**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**The Courage of Truth in a Post-Truth World**

***Context***

The philosophical testament of Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, seems to unveil the grounds of disinformation and fake news which tailor the post-truth society. On the one hand, we owe to Foucault the roots of the so-called parrhesiastic truth-telling techniques, together with the analysis of entangling risks and forms of courage that turned the modern essence of philosophical discourses into new expressions of interpersonal relationships defined by the challenges of speakers and listeners. On the other hand, *the franc speech* went beyond discursive practices and manners, providing refashioned meanings of democratic citizenship, moral responsibility, and political engagement, otherwise tightly bound. Back in vogue 40 years ago, there was the tendency to analyse to what extent relationships of power embody post-cynical revaluations of “happiness and unhappiness, good and ill fortune, slavery and freedom” (CT, 302-303) transgressed by different dynamics of *parrhesia*: ethical, political, and even aesthetic.

Forty years after Foucault’s death, it is worth contemplating what kind of *parrhesiastic pact* is possible in the era of post-truth? Are the four meanings of truth — unconcealed, unalloyed, straight, and unchanging (217) — still dictating the standards of truth in times when “the government of the world” needs, more than ever, the ethical elements of “the cynic mission”, “endurance, vigilance, inspection” (291)? As critical perspectives addressed to the Foucauldian legacy move back and forth between carefully documented historical and philosophical reconstructions of genealogical regimes of truth, we should undoubtedly keep in mind what the French author deemed to be one of the most provocative features of his late writings, namely, the attempt to place parrhesia at the heart of European philosophy and its evolution. Therefore, among the perspectives that could untangle the philosophical and political implications of parrhesia, we should question what remained from the Foucauldian ambition to track down the history of modern European philosophy as a history of practices of veridiction?

***Call for papers***

The Research Center for the History and Circulation of Philosophical Ideas (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest), in collaboration with other CIVIS (European Civic University Alliance) partners from National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Sapienza Università di Roma, Aix-Marseille Université, and also with the Center for Applied Philosophy (Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca), and the Institute of Philosophy and Psychology of the Romanian Academy (Bucharest) is organizing the International Conference “The Courage of Truth in a Post-Truth World”, under the auspices of the [WORLD CONGRESS Foucault: 40 years after](https://www.ucm.es/sfc/world-congress-foucault-4).

The conference will take place at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania, between June 7-8, 2024. The costs for this venue will be partially covered by a CIVIS EU grant. Speakers from non-CIVIS university are kindly asked to obtain financial support from their institutions.

No participation fee will be required from the selected participants. Professors and researchers of CIVIS universities might use a CIVIS mobility grant to attend the event.

On the occasion of this commemorative conference, we seek to explore the multiple understandings of the “courage of truth” in a “post-truth” society. Topics may include, but are not restricted to:

a) The changes of the (post)modern philosophical discourse as reaction to the Kantian inheritance of public and private use of reason, closely following the emancipation of the public sphere through its detachment from “prophetic speech” and its enthusiasm for professionalized and technocratic discourses.

b) The limits of revolutionary discourses as parrhesiastic compositions overviewing criticism of finitude, moral realms, dominant institutions, mirrored by what Foucault targeted in his courses from Collège de France as “a militancy which aspires to change the world, much more than a militancy which would seek merely to provide its followers with the means for achieving a happy life” (*CT,* 285).

c) The limits of discarding the concept of postmodernism as a post-truth era in Foucauldian readings, by tracking core-concepts that underpin (post)panoptical, totalitarian, and manipulative societies.

d) The entanglement between post-truth and post-factual era that turned Foucault, especially after Latour’s critique, into a revolutionary thinker of new forms of relationship between epistemology and subjectivity, orchestrated by different regimes of power.

e) The possibility to track down truth-telling techniques as (im)political predicaments and (non)political practices of freedom, which might be gendered and ideologically disputed.

f) The (dis)continuities between philosophical and political parrhesia, in private and public spheres, which lead to forms of reflexivity and will to truth.

g) The implications of portraying models of original freedom as an act of language mediated by practices of virtues, epistemological constraints, forms of intelligibility of the power-knowledge relations.

h) The intertwining of biopoetics and biopolitics, framing a project meant to conciliate forms of governmental rationalities, resistances and adjustments of social orders that articulate differently the Western tradition of authenticity and self-creation.

i) The gaps between *Kynismus* and *Zynismus*, more precisely, between ancient and contemporary cynicism related to the courage of being one’s own creator and telling the truth of/to oneself.

Foucault’s final course at Collège de France *Le courage de la vérité*, as well as other lectures from the 80s posthumously published addressing a similar topic (*Mal faire, dire vrai*, *Dire vrai sur soi-même*, *Discours et vérité*, etc.) constitute the overarching point of reference for this conference. We invite participants to engage with Foucault’s intellectual and civic legacy on various interdisciplinary areas, from biopolitical investigations following the COVID-19 pandemic, to self-writing in digital networks, or tokens of “fearless speech” (*parrêsia*) in contemporary art and public discourse.

***Deadline and submission***

Interested parties should submit a proposed abstract (in English or French) of 350 words and a short professional biography to [worldcongressfoucault@unibuc.ro](mailto:worldcongressfoucault@unibuc.ro) by March 30, 2024. Authors will be informed of acceptance no later than April 10, 2024. Full papers are not expected to be submitted by the date of the conference, although a different call for papers for gathering the most challenging contributions into a volume is forthcoming.  Complete details will be disseminated individually to the invited contributors by July 30, 2024.