

"The Genealogy of Ethics" Presentation

- Greeks:** - Principle target of ethics an aesthetic one, the will to live a beautiful life, and not to normalize the population (341)
- Ethics can be a strong structure of existence without any relation to authoritarian systems of disciplinary structures (348)
 - Not the *techne* (art) of the self but the *techne* of life, how to live, "which *techne* do I have to use to live as I ought to live?" (348)
 - *Techne* for life might be to take care of one's city, one's companions (348)
 - Concerned more with relations to oneself instead of questions of the afterlife, the gods, providence, etc. (343)
 - Linked to a purely virile society, women were dominated sexually, no reciprocity during sexual activity (344-5)
 - Pleasure is linked to excluding the other, standing out, an obsession with penetration, repossessing your own energy (346)
 - Sexual act is an "activity" (347), and the ethical life is active and experiential; the self is forming externally (348).
 - Telos is the glory of a beautiful existence (356)

- Romans:** - Beginnings of a development of an art of existence dominated by self-preoccupation (HS3, 238)
- Emphasis on the frailty of the individual faced with the manifold of ills that sexual activity can give rise to (HS3, 238)
 - The sexual act is something that has serious dangers and is linked much closer to pathos, to possible self-destruction (346)
 - *Techne* for life turns to something like "How do I take care of myself?" (348)
 - Underscores the need to subject the self to a universal form: You ought to be mastering yourself not as a choice (as in Greece) but because you are a rational being (358)
 - More of an emphasis in forming oneself through contemplation (368) instead of action

- Christians:** - Moral code (what is forbidden and what is not) imposing on subjects from independent structure (355)
- Rules of behavior justified by religion, but the form of obligation was a legal form (356)
 - After Enlightenment, justification by religion switches to medical or scientific justification (357)
 - Sexual act is a passivity (Augustine on erections: not voluntary, sign of passivity, punishment for first sin (347)
 - The self is forming internally (self-examination, self-deciphering)
 - Telos is immortality, purity, etc.

- Today:** - Most of us believe ethics not universal, so aesthetics of existence possible, but we still can't shake the "scientific knowledge" what the self is (343)
- Greeks gave us example of an ethical experience that linked pleasure and desire whereas, now, what is important in the ethical experience is just desire and pleasure is nothing. This modern disconnection is not due to any anthropological necessity (347)
 - It is not at all necessary to relate ethical problems to scientific knowledge (349)
 - We have to get rid of this idea of an analytical or necessary link between ethics and other social, economic, or political structures (350)
 - Why is art only related to objects and not to individuals or to life? Couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? (350)
 - * We should not have to refer the creative activity of somebody to the kind of relation he has to himself, but should relate the kind of relation one has to oneself to a creative activity (351)

The process of internalization of self, from Greeks to Christians, is also partially found in shift from Catholicism to Protestantism (368). Not everything is bad, but everything is dangerous (343)

You can't find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people (343). There is no exemplary value in a period [Classical Greece] which is not our period... it is not anything to get back to (347)

What does he mean? Do we find this at odds with his advocating an "aesthetics of existence"? Do we agree?
(What does he mean by the quotes just above this question, on pp. 343 and 347)

Is the pleasure of the other something that can be integrated into our pleasure, without reference to law, marriage, etc.? (346)

Does Foucault take liberties with referring to the self-forming activity as asceticism (a word with roots in the act of denying)?

What do we think of the notion that "creative activity", like "power", is not "within us" but acquired and used?

CHRISTINA'S NOTES ON THE PRESENTATION

The Roman period, which is discussed in Care of the Self, is a transition phase between the Greek style of ethics and the Christian style.

GREEKS

— Most people didn't have time to address these questions of shaping the self, so it was just a choice for a few.