humans, gods, and nature on the nature of the subject,

about execution styles for some things, and about the effect created on the ethos. In this context, we should notice that Greeks have an interesting term for this notion, *Ethopoiein*. *Ethopoiein* means to grow ethos like a poem, and alteration or transformation of one's own mode of existence. *Ethopoios* is a more interesting word. This means the human who can make the distinction between the aforementioned types of knowledge, and who is capable to form a new mode of existence or character. Knowing (savoir) knowledge (connaissance) is beneficial if it has a formation and aspect useful for creating ethos. This critic of unnecessary knowledge does not affirm the knowledge of different content or a different knowledge about us or "inside" of us. Thus, the knowledge of selfhood is never an analysis of the secrets of the conscience or a kind of selfhood perspective of Christianity. Useful knowledge, which directly addresses the human existence, is both affirming and dictating and also capable to cause a change in the modality of existence.

Foucault states that Epicurus refers to the existence of a significant notion that encompasses an ethopoietic (as mentioned above) knowing/knowledge which gives or creates ethos in humans. This notion is named as phusiologia.

"What is phusiologia? In the Vatican Sayings – paragraph 45- there is a text that gives the precise definition of phusiologia. Here again, phusiologia is not a distinct branch of knowledge (savoir): it is the modality of knowledge (savoir) of nature insofar as it is philosophically relevant for the practice of the self. The text says: "The study of nature (phusiologia) does not form men who are fond of boasting and who are verbal performers, or those who make a show of the culture which is envied by the masses, but men rather, who are haughty and independent, and who take pride in what is their own and not what comes from circumstances." Let us go back over this. So, the text says: phusiologia does not form (paraskeueazei) boasters and verbal performers...people who make a show of that culture (paideia) prized by the masses. It forms men who are haughty and independent (autarkies), who take pride in what



belongs to them by right and not what comes to them from circumstances, from things. (pragmata)” (Foucault, 2006)

According to the quoted passage, cultural knowledge finds its goal in pomposity which brings fame and reputation to humans. This boasting of knowledge belongs to the loudmouth trying to gain unnecessary fame in the eyes of the others. The aforementioned paideia is mostly observed at “verbal performers”. These kinds of people never study for themselves in the sense of the rationality (logos) of the discourse. They learn the letters to sell others. In short, we can see the paideia notion as a method to be exploited to boast among others. Yet this is the attitude that boastingly addressed crowds esteem and gets impressed. Epicurus also criticizes paideia thinking the only benefit of it is the admiration of the masses.

Epicurus offers phusiologia instead of paideia. Phusiologia prepares the individual and equips it with a certain formation instead of creating boasting characters (paraskeue). This formation prepares the individual against all the possible troubles of life and all types of living conditions that the subject and psyche may face. Paraskeue creates resistance against all exterior fascinations and actions. Paraskeue is the notion that protects the individual from the exterior injections during the required time for reaching the selected goal and helps him to consistently persist on this goal. Phusiologia equips the soul with the formation required for reaching the goal and struggle thus it is the opposite of paideia. Phusiologia furnishes the individual with courage and resilience that not only helps to oppose the imposed beliefs and attitudes but also to oppose the authority of the rulers and the hazards of life. Owing to phusiologia the individuals become self-sufficient and not dependent on the others (autarkes). The individuals will be content (contenti) and satisfied with themselves. In phusiologia, knowing the world (savoir) is an active and effective tool in the subject’s transformation by itself. The contrast between knowing the things and knowing the self/selfhood should not be considered as the current contrast between knowing nature and knowing humans. The contrast between them includes ignoring and opting out certain knowledge (connaissance) and the modality of the knowledge. Knowledge

here is required for both the philosopher and the student. It includes knowing the knowledge that is acceptable, related to the things, nature, and gods, and that can have a transforming effect on the subject's existence. The truth should touch and affect (affecte) the subject. We should remind that these selfhood practices do not act as a pioneer for the continuous hermeneutics of the self in upcoming Christianity.

### **2.11 Stoic Knowledge of the Self**

Let's remember the Platonic model. As we examined in Alcibiades, the self-concern and the knowledge of the self gravitate around three elements. First of all, if one concerns or is required to concern about the self, it is due to his ignorance. The individual is ignorant and even is not aware of his ignorance. This ignorance may be discovered by an event, a meeting, a conversation, or after a question. After Socartes's query Alcibiades realizes his own ignorance and that he is not even aware of his ignorance. After that, he discovers that he needs to care for himself. We can state that it is the discovery of the ignorance that reveals the need for the care of the self. In the Platonic model, self-concern never leaves the "know yourself" (gnothi seauton) after getting affirmation and the self-concern practice starts running. The surface of the self-concern gets occupied by this "know yourself". This knowledge is the point where the soul recognizes the self and apprehends the existence of itself as aforementioned. It is a form of comprehension that occurs by looking at the self in the mirror that can be reached and understood only by the reason. The Platonic remembering is exactly the integration point of self-concern (epimeleia heautou) and knowing the self (gnothi seauton). Psyche remembers what is seen and discovers it. In Platonic remembering, knowledge of the truth, knowledge of the self, self-concern, and returning to the existence are unified and integrated into one deed of the soul.

In the Christian model, the self-concern as given in the Holy Book and revelation is complicatedly connected with the knowledge of the truth. First of all, it is believed that the heart should be completely cleansed to understand the word.

Only this knowledge of the self can cleanse the heart. The word should have arrived to start cleansing the heart and realize the knowledge of the self. There is a cyclic relationship between knowledge of the self, knowledge of the truth, and self-concern. If one wishes to attain salvation, he should admit the truth given by the Book and revelation. But this truth can be known if and only if the self is involved in the knowledge that cleanses the heart, so to say. Besides, this knowledge will have the function of cleansing the self with the self if currently there is a basic relationship between the subject and the truth of the Book and Revelation. In Christianity, one can reach this kind of knowledge of the self by using some techniques that aim to scatter interior reflections, detect the temptations that may emerge in the soul or heart, and avoid all the seduction and incitations that may victimize us. All this may happen after the analysis of the processes and practices in the soul. The origins, goals, and formation of these processes and practices should be apprehended. On contrary to Antiquity, here we see the requirement for a detailed interpretation and exposition (exegesis) of the selfhood. In Christianity, unlike the Platonism, there is no function of returning to self with a deed of remembering to find the truth and existence contemplated before. By the introduction of Christianity, we can build a schematic of the relationship between the self-concern and knowing the self. This may include the cyclic relationship between the truth of the Book and knowing the self, a detailed interpretation and inventory of knowing the self, and finally completely surrendering the self as well-known. The Hellenistic model which is focusing on a totally different study has a relationship neither with the interpretation and inventory of the selfhood nor the surrendering of the self which is the first conditional of the Christian spirituality. Foucault determines in his lecture on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1982 that:

“Second, the Hellenistic model, unlike the Christian model, far from moving in the direction of self-exegesis or self-renunciation, tends, Hellenistic and Roman period, between Platonism and Christianity, an art of oneself was constituted, which for us will no doubt be just an episode permanently bracketed off by these two great models, the earlier and the later, which then dominated it

and concealed it. As a result, we might consider it to be more than a sort of archeological curiosity within our culture were it not for the fact –and this is undoubtedly the paradox to be grasped- that an exacting, rigorous, restrictive, and austere morality was developed within this neither Platonic nor Christian but Hellenistic model. Christianity certainly did not invent this morality because Christianity, like all good religions, is not morality. At any rate, Christianity is a religion without morality. Well, it was this morality that Christianity utilized and repatriated, first of all as strong support explicitly taken in from outside and then that it adapted, fashioned, and honed precisely through those practices of the self, we have then if you like three great models which historically succeeded each other, the model I will call ‘‘Platonic’’ which gravitated around recollection, the ‘‘Hellenistic’’ model which turns on the self-finalization of the relationship to the self, and the ‘‘Christian’’ model, which turns on self-exegesis and self-renunciation.’’ (Foucault, 2006)

The model that we will discuss below includes neither remembering nor a selfhood interpretation. This model falls apart from the Platonic and Christian model of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The self-concern and knowing the self do not identify with each other. In other words, they don’t meet in the same melting pot. Inversely, this model tends to emphasize the self-concern (*epimeleia heautou*) and to grant privilege to it. Also, this model desires to preserve the autarky of the self-concern or to reinstate its reputation, so to speak.

Stoics have a criticism tradition about useless knowledge that is unnecessary for transforming the human character. The required knowledge should be organized according to the aforementioned ‘‘*techne tou biou*’’. While classifying the knowledge according to ‘‘*techne tou biou*’’ and insisting on the necessity of redirecting the look towards the self, Stoics relate the world’s general order with the redirecting of the look towards the self. Seneca criticizes the Library of Alexandria in *De Tranquillitate Animi*:

“ Even for studies, where expenditure is most honorable, it is justifiable only so long as it is kept within bounds. What is the use of having countless books and libraries, whose titles their owners can scarcely read through in a whole lifetime? The learner is, not instructed, but burdened by the mass of them, and it is much better to surrender yourself to a few authors than to wander through many. Forty thousand books were burned at Alexandria; let someone else praise this library as the most noble monument to the wealth of kings, as did Titus Livius, who says that it was the most distinguished achievement of the good taste and solicitude of kings. There was no "good taste" or "solicitude" about it, but only learned luxury — nay, not even "learned," since they had collected the books, not for the sake of learning, but to make a show, just as many who lack even a child's knowledge of letters use books, not as the tools of learning, but as decorations for the dining-room. Therefore, let just as many books be acquired as are enough, but not for mere show” (Seneca, 2016)

In this quoted passage, Seneca delineates the Library of Alexandria as the kings' curiosity to make a show. Seneca states that the books were collected for the sake of luxury rather than a tool for learning. Yet for Seneca, one should not read much, or more precisely speaking not in multiple areas. This implies that one should not distract the concentration. You should attain two or three books which you should read carefully and also memorize. Certain aphorisms of these books should be meditated. Following Ancient Greek traditions, these meditations should be performed regarding the propositions that are both speaking the truth and acting as an order on the ethos. So, why Seneca wrote “*Naturales Quaestiones*” which includes encyclopedic information about the natural world despite Stoics constantly advice to redirect our looks towards ourselves? Stoics believe that the world is an engineering marvel. Human beings are part of nature. Cosmos (or the universe) is a divine mechanism that has its own mind. Stoics call this mind the God from time to time. The world that is organized by this mind is an engineering marvel. Human beings are part of this engineering marvel to the extent they are a part of nature. In the preface and his letters to Lucilius, Seneca explains the reasons for writing such a book about the topics far from the spiritual

knowledge in Stoics' perspective, giving information about the things in nature, and mentioning natural researches. Seneca wishes to explore the secrets of the world as he was traversing the world. But why? First, the well-known aging mood has a role. Seneca was old when he wrote "*Naturales Quaestiones*" (senex). Like other Stoics, Seneca gives a special meaning to elderliness. One should hurry in elderliness as it is the end of life. You should live life as fast as possible without segmenting it to different modes of existence and different phases. But for Stoics, the importance of the elderliness is not because it is chronologically at the end. The elderliness is a special period because it is the time when one can reach the unmediated and satisfactory relationship with the self. Secondly comes Seneca's historical criticism or in other words the criticism of chroniclers. For Seneca, the history of kings' adventures, conquests, and braveries transferred to us are actually the history of peoples' misery, devastation, and agony. Instead of understanding and admiring the kings' and princes' passions like the historians do, humans should surrender and defeat their own passions. Now it may be a proper time to mention Seneca's hatred for Alexander the Great. Seneca states that there are countless masters of the cities and nations but he questions how many people succeeded to become the master of the self. There is nothing almighty in this sense to admire. The almighty thing is to overcome the threats or promises of the soul and faith. It is also not to expect anything from faith, luck, or destiny. Welcoming all kinds of unhappiness and disaster coldly and firmly as expecting them for a long time is almighty. Finally, building a satisfactory and unmediated relationship with the self is the same thing as being always ready for death and completing life before death.

## **2.12 Marcus Aurelius**

In the discourse of Marcus Aurelius, unlike the other Stoics, there is a spiritual knowledge modality that does not require the subject surrendering from the current position to re-apprehend the existing world. The knowledge modality of Marcus Aurelius is more like explaining the deed of the subject. The subject dives into the world from its current position without surrendering and penetrates

the world. He bends towards the world from his current position to have a close look in the details of the world, or in other words, the smallest particles of the things. Neither the quality (poiotēs) nor the value (axia) of the things should be disregarded. The image appearing in the mind should always be defined and described. We should see the object, which we have the image in our mind, barely, inherently, and explicitly with all aspects. The name, associating elements, and dissociating elements should be listed one by one. What is this object? Which components does it consist of? Or how long it will exist in the world? Which virtue does the subject need for this object that reflects an image in the subject? Tranquillity, courage, reliance, simplicity, sincerity, etc. The definition of good for the subject, good for liberty, and good for truth are important for Marcus Aurelius. It is more important to maintain these three elements continuously in the mind with the help of memory exercises. The exercises constantly remind the subject of the aforementioned three elements. The subject links them with each other while realizing them in each deed. The subject defines the desired thing for liberty in the present time. In the sense of liberty, the subject has only one component of truth which is the present time. Marcus Aurelius gives special importance to the present time. The venue these three elements mostly meet is the exercises as understood. The necessity to interfere with the flow of the representations (as they presented themselves to the subject) to the subject was occasionally seen in Antiquity but returned to the stage with Stoics. It is necessary to focus on the flow of the representation and to care for this automatic and unintended flow to determine the objective content of it.

The free flow of representations towards us and the study over this freedom may be defined as a spiritual exercise. The inverse process is to detect and define the order in the sequence of the flow of the representations. Outside representations are accepted only to the extent that there is a "sufficient" degree between them so that the transition from one representation to another should be clear and distinct. Descartes' method, which we will examine later, is completely the second one. Marcus Aurelius states that it is necessary to identify the object whose image comes to the mind in essence in a clear way that we can name it

among its associates and dissociates. First of all, it should be plainly identified so all aspects of it can be seen clearly. The object should be apprehended just only as it is represented. *Blepein*, as Marcus Aurelius calls it, is seeing the object clearly with its entirety. *Blepein* means good thought. Here we see a meditative factor. Gazing at the object (blepein also means to look at) and not missing the entirety and singularity of the object is necessary. Another important factor is the saying. It is described as saying or uttering the object's entirety and singularity after having a fine look at the arriving object (blepein). It is a clear and uncovered enunciation even it is interior. The exercise of uttering or saying it to ourselves loudly provides the stabilization of the components of the image arriving at us. It also activates some systems of values (ethos). The names of the things are formulated by remembering (yet another important notion in Ancient Greek tradition). By this double exercise (naming and remembering) the essence of the thing reveals with its entirety. By looking at (blepein) the thing itself and naming the dissociating elements of it, the components and segments of the given object become visible. It can be stated that this exercise does not only reveal the elements that the object is composed of but also the future of the object and its decomposition element or elements. They will also show us how and when it will break to pieces and die out and under which circumstances. By the aforementioned exercise, the essential truth of the object with its complexity and the position in time will be apprehended.

“To the stand-bys above, add this one: always to define whatever it is we perceive –to trace its outline- so we can see what it really is: its substance. Stripped bare. As a whole. Unmodified. And to call it by its name –the thing itself and its components, to which it will eventually return. Nothing is so conducive to spiritual growth as this capacity for logical and accurate analysis of everything that happens to us. To look at it in such a way that we understand what need it fulfills, and what kind of world. And its value to that world as a whole and to man particular –as a citizen of that higher city, of which all other cities are mere households.” (Aurelius, 2002)



Another phase of the exercise that Aurelius exhorts is related to appraising the object in the shape he submitted to his mind, in its complexity, and in the time flow. The objective of this exercise is to emblazon the soul by applying it. The subject should be freed from its bounds, impression, and the captivity caused by the impressions. Emblazoning the soul means to liberate it from all bonds immobilizing and restricting it. The real nature of the soul should be carried to its true destination which is the elderliness that is the rational principle organizing the world as aforementioned. The value of the object should be judged. In other words, the objective of the exercise is to treat in pieces within its entirety, and also to ensure the adequacy to the serenity/tranquillity (ataraxia) of the spirit we stare at and the adequacy to the rational/divine principle which is an engineering marvel. For the world citizen, as Marcus Aurelius defines them, it is important to grasp the importance of the object for the cosmos; as well as the value of this object for the subject in the cosmos in harmony with the divine grace and natural order which is an engineering marvel. We should further explain the term “world citizen”. For Stoics, we should explore how various types of social communities are intertwined with the large community of humankind, evaluate the representations, think about the type of relationship between representation/object/thing, and human as a citizen. We should also show the human’s benefit accompanying this object in the context of world citizenship and its aspects such as; being the citizen of this city or that country, belonging to this city or that city, belonging to this or that community, being a family man or a master, etc. In this way, the type of virtue human needs relating to these representations, things, and objects will be understood. When the representations show themselves to the mind of the subject and the imagery presents itself to the perception of the subject, the subject will then determine the type of virtue to use like courage, sincerity, or self-control (egkrateia). We should note that while the Stoic analysis, represented by Marcus Aurelius, is only concerned with the content of the representation, in the upcoming Christianity meditation will involve the nature and the origins of the thought itself. Marcus Aurelius has a top-to-down perspective like Seneca. However, when we consider “*Naturales Quaestiones*” and the writing reasons as aforementioned, the origin of Marcus Aurelius’

perspective has the same level as human existence, unlike Seneca for whom the origin is at the world peak. In Marcus Aurelius, the staring starts from exactly the current position and the aim or issue is to go downwards or to look downwards from the current position to explore the phenomena from end to end. In nearly all Stoics, either in Marcus Aurelius or in Seneca, if humans apprehend themselves as a reasonable and rational principle, they will realize that they are nothing more than a component of the rational principle ruling all the world.

When conceptions such as turning the look towards the self, redirecting the mind to oneself, giving the attention only to oneself are in question the issue is not emphasizing or uncovering the knowledge (*savoir*) of the intrinsicness of the subject's soul as arrival or opponent to the knowledge (*savoir*) related to the world. The issue is reformation and segmenting the knowledge (*savoir*) of the phenomena into modalities. A kind dislocation of the subject is determined here either we look from the world's peak to see it within its entirety or we look from the current position to go down to the essence of the phenomena. Either this way or another, the subject is not capable to know as necessary from its position or as it is (as staying on the peak or without looking down). This the characteristic of knowledge that can be named as spiritual knowledge. With a kind of shifting action like this, the phenomena gain the ability to apprehend the truth (with the elements it is composed of or will be partitioned) and the ability to value it with the subject staying on its current position. Their positions in the world, their unique sizes, their relationship with the subject in case they are free, and their importance for the subject are considered under the value category. In the later passages of this study, with the analysis of Cartesian doctrine, we will try to show how intellectual knowledge (*connaissance*) influences the spiritual knowledge (*savoir*). Since it is frequently used, we should know that *savoir* is mostly used for spiritual knowledge, wisdom, acquiring knowledge, and the knowledge referring to the essence of the things. On the other hand, *connaissance* is intellectual knowledge of the quality of the things. Before finalizing this sub-title we should emphasize one more thing. In the selfhood culture of the Hellenistic and Roman era, when the relationship between the subject and knowledge is in

concern, some problems are not brought to the stage. These problems include questions such as; “Should we objectify the subject or not?”; “Should we apply the same knowledge modality that is used for world phenomena or not?”; “Should we consider the subject as a part of knowable things belonging to the world’s information field or not?” In the subject experience of world knowledge, the subject may be dislocated or bent so it can attain a certain spiritual form and value.

### **2.13 Mortification (Suffering), Askesis and Telling the Truth**

When the mortification word is uttered, it echos the Christian practices such as surrendering the self, dedicating the self, and completely overlooking the self. But in the Ancient Greek, Hellenic, and Roman era, there are no strict prohibitions, rigorous rules, moral strictness, and self-surrender affirming the mortification (askesis). There is no sort of obeying a rule or word. Askesis can not be affirmed by referring to a rule, word, or authority. In the mentioned era, askesis was completely a practice for truth. Asceticism should be considered as a kind of practice connecting the subject to the truth. The questions regarding the subject and law such as; how should we consider the subject, at what level, on which basis, in which topics should the subject be tied to the law are always valid due to a historical burden. In the Ancient Greek, Hellenic, and Roman era, we can sense how the subject will talk and deed to the extent he utters and says the truth, and follows the practices and exercises of his selected truth rather than knowing the truth. In other words, the question between the subject and the practice in the aforementioned periods goes parallel with the question of knowing the truth, expressing the truth, and the extent the known/chosen/accepted truth affects how the subject should act and exist. In the mentioned era, unlike the modern era (at least a long period of it), knowing the truth was always a matter of ethos. It is known that, in modern times, the goal of the mortification is completely renouncing and surrendering the self, and a cumulative abandoning that gets more strict and heavy by the time. Yet in the Ancient Greek, Hellenic, and Roman era, inversely, mortification was a practice of saving the self. The ultimate goal is a

finalized and complete subject in ataraxia that built a perfect relationship with the self in spite of a subject that renounced the self, surrendered, and became empty. In the mentioned era, the mortification was a collection of exercises and a kind of truth practice helping to transform the subject to a complete and exact form which was entirely different from the beginning. Askesis is the exercises that help the subject tell the truth, telling the truth to the subject, and help the subject to attain the existence modality. Askesis makes telling the truth almost the existence modality of the subject. The ancient mortification decorates and equips the subject, unlike the Christian mortification which discharges it (paraskeue). The word “paraskeue” implies fully preparing the subject against the events and possible misfortunes of life. The mortification in the Ancient Greek, Hellenic, and Roman era the main issue is to prepare the subject for the future whose nature is somewhat known but the occurring time can not be estimated. A future composed of events that we don’t know whether they will happen or not. Mortification is a kind of preparation, a paraskeue. The paraskeue consists of narratives (logoi) that the self should use most effectively when required. Logoi does not necessarily consist of all correct propositions. These are practically attained, adopted, practiced, and characterized sentences that are read, re-written, re-read, noted, stated, and restated. Of course, these expressions are neither ordinary statements nor they can be. As the word implies (logos), these expressions are adopted, preserved, and grounded in the mind. They should also have a mobilizing effect. They mobilize the individual when necessary like the impulsive impressions of Stoics as mentioned above. It is not possible to estimate the time of necessity. Just at that moment, this logoi starts speaking for the subject and takes action, executes. This is paraskeue. Askesis and mortification in a manner form the paraskeue and make the logoi a piece of subject’s character by a series of exercises. Owing to the mortification in the mentioned era logoi telling the truth and acting the truth. When it became a type of existence for the subject with Christianity, it attained a new definition which was far from the previous. In the mentioned era, the correct logoi were prerequisites for the subject’s being a modality of existence. In Christianity, the correct logoi is not selected since it was given by revelation at the beginning. Mortification is a tool for surrendering the

self in order to apprehend the logoi. On one side there is a reconstructed subject by the correct logoi as the subject's type of existence. On the other side completely surrendering the self to possess the given and revealed word told at the beginning. The critical difference between them is obvious. The sacrifice practice in the philosophic mortification is not setting the rules to renounce this or that piece or the whole of the subject's existence or the complete. On the contrary, it refers to equipping the subject with things that it does not currently possess. It refers to building a formation for the self to prepare for the coming events of life (paraskeue). Askesis is indispensable for building paraskeue. The philosophic mortification does not subordinate the subject to law or word but builds a connection between the individual and truth. It connects the individual to the self-selected, repeated, and uttered truth. The subject exactly becomes the subject of the correct discourse. The subject carries this correct discourse by askesis. Yet the discourse (logoi) speaks for the subject as a subject. Again the ultimate goal of this art of life (techne tou biou) is to return to the self. The critical thing is the subjectivization of the exercises (askesis) and the practice of the self on the self with a correct discourse (logoi), but not the subjectivization of the self with a given and ready discourse. At the end of this subjectivization process, the destination will just be the self as you could estimate. The subjectivization and possession of the correct discourse have critical importance in the mentioned era. One should possess known things (facere suum). Unlike knowing the knowledge, they don't stay as a memory but become a character trait. The issue is to possess the heard, written, listened (listening have special importance for Stoics), and transferred logoi. Possessing the selected truth but not the given truth and becoming the subject of this selected truth. Right here lies the importance of askesis. Let's investigate some of these exercises such as listening, reading, and writing.

Listening is the first step of the subjectivization of the correct discourse. Therefore, listening has a specific position among other exercises. In the oral tradition, listening is the primary notion that provides the intake of the correct discourses (logoi). If the listening is applied properly, the heard and exhorted truth

will settle in the subject and will belong to it. Listening is the first step for the development of the pattern of ethos. It is also the first step where the correct expressions start to be digested as basic codes of conduct. The nature of listening seems to be ambiguous when explored closely. This conception of ambiguity is frequently referred to in Ancient Greek tradition. Hearing is the most passive sense among all but also the most *logikos* (logical) one. Looking and tasting inputs may be refused but ultimately hearing can't be refused. Listening has much more effect on the soul than the other senses either under rhetoric effect or musical effect. Here, reminding *Odyssey's* comparison of the sirens will be helpful. Neither his courage nor his cunning nor his wisdom could protect him from listening to the sirens and walking to death. Thus, he plugged his crews' ears with wax and tied himself to one of the sailing masts. Hearing is the most passive (*pathetikos*) but the most *logos* one. Because virtue can only be learned by listening. Virtue can not be attained by looking, smelling, or tasting but all and only by listening. Let's discuss the well-known Stoic doctrine of "seeds for the soul". All rational souls in the world possess the seeds for the soul. So, how we can activate these virtue seeds currently available? For sure, with the truth discourse the subject formed by listening which is frequently mentioned around the subject. We should notice that silence is a conception that is arm-in-arm with listening. Remember *Pythagoras's* five years of silence rule. Of course, this does not mean that the students never speak a word during these five years. They were required to just listen and learn to listen before conveying their ideas and lecturing. It was also necessary to show their instructors that they learned well to listen with their certain gestures and mimics. The students were required to show their proficiency in listening within their silence. The soul should possess the word addressing itself at peace and transform it. The body should reflect the soul's peacefulness in listening deed and stay still (except the indications showing that the attention is paid to the speaker) as possible as much.

The meditation (*meditatio* in Latin) we witness today, is derived from Greek words *melete* or *meletan*. But *melete* or *meletan* doesn't have the same meaning as today's meditation. *Meletan* exactly means to exercise. Even though it

is a kind of mental exercise, its content is not the same as meditation. The meditation we are familiar with is thinking or trying anything at a certain intensity. Yet the *meletan* of Greeks and Latins refers to an exercise to own and possess a thought. To make exercise does not mean interpreting a given word deeply. *Meditatio* is a *melete* practice to possess any thought after testing and accepting its validity. It means to be convinced enough to reexpress this thought constantly when required or when there is an opportunity. *Meditatio* is not thinking over the thing itself, but it is exercising this thing of interest. (Like in Stoic *premeditatio malorum* and *praemeditatio thanatou*). Therefore, *meditatitio* does not mean to exercise about the content of the thought. It is the thinking subject's positioning of the self by thinking again and a shift from the current position by the effect of thinking. The destination of these meditation discussions is reading. This the function of the meditation that should be conditional for philosophical reading. Instead of trying to understand the author's intentions, the reader should build a composition of true propositions for himself to possess these propositions (*paraskeue*). The mentioned practice is not stacking random proposition but to create hardware of propositions for the self out of propositions that address the ethos of the subject as a command and that can be used as a code of conduct. This is expected from the Greek and Latin reading exercises. Writing (*graphein*) is arm-in-arm with reading. We transform the discourse with reading and create them with writing (*corpus*). Only writing makes the thought things completely possessed. Writing helps discourse (*logoi*) to settle in body and soul and become a habit and character trait thus reaching physical authenticity. They write. They read. They re-write and re-read. In Ancient Greek and Roman literature reading loud is frequently advised. Therefore, in order to possess the discourse heard from the others and to become the enunciation subject of this discourse, one should constantly take notes and read these notes afterward. Owing to the writing we remember the true discourse and record them (*hupomnemata*).

### 3. CARTESIAN DOCTRINE

In this last chapter of the study, we will briefly examine René Descartes' philosophy who planted the seeds of a radical separation from the Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman understanding of reason and knowledge. In this section, we will briefly scan René Descartes' work "Rules for the Direction of the Mind".

The main idea of his work "Rules for the Direction of the Mind" is directing the mind as understood from the title. The mind should be capable of making true and sound judgments for the things it comes across.

"The aim of our studies must be the direction of our mind so that it may form solid and true judgments on whatever matters arise." (Descartes, 1961)

We should notice the difference between true and sound. For Descartes, a judgment can only be sound if none of the propositions used to reach this judgment is false. If any of these propositions is false, the judgment won't be sound. The judgment is defined as sound if successive true propositions follow each other to reach the judgment.

Descartes thinks that sciences and arts should be separated in the first place. Descartes thinks that science belongs to a knowledge area that humans obtain by using the mind where he considers art as a branch created by certain skills and capabilities and their practices. On one side stays the knowledge developed by the composition of true and sound propositions, where on the other side there is art for which a certain skill is a requirement. From the beginning, Descartes excludes one kind of knowledge on the way to his wisdom approach. This is, of course, *techne*. The relation of knowledge with "art of life" (*techne tou biou*), which had a significant role during the aforementioned Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman era, is broken from this point on. Life itself is never considered as a *techne* by Descartes. For Descartes, philosophy has no relationship with *techne*. However, in the era that we explore in the previous



chapters, the philosophy itself corresponds to *techne*. Philosophy is a practice that aims to furnish the subject with a new ethos different from the current one. This practice which requires skill and tendency is improved and applied by practicing and constantly exercising. In this aforementioned era, philosophy is never degraded to the compilation of true propositions. These propositions (*logoi*) are valuable to the extent they realize a transformation or shift in the subject itself. Descartes completely excludes this *techne* aspect of philosophy. For Descartes, sciences as a whole form the conception that he calls wisdom. This wisdom is always a unique wisdom. Even though the sciences are different in the sense of their objects, it is always the scientific information filling in these sciences. yet in the aforementioned era, the wisdom was never a conception composed of true propositions. There is of course a truth that an individual should reach. But the practice that is called science was never solely adequate. Especially in Ancient Greece, truth is required for wisdom but science is not solely adequate for the truth. So, why did such a separation occurred with Descartes? I think there is a quick answer to this. In the tradition of Descartes and his contemporaries, truth, good or God is not a providentially ordered conception having a mind of their own, as in Aristotle's teleologic approach or Stoic's engineering marvel concept. In the tradition of Descartes and his contemporaries, there is an understanding of the mechanical world. God created and established the world and left it as it is. He has no final goal or *telos*. In modern science, the universe is defined and explained as a mechanism.

The concept that Descartes considers as universal human wisdom should be filled with safe and sound propositions. All the sciences are valuable to the extent they contribute to universal human wisdom as a whole, not singularly or for itself. The value of each science is directly proportional to its contribution to universal human wisdom. I think it will be useful to remember Marcus Aurelius. For Marcus Aurelius and generally the Stoics, the value given to the knowledge of phenomena and things after naming them and determining their differentiation factors in the future is directly proportional to some factors such as; the importance of this knowledge for the subject, the relationships it activates in the

subject, the virtues it triggers, and the virtues it advises the subject to use. Knowledge is never important for science itself. It is obviously seen that this turns completely opposite with Descartes. The value of knowledge for ethos is yet diminished. Descartes thinks that some factors could detour humans from universal human wisdom. These factors are seeking the comfort of life (obviously refers to the good life in Ancient Greek tradition) and seeking the pleasure to be gained from contemplating the truth. (He excludes the contemplation and meditatio tradition here as well as we discussed above in detail). Descartes thinks that if we consider philosophy as an ethical practice carrying us to a good life, there won't be any time for making science. Running after the thought of truth prevents the subject to conduct scientific activity. For Descartes, the things called science are so intertwined that one should study them as a whole instead of studying them separately. We should proliferate the "natural light" that is given by the reason to reach the truth of things. Descartes sees the reason as a faculty that provides illumination but advises to use this faculty only for making science. One should focus on certain objects while making science. These objects should be the ones that we can give certain and indubitable cognition. Descartes always seeks certainty. Descartes defines science as certain and evident cognition.

"We must occupy ourselves only with those objects that our intellectual powers appear competent to know certainly and indubitably." (Descartes, 1961)

So, why we need a concept called evident? Because in the tradition Descartes belongs to, it is not enough to know or believe certain propositions are true. It is not enough to be a knowledge for a proposition even it is certain. Besides, there should be evidence to justify that this proposition is certain. Knowledge is a justified true belief. There should be a justification to announce the knowledge as true. The beliefs that are proved true by chance can not be knowledge. Probable cognitions are excluded. Even the statement "the sun will rise tomorrow" is excluded. Therefore, for Descartes, the model of the certain knowledge is arithmetic and geometry. Arithmetic and Geometry includes some formulas and laws. These laws are indubitable. We will never make mistakes in

our judgments by using these propositions since we have a deduction method. In the deductive judgment, the result is already present in the premise. That's why the result compulsorily follows the precursors. As the most known example;

All men are mortal.

Socrates is a man.

Therefore Socrates is a mortal.

If all humans are mortal, which is certain knowledge, the death of Socrates is already present in the first premise. We should see what factors make the certainty probable.

“As regards any subject we propose to investigate, we must inquire not what other people have thought, or what we ourselves conjecture, but what we can clearly and manifestly perceive by intuition or deduce with certainty. For there is no other way of acquiring knowledge.” (Descartes, 1961)

What should we investigate? We should investigate the phenomena that we can intuit or deduce. We should state at this point that the meaning of intuition for Descartes is different from its later meaning for Kant.

In Descartes's doctrine, we define a thing as intuition if we can apprehend it without requiring any proof. For example, there is no need for proof to know a triangle has three sides. There is no need to prove ourselves that we think, intuit. Therefore, the knowledge we acquire by intuition holds the evidence within itself. This is self-evident knowledge. Thus, the deduction method is actually a kind of proof. Intuition is a kind of knowledge that enables the subject to undoubtedly apprehend the things that we look at or think as they are. Now we have enough elements to develop a method at hand. Methods are required to make science. A method is a set of instructions. If these instructions are followed properly, the true and false never get mixed up. The knowledge is enriched by this method until

reaching the point where we can know everything within the capability. Here it will be sound to remind Seneca's criticism about the Library of Alexandria and his views about knowing everything or knowing much. On one side there is as few as possible knowledge but such ethopoetic knowledge which can convert to a character trait, make a change in our ethos, and transform us into a new individual different from the current one. On the other side, there is, if appropriate to say, ornamental knowledge that has no effect on the character or ethos of the subject who knows everything possible, or better to say struggles to know everything. This study gives great importance to this difference. Maybe philosophy's passion for becoming a science that is composed of true propositions started with this separation.

Let's return to Descartes. We should state that intuition does not give or teach us deduction. For Descartes, intuition and deduction are two basic mental activities. Yet the instructions of the method will not be deduced without performing these activities. Descartes aims to develop a certain discipline by following this method. Even though this discipline seeks a type of certainty that arithmetic and geometry also seeks and uses the same method, he wants this discipline to be much broader than mathematics. This discipline should be a kind that provides to know everything possible in the world except numbers and shapes. What Descartes was looking for was the order in the universe and the measure in this order. As understood this is not something new. Descartes defines it as *mathesis universalis*. He is after a universal *mathesis* (science or learning). No matter what the research is or no matter the object of this research area is; two skills, intuition and deduction are required to enable capturing the order and measure in there. In certain cases, we can easily apprehend self-evident truths and then acquire other pieces of knowledge as certain and indubitable as they are by deducing from self-evident truths.

“Method consists entirely in the order and disposition of the objects towards which our mental vision must be directed if we would find out any truth. We shall comply with it exactly if we reduce involved and

obscure propositions step by step to those that are simpler, and then starting with the intuitive apprehension of all those that are absolutely simple, attempt to ascend to the knowledge of all others by precisely similar steps.” (Descartes, 1961)

This is the method Descartes suggests. The reason will be used while following the whole method for sure. For Descartes, the reason is the skill that enables sound judgment and separating right from wrong. For Descartes, the reason is the only faculty that separates us from the animals.

As we can briefly see in “Rules for the Direction of the Mind” we are completely detached from the ethopoetic character of knowledge with Descartes. From this time on the value of knowledge is directly proportional only to its certainty and contribution to the world’s “pool of knowledge”. A new period starts where the model of knowledge evolves into intellectual knowledge. This intellectual knowledge of the new period excluded nearly the whole virtue notion which started from the Ancient Greek tradition and lasted until the Imperial period. The effect of knowledge that transforms the character is not mentioned anymore. Human is capable of reaching knowledge with its current state. This stack of knowledge, which is acquired without paying any price, will not be enough for the human to build an all-appropriate, unmediated, and satisfactory relationship with the self.

## CONCLUSION

### A New Ethos

From the beginning of this study, under Michel Foucault's guidance and by re-reading him when appropriate (we should keep in mind that the issues this study elaborates are actually a re-reading of Foucault's reading), we tried to answer some questions or re-asked questions that were essential to answer. Yet, I believe that this question is of utmost importance: What happened in Descartes and the following period so the subject became capable of reaching the truth as staying itself while in the Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman periods, the present subject, as it is and without performing any practice on the self was not capable of knowing the truth? More importantly, what prices the subject had to pay? I think the biggest price paid is the subject's becoming almost a slave of the knowledge and evisceration of the subject which once was able to know everything, yet knew much, and constantly enriched its wealth of information. Now the question is how much do you know instead of the questions such as; what do you know better, can you live in harmony with what you know, do you have a firm character against future incidents that you may face. As long as the ethos of the subject that is under the instructions of the true knowledge stays unchanged, this subject will never succeed to resist dominations, limitations, and identification. Virtues and deeds indicating the subject's self-existence are not expected from the knowledge of the selfhood (*gnothi seauton*) anymore. Self-concern (*epimeleia heautou*) is unfortunately dominated by this knowledge of the self. The selfhood techniques that have an important role in involving the subject into an unmediated and satisfactory relationship with the self are excluded which caused the subject to become excessively and mandatorily dependent on the given truth and also to become an unsatisfied object though it knows much. Though the thing Foucault tried to show with all his Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman readings was completely the opposite of this. The subject was not excessively dependent on the given truth. This relationship that the subject established with its consciousness is historical, mobile, and replaceable. As long as the philosophy

stays stuck with the possibilities of knowing the object, it won't be able to see or will ignore the possibilities for the subject to transform itself, to create a new ethos, and to establish a satisfactory relationship with the self which I think is the main issue. Another important issue is that the subject, which is bound with the laws of the knowledge, does not realize the change in the laws of the knowledge in history and presumes that it has a knowing skill above history. Now we certainly know that today's knowledge may be disqualified from that status of being knowledge as a result of the intertwinement or unification of relationships and some benefit based relations. The subject, which is under the instruction of the laws of knowledge, may be limited or controlled by identification which is one of the most effective domination tools of today. This may happen unwittingly or even by claiming that it was with the subject's consent. Why is it so important to be able to create a new ethos? I think the answer is completely political. An individual who is the subject of the self-selected truth (also aware that it can change this truth anytime he wants), independent of the laws of any knowledge or truth, rejects all identifications, stays firm against the paralyzing, limiting, and identifying effects of the modern states will be protected against government relations. He will definitely reject the identification injections by undreamt-of flourishing, heroic stories, etc.

This subject, who can not be dominated and who doesn't need anybody to establish an all-appropriate relationship with the self, is the most feared subject. I think the importance of having the capability to create a new ethos lies here (ethopoios). It does not have a certain identity. It rejects all the identifications. It does not need excessive truth. It gathers the truth from its own selections, readings, re-readings, experiences, and knows that it does not refer to a constant and universal law. It is always open to change. It does not rely upon ancient truths and universal laws. This subject is not a subject of codes that are tried to be guaranteed by excessive values, and that are externally imposed or conditioned by social norms. This subject is a personally selected subject like in Greek ethical understanding. The ethical construction of the self means to make this material (subject) the basis of the construction of order within its internal consistency. This

type of managing of the self, which has unique techniques and exercises, differentiates from the pedagogic institutions or the religions promising salvation (I presume there is no known religion that doesn't promise salvation). This an objective existence choice rather than an obligation that is valid for everybody. Instead of an authentic excessiveness, this subject has an all-appropriate and satisfactory relationship with the self and focuses on establishing a new self as the object of self-concern. It is also a subject that can not be dominated. Since Foucault inversed the relationship directed from the knowledge to the subject for centuries, we know that the statements and nonverbal factors establish the subject. The main issue is that we decide which statement to become a subject of. For Foucault, the Stoic self-concern may take a role as the organizing element of political activities. Again Foucault defines three types of struggle: Struggle against domination, struggle against economic exploitation, and struggle against ethical subordination which I think is the most important one. The last type of struggle shows the individuating and pastoral aspects of the government as we recognize in Foucault's discourse.

“This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to...”  
(Foucault, 2011)

Hence, maybe the only way to resist the individualization, normalization, and identification policies of the modern states is to develop new existence and subjectivity techniques. Although in his Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman era researches Foucault investigated other subjectivity types and knowledge modalities present those days, he never shows traces of an idea suggesting to



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