

Foucault and the Writing of the Self in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*

Nicholas Kerklaan

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Dr. Emilia Angelova

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Finally, I would like to note that this paper was written in Montreal, Quebec, which, it continues to be necessary to stress, sits on unceded indigenous territory.

## Abstract

This paper explores Michel Foucault's conception of the role of writing in what he calls the "arts of the self," ancient Greek and Roman practices of self-transformation, understood as the modification of one's thoughts and conduct in light of some particular ethical ideal. I proceed by first explicating Foucault's 1983 text "Self Writing," in which he analyses two such practices, the keeping of *hupomnēmata*, personal notebooks of quotations and reflections; and the writing of correspondence to others, in which one both offers advice and guidance and recounts the details of one's daily life. I then move on to apply Foucault's analyses to a text about which they are curiously silent: Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*.

My broad goal is to offer a preliminary sketch of a Foucauldian genealogy of writing as an art of the self. I argue that, for Foucault, the role of writing in the arts of the self is primarily confessional, where "confession" is understood as a sub-category of the arts of the self whereby self-transformation is achieved through an enunciation that relates oneself to the truth. In the case of *hupomnēmata* and correspondence, this truth is that of a discourse which one gathers close at hand through the writing of *hupomnēmata* and enunciates through correspondence; in both cases, true discourse is "subjectivated," i.e. becomes the truth *of* the individual who writes.

The *Meditations* is crucial to a genealogy of these practices, because the text finds Marcus Aurelius engaged in both *hupomnēmata* and correspondence, and thereby shows them to be distinct but related aspects of the confessional process Foucault describes. I illustrate this through a close reading of select chapters that best evidence either practice. In the case of *hupomnēmata*, these are Marcus' numerous direct citations of other texts; in the case of correspondence, these are chapters where Marcus directly addresses himself in regard to his particular life circumstances, i.e. establishes a correspondence of himself with himself.

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## Introduction

Michel Foucault's 1983 text "Self Writing" is a brief but rich entry in his late-period work on ancient Greek and Roman practices that he captures together under various names; here they are referred to both as the "arts of oneself" and the "arts of living" (from the Greek *tekhnē tou biou*).<sup>1</sup> These are, broadly speaking, practices of self-transformation, of modifying one's thoughts and conduct in light of some particular ethical ideal.<sup>2</sup> Two such practices are discussed in "Self-Writing": the keeping of personal notebooks, or *hupomnēmata*, and the writing of correspondence to others. This is a key text, then, for understanding Foucault's conception of the role of writing in the arts of the self.

Yet even in this text that role is only briefly sketched out, especially compared to Foucault's treatment of the other kinds of practices that, together, comprise his genealogy of the arts of the self.<sup>3</sup> My broad goal in this paper, then, is to extend this genealogy further in terms of the role of writing. Such a project must necessarily go beyond Foucault's work in some sense, but I aim to do so in such a way that it follows more naturally from that work than not; I aim to push Foucault's genealogy of the arts of the self in a direction in which it was already clearly headed, judging from the analyses in "Self Writing."<sup>4</sup>

More specifically, this will consist of: (1) an explication of Foucault's analyses of *hupomnēmata* and correspondence in "Self Writing," with an eye toward establishing their context as among the group of practices Foucault captures together under the heading of "confession;" and (2) an application of these analyses to a text about which they are curiously silent: Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*. It is my contention that the *Meditations* is crucial to such a genealogy because it evidences both practices, operating alongside one another in a single text. This is important because *hupomnēmata* and correspondence represent two distinct but related

aspects of the confessional process that Foucault calls “the subjectivation of true discourse”; *hupomnēmata* constitutes this discourse in relation to the individual who compiles it, while correspondence establishes the writer as the subject of that discourse through the enunciation, in this case the letter to another, that effects it.

I will proceed in three sections. In the first, I situate “Self Writing” in the context of Foucault’s work on the arts of the self and on confession. In the second and third, I read the discussions of *hupomnēmata* and correspondence, respectively, alongside the *Meditations*; the goal is to pick out select passages of Marcus’ text that, I will argue, function as the practices that Foucault describes. In the case of *hupomnēmata*, this is best seen in Marcus’ numerous direct citations of other texts; in the case of correspondence, this is best seen in passages where Marcus’ directly addresses himself in regard to his particular life circumstances, effectively establishing a correspondence of himself with himself.

### **I. Foucault on Writing and Confession**

By the time of “Self Writing,” Foucault had already written and lectured a good deal on various aspects of the Greek and Roman arts of the self, including the role of writing. In these contexts, writing is repeatedly linked to the conception of confession that Foucault had first treated in-depth in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, before the emergence of his interest in the arts of the self.<sup>5</sup> Once this interest does emerge, confession is taken up again in terms of what Foucault takes to be its origins in those ancient Greek and Roman practices. My goal in this first section is to briefly outline this background, in order to situate “Self Writing” in its proper context and in order to emphasize that the practices it describes are, at core, *confessional* practices.

In a 1980 lecture at Dartmouth College, Foucault tells us that to confess is “to declare aloud and intelligibly the truth about oneself,” and this can stand as his most general definition.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted at the outset that the use of the word “confession” to capture all of the practices which fall under this definition is, perhaps, controversial. In French, the word Foucault generally uses in this context is *aveu*, which could be translated as “confession” or “avowal,” depending on context. Most translators of Foucault into English opt for the former, but it has been argued, for example by the translator of Foucault’s 1981 lecture course at the Catholic University of Louvain, that “avowal” is more appropriate, at least in the context of Foucault’s treatment of the ancients.<sup>7</sup> In the Dartmouth lectures, which were delivered in English, Foucault himself consistently uses the word “confession,” and it is for this reason that I use the word here. However, we should keep in mind that, whatever word we use, it is just a word, which for Foucault refers to a particular technical conception that is not adequately captured by the colloquial or everyday sense of either “confession” or “avowal” – or, for that matter, of *aveu*, as Foucault himself emphasizes in the Louvain lectures.<sup>8</sup>

It should also be noted that, initially, in the famous formulation of the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, confession is defined in much more specific terms.<sup>9</sup> But even in this context, where Foucault’s interest is exclusively the relationship of confessional practices to sexuality, he is explicit that “confession” encompasses a more general category, which need entail neither a particular form nor content:

The motivations and effects [confession] is expected to produce have varied, as have the forms it has taken: interrogations, consultations, autobiographical narratives, letters: they have been recorded, transcribed, assembled into dossiers, published, and commented on.<sup>10</sup>

The list of examples makes clear that confession can be spoken *or* written. This is in keeping with Foucault's conception of the discursive "statement" as having a function independent of the act that formulates it; the confession is a kind of statement in this sense.<sup>11</sup>

In the context of the arts of the self, Foucault views the role of writing as primarily confessional. In his 1981-82 lecture course at the Collège de France, Foucault claims that, for the ancients, writing is one of several practices through which one effects what he calls the "subjectivation of true discourse."<sup>12</sup> This takes place in the context of a practice of gathering together, through reading or listening, helpful discourses that comprise the principles and codes of conduct in light of which one seeks to modify one's behaviour. Such discourses, when accepted as true, effect the desired transformation insofar as one enunciates that truth, and thereby becomes "the subject who tells the truth and who is transfigured by this enunciation of the truth... precisely by the fact of telling the truth."<sup>13</sup> This act of becoming the subject of a true discourse is what is captured by the word "subjectivation" here, and writing is one possible form of enunciation which accomplishes it. And we can see that this practice is indeed confessional, in the sense of being an enunciation, or statement, which relates the one who formulates it to the truth.

To better understand this relationship between the enunciation of truth and the transformation of the individual who enunciates it, we can turn again to both the Dartmouth and Louvain lectures, where Foucault traces the development of ancient confessional practices and outlines their general form. In both sets of lectures, Foucault reads two texts by Seneca as representative examples of Greco-Roman confessional discourse. The first is from the treatise *On Anger*, and describes a ritual of self-examination that Seneca claims to practice daily. One thing to note at the outset is that Foucault characterizes this practice as "a kind of confession to

oneself,” which again emphasizes the generality of “confession” as a concept for Foucault.<sup>14</sup> Because while it is true that in the initial formulation of the *History of Sexuality* the possibility of a “confession to oneself” is not accounted for, and emphasis is placed on the other to whom one confesses and, indeed, who compels one to confess,<sup>15</sup> I understand the later formulation as a shift in *emphasis*, rather than in the essential conception. Foucault is more concerned, in the earlier context, with confession as a technique of power, and thereby emphasizes its coercive role. Later, when he is less interested in the coercive function of confession than in its general function as a means of relating self to truth, it becomes clear that neither compulsion nor the presence of another are necessary components of this relation; and yet, there is a sense in which to speak of a self-*relation* is to implicate the self as self *and* as other. We will have cause to return to this point when it comes to how *Meditations* can be seen to function as correspondence despite being written for no designated reader but Marcus himself.

To return to Seneca, the ritual that he describes is quite straightforward: at the end of the day he reviews all he has said and done in light of principles and rules of conduct that he has already accepted as true, received through discourses with which he is already thoroughly familiar. He notes all instances where his conduct falls short of these principles, and reminds himself to avoid similar errors in future.<sup>16</sup> And they are just that: errors. Moral errors, certainly, insofar as they represent failures of conduct, but not anything like what will later be connoted by a word like “sin.” This confession is not a matter of weighing the relative guilt inherent to different acts, but rather of identifying what amount to simple mistakes, “bad adjustments between aims and means.”<sup>17</sup> Neither is it a matter of identifying faults or failings for which to punish oneself. This is, on one level, a simple exercise of memory; in recalling what one has done and relating it to the discourses that one has accepted as true, one recommits that truth to

memory and thereby “reactivates” it. But in this very act of re-memorization it is also an example of the “subjectivation of discourse” that Foucault speaks about in the Collège de France lectures; one relates oneself to a true discourse through confessing one’s actions, and thereby seeks to internalize that discourse and transform oneself in its light.

The second text that Foucault considers is from the dialogue *On Tranquility of Mind*, in which Seneca’s friend, Serenus, recounts to him that which has left him feeling ill at ease. It represents, therefore, a slightly different form of confession, which more closely resembles the practices that concern Foucault in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*. But unlike these practices, which derive most directly from forms of Christian penitence, in which one confesses “profound desires” indicative of “a deep concupiscence that is always present but hidden,”<sup>18</sup> Serenus enumerates a series of more or less banal acts and behaviours: “that he uses the earthenware he inherited from his father, that he easily gets carried away when he makes public speeches, and so on and so on.”<sup>19</sup> The point, ultimately, is not to excavate a buried nature but, as with Seneca’s self-examination, to take account of acts and behaviours in relation to a discourse that one accepts as true and that has transmitted the principles to which one is committed. The principle that is primarily at issue in this specific instance appears to be the traditional Stoic maxim that one should remain unattached to those things that are outside of one’s own power. And Seneca’s role, as the other to whom Serenus confesses, is not that of “diagnosing a secret malady,” but of verifying the extent to which Serenus has succeeded in removing himself from attachments and of pointing out the attachments that still adhere, the better to be wary of in the future.<sup>20</sup>

As in the self-examination, the goal of Serenus’ confession is the subjectivation of true discourse, which in this case is aided and overseen by Seneca rather than undertaken alone.

Again, what is at issue is establishing and maintaining a relationship to the truth in terms of one's conduct. It is not that Seneca helps Serenus to retrieve something from deep within himself, which was otherwise obscure to him; the practice is concerned solely with acts and with truth, both of which are readily available not only to Serenus, but to anyone familiar with his actions and the discourse to which he brings himself in relation. In the Collège de France lectures, Foucault articulates this as the difference between the enunciation through which one makes oneself the subject of true discourse, as the ancients do, and of objectifying oneself through a discourse one enunciates *as* the truth of oneself.<sup>21</sup>

This, then, is the general form of confession as an art of the self: the subjectivation of true discourse through the enunciation of acts and behaviours that brings one in relation to that discourse. The practices of *hupomnēmata* and correspondence are specific forms of confession, and the treatment of these in “Self Writing” is prefigured, briefly, in the 1981-82 lecture course. Here, they are less sharply delineated than they will be in the later essay, and Foucault seems to consider them more like successive steps in a single practice: first, one writes the *hupomnēmata* as a means of “incorporating” true discourse; second, one enters into the relationship of correspondence, either as the confessor or the one to whom is confessed, on the basis of the true discourse, the *hupomnēmata*, which one now has readily at hand.

By the time of “Self Writing,” as we will see, Foucault has clearly come to consider *hupomnēmata* and correspondence as distinct practices. That being said, they remain closely linked, and Foucault echoes his earlier description of the two as successive stages in the subjectivation of discourse when he writes that *hupomnēmata* can form the “raw material” of correspondence.<sup>22</sup> This will be important to keep in mind when we turn to Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, where we will find both practices at work in a single text.

## II. *Hupomnēmata* and the *Meditations*

With this section I turn to the text of “Self Writing” itself, and to Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations*. I will first explicate Foucault’s account of *hupomnēmata*, then apply it to select chapters of the *Meditations*. My broad goal here, again, is to undertake the beginnings a Foucauldian genealogy of writing as a practice of the self, and as such my goal in reading the *Meditations* is to extend Foucault’s account with an example of written discourse that evidences the practices he describes. That is to say, my primary claim regarding *hupomnēmata* and the *Meditations* is not that it offers a theoretical elaboration of *hupomnēmata* as an art of the self, though we will see that it might, but rather that it itself is *hupomnēmata*. In the third section, I will proceed in an identical manner, with identical goals, in terms of Foucault’s account of correspondence.

To begin, then, with *hupomnēmata*, the word can be translated most literally as “notes” or “notebooks,” and at the most basic level connotes nothing more than this, capturing everything from public registers to personal notebooks. But the term is also used to refer specifically to a practice of keeping a kind of “book of life,” in which one writes quotations from books read or things heard, examples of actions one has seen, heard, or read about, and reflections or arguments that one has heard, read, or which have otherwise come to mind.<sup>23</sup> Foucault stresses that these books should not be understood as simple memory aids, but as “a material and a framework for exercises to be carried out frequently: reading, rereading, meditating, conversing with oneself and with others.”<sup>24</sup> The idea is to render what one collates “near at hand,” not simply in the sense of being readily called to memory, but also as being readily available in the sphere understood as most important in moral reflection of this period: namely, that of action.<sup>25</sup>

If we recall from Foucault's account of confession that it is precisely in this sphere of ethical action that the self is constituted, we can begin to see how the writing of *hupomnēmata* constitutes a confession in this Foucauldian sense. What one gathers together is, Foucault writes, "a matter of constituting a *logos bioēthikos* for oneself... in short, the soul must make them not merely its own but its self."<sup>26</sup> Recall, as well, that for Foucault we are at this point in time far from Christian confession, in which the self is constituted through what is understood as the unearthing of something deeply hidden; here "the intent is not to pursue the unspeakable, nor to say the unsaid, but on the contrary to capture the already-said, to collect what one has managed to hear or read."<sup>27</sup>

This clearly recalls Foucault's earlier characterization of confession as the subjectivation of true discourse. The starting point of this subjectivation, as we have seen, is to have this true discourse ready to hand, and the *hupomnēmata* is a means of accomplishing this through writing. Here Foucault describes that discourse as "the fragmentary *logos*," which, though cobbled together from various sources, nonetheless establishes itself as "a timeless discourse accepted almost everywhere." Foucault emphasizes the cultural context of the Imperial period in which the practice emerged: it is "a culture strongly stamped by traditionality, by the recognized value of the already-said, by the recurrence of discourse, by 'citational' practice under the seal of antiquity and authority."<sup>28</sup> In such a context, truth is less something that needs to be independently experienced or verified than something to which one can bring oneself in accordance simply by accepting the validity of the *logos* that presents it.

The gathering together of true discourse as *hupomnēmata* is thus a means of making possible its subjectivation by the individual, and Foucault elaborates on three key points in this regard. The first is that the writing of *hupomnēmata* is predicated on reading, and reading widely,

and is in fact understood as a way of mitigating the dangers of constant and exhaustive reading. Seneca, for example, articulates this danger as a kind of “scattering” effect, which results in *stultitia*, a kind of weakness of character born of excessive mental agitation and a preoccupation with the future.<sup>29</sup> The *hupomnēmata*, through which one gathers in one place precisely those parts of one’s reading with those qualities, is a means of bringing some measure of order both to the material and to one’s thoughts about it, and thereby countering *stultitia*. And if *stultitia* is characterized by a preoccupation with the future, the writing of *hupomnēmata* refocuses one’s attention on the past, and in fact makes a “possession of the past that one can enjoy to the full and without disturbance.”<sup>30</sup> There is thus a certain measure of discernment and judgment involved in determining the “shape” of the true discourse one seeks to subjectivate; it is not a matter of bringing together any and *all* discourse.

The second point is that this true discourse is a heterogeneous one; the writing of *hupomnēmata* is “a regular and deliberate practice of the disparate.” The material that one collects is selected for its “local truth” or “circumstantial use value.” This explains why, for example, Seneca finds value in making note of points drawn not only from Stoic discourse, but also from those discourses to which Stoicism is nominally opposed, such as Epicureanism; “the essential requirement,” Foucault writes, “is that he be able to consider the selected sentence as a maxim that is true in what it asserts, suitable in what it prescribes, and useful in terms of one’s circumstances.” If the truth with which *hupomnēmata* is a means of bringing oneself into relation is indeed a fragmentary *logos*, then the original context of any given fragment is less important than the new context into which it is placed by being gathered together with other fragments, selected based on their usefulness for the individual at the moment of collection. The truth of ostensibly universal discourse is thus, paradoxically, not effected by being filtered through one’s

individual circumstances and requirements – indeed, this is one of the principal means by which the subjectivation of that discourse is accomplished.<sup>31</sup>

The third and final point is that subjectivation is effected through the writing of *hupomnēmata* precisely in its bringing together of a heterogenous truth with the individual who gathers it. The *hupomnēmata*, as the collation of a heterogenous discourse, resists unification in and of itself, and must be unified *in the individual*; this constitutes, and Foucault uses this word here explicitly, precisely the *subjectivation* of discourse. The truth, which the individual works through and solidifies by writing it down, in effect becomes the truth *of the self* – not, again, in any internal sense, as something unearthed from within the individual, but precisely as something other made same:

The role of writing is to constitute, along with all that reading has constituted, a “body”... And this body should be understood not as a body of doctrine but, rather – following an often-evoked metaphor of digestion, as the very body of the one who, by transcribing his readings, has appropriated them and made them his own: writing transforms the thing seen or heard “into tissue and blood”... It becomes a principle of rational action in the writer himself.<sup>32</sup>

To be clear, this process is not to be understood as a subsumption into what is other, but rather a bringing-together of what is other with the individual to produce, effectively, a *new* individual. On this point Foucault cites one of Seneca’s letters, in which Seneca likens the ideal practice of reading, and of writing based on what one reads, to the behaviour of bees: “First they fly about and choose the flowers best suited for making honey, then distribute what they have collected throughout the hive” (Seneca, *Letters*, 84.3).<sup>33</sup> On one view, he notes, bees do not really make honey but merely collect it; on another view, the very act of collection changes the

material's character, bringing it together to form something new (84.4). Reading and writing, Seneca argues, should be like this, where the bringing together of the disparate fragments one selects changes the character of the material, and produces something new born of the unification of that material with the individual who collects it.

I will turn now to Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*. As noted, the absence of this text from the analyses of "Self Writing" is a curious one, and this is especially true in the case of *hupomnēmata*. Following the influential work of Pierre Hadot,<sup>34</sup> the text is generally taken as a paradigmatic example of that form.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, while there are certainly differences in how the two conceive of ancient thought, Hadot's conception of the *Meditations* as a text which itself constitutes work done by its author on himself has strong echoes with Foucault's account of *hupomnēmata* – though Hadot falls short of explicitly linking this quality of the text to its being *hupomnēmata*, which he seems to understand as more of a formal categorization.<sup>36</sup> We can only speculate as to Foucault's reasons for avoiding discussion of Marcus' *Meditations* in this context (if it is indeed an avoidance). Perhaps this is simply an example of what Chloe Taylor notes as Foucault's tendency to prefer "the obscure over the canonical," which she sees evidenced in his relative lack of engagement with either Augustine or Rousseau on the subject of confession.<sup>37</sup>

In any case, one reason for identifying the *Meditations* as *hupomnēmata* is that Marcus himself may, in fact, tell us this, and it is with this passage that I will begin:

No more wandering. You are not likely to read your own jottings [*hupomnēmatia*], your histories of the ancient Greeks and Romans, your extracts from their literature laid up for your old age. Hurry then to the end, abandon vain hopes; rescue yourself, if you have any care for yourself, while the opportunity it still there (3.14).<sup>38</sup>

*Hupomnēmatia* is a diminutive form of *hupomnēmata*, and as such means something like “little notes.”<sup>39</sup> Whether or not Marcus’ use of the word is, in fact, meant to refer to the *Meditations* itself, the passage suggests, at the very least, that Marcus understands himself as consciously engaged, whether in this particular text or not, in a practice of gathering together disparate sources and thoughts and writing them down, i.e. a practice very much in line with Foucault’s description of *hupomnēmata*.

But the passage also suggests a certain suspicion of such practices. Whatever the “little notes” are, Marcus appears to admonish himself for relying on them overmuch when he should simply “rescue himself,” by which he perhaps means to put into action that of which his notes can only be, at best, a rehearsal. This should be kept in mind going forward; while I maintain that the *Meditations* evidences the practices that Foucault describes in “Self Writing,” we must be careful not to over-emphasize the role of writing in Marcus’ conception of Stoicism, of philosophy in general, or indeed of the practice of self-transformation. As Foucault reminds us elsewhere, philosophy of this period is a matter of providing principles to better support the day-to-day life and conduct of the individual rather than on the elaboration of theory for its own sake.<sup>40</sup> In the Stoic canon we find repeated warnings about the dangers of emphasizing scholarly pursuits over practical action, and Marcus is no different in this respect, as we see in the above passage and elsewhere; for example, in 10.1 he tells himself: “No more roundabout discussion of what makes a good man. Be one!”

That said, writing clearly does play *a* role, as 3.14 makes clear, and it is on this note that we turn to the practice of writing in the *Meditations*. In the case of *hupomnēmata*, we ought to examine those passages which are most clearly the result of a process of collecting together a disparate and heterogenous, but nonetheless true, discourse: namely, Marcus’ numerous direct

citations of other texts. Now, it is true that, for Foucault at least, *hupomnēmata* need not be composed *only* of fragments or paraphrases of other texts; personal observations, recollections, references to things heard or seen etc., would all seem to fall under the purview of the practice, and in this sense the entirety of the text is *hupomnēmata*. But it is easiest, for my purposes, to focus on such passages as are most definitively and obviously repurposed from other sources. For the sake of space, and because an exhaustive analysis of every citation is not required for my purposes, I will limit myself to a particular sequence of chapters: 11.22-39, all but two of which are direct quotations or paraphrases, which Marcus presents without comment or interpretation.<sup>41</sup>

Of these fifteen citations, seven are from Epictetus. Five of these are from the *Discourses* (11.23, 11.33-36), while the other two are fragments (11.37-38); 11.23 is a reference to Socrates which is itself sourced from Plato's *Crito* and/or *Phaedo*.<sup>42</sup> There are three other anecdotes about Socrates; one of these is a story told by Aristotle and Seneca, which Marcus slightly misremembers here (11.25), while the other two (11.28, 11.39) are from unknown sources. The remaining five are from: a fable told by Aesop, Horace, and Babrius (11.22); Epicurus, as quoted in one of Seneca's letters (11.26); a Pythagorean saying of unknown origin (11.27); an otherwise unknown poem (11.30); Homer's *Odyssey* (11.31); and Hesiod's *Works and Days*, with the quotation slightly altered from the original (11.32).

If, for Foucault, confession is the subjectivation of true discourse, then on a Foucauldian reading of the *Meditations* Marcus' citations clearly function as that true discourse, brought together "near at hand" for his own use. "True" discourse because the authority and correctness of these citations is not in question for the one who has compiled them. Nearly half, after all, are from one of the canonical Stoic sages, and indeed the one with whom Marcus' own approach to Stoicism is most clearly in line.<sup>43</sup> Another three concern Socrates, who is, for Epictetus at least, a

kind of precursor and exemplar of the Stoic sage.<sup>44</sup> Another two are from traditional and unquestionable authorities in the Greco-Roman world (Homer and Hesiod), while another is from an established philosophical authority with its own resonances with Stoicism (the Pythagorean tradition). The other two literary references (to the fable and to the unknown poem) have no direct Stoic authority, but the contents of the quotations themselves have clear resonances with Stoic thought. This leaves only the reference to Epicurus, and while it is true that the Epicurean school was traditionally taken to be in opposition to Stoicism, the quotation's concern with virtue is perfectly in keeping with Stoic thought, and in any case it is stamped with the approval of having first been cited by Seneca.

As we are considering a particular sequence of citations, we can examine them more closely, and in the order that they appear, in order to get a sense of the truth which is to be subjectivated, and also the manner in which the very selection and arrangement of that truth works toward that subjectivation. The sequence begins with a reference to the fable of the town mouse (here called the "house mouse") and the country mouse (here called the "hill mouse"), with an emphasis on the "frightened scurrying of the house mouse;" this suggests an equation of urban life with unease and country life with rustic simplicity. This is immediately followed by 11.23, in which is referenced Epictetus' claim that "Socrates used to call the popular beliefs 'bogies,' things to frighten children with." This both seems to follow up on, and somewhat recontextualize, the thought evoked by 11.22: urban life, such as that which must be lived by the Emperor of Rome, is productive of fear and anxiety – but, after all, to fall in with the common lot's anxieties is to give in to a fear appropriate only for children.

After these reflections on proper conduct in the face of fear comes a series of examples of exemplary conduct and reflections on the benefits of such reminders: a story of Socrates

declining the invitation of a king in order to avoid receiving benefits he would be unable to return in kind (11.25); Epicurus' remark that one should always keep in mind the conduct of virtuous figures from the past (11.26); a Pythagorean maxim on looking to the dawn sky as a reminder of the order and goodness of the universe (11.27); and a story of Socrates apparently unembarrassed at being seen in public in his underclothes (11.28). Not only do these chapters share a strong thematic unity, but together they seem to comprise an argument for the value of the very act of citing exemplars of which they are themselves examples.

Next come three quotations from literary sources: the unknown poet's "You were born a slave: you have no voice" (11.30); Odysseus' expression of joy at his outwitting the Cyclops – "And the heart within me laughed" (11.31); and Hesiod's line "They will pour scorn on virtue and sting with their abuse," where "virtue" has been substituted for the original "them" (11.32). Divorced of original context, the meaning behind such quotations is highly oblique – which is precisely the point, as in their context in the *Meditations* they take on new meaning, one meant for Marcus alone. Coming on the heel of the passages on exemplars, they suggest a turn toward more personal reflection, or perhaps simply a turn from considerations of conduct to emotions: meditations on feelings of helplessness (the voiceless slave), pride (Odysseus), and the sensation of being insulted or offended. All, for the Stoic, negative emotions; that they follow citations of exemplary conduct suggests, perhaps, self-admonishment, or perhaps a brief catalogue of states of mind to be avoided.

After this, it makes sense that Marcus would then turn to a series of quotations from Epictetus, which seem to function as straightforward memorizations (or, to use Foucault's language, reactivations) of Stoic principles: a reminder of the vainness of hoping for children past the appropriate age (11.33); a reiteration of the very traditional Stoic idea that one ought to

constantly remind oneself of the possibility that one's loved ones will die, in order to constantly reaffirm that there is nothing inherently bad in this occurrence (11.34);<sup>45</sup> another traditional Stoic affirmation, of the order inherent to natural processes (11.35); two successive iterations of the foundational Stoic principle that our own judgements, and only our own judgements, are entirely within our own control (11.36; 11.37);<sup>46</sup> and finally a somewhat oblique reference, presumably a statement on the importance of adopting the right mindset – “So this is not a contest for a trivial prize: at issue is madness or sanity” (11.38).

The sequence ends with the recounting of a story of Socrates, the source of which is now lost:

Socrates used to question thus: “What do you want to have? The souls of rational or irrational beings?” “Rational.” “What sort of rational beings? The pure or the lower?” “The pure.” “Why then don't you aim for that?” “Because we have it.” “Why then your fighting and disagreements” (11.39)?

Despite the absence of a source, this is undoubtedly a familiar scene to any reader of Plato's dialogues: a perfect example of Socratic *elenchus*. But it is also a fitting capstone to this series of citations, suggestive as it is of the idea that human beings are innately rational and thereby capable, entirely of their own volition, of achieving happiness and tranquility.

The entire sequence seems to share a movement or logic of sorts: from agitation, to seeing solace from that agitation in recounting the exemplary conduct of others, to reflections on negative emotions, to the reaffirmation of key principles. If the meaning of some citations is clearer than others, this is precisely because they have been selected based on their usefulness to their compiler; they constitute a true discourse, but one that serves Marcus' particular needs. Yet

at the same time, there is nothing idiosyncratic about what has been selected; nothing is out of place in terms of what any Roman Stoic of this period would understand as true.

To connect this back to Foucault's three points regarding *hupomnēmata*'s role in subjectivation, we can say of these citations that: (1) they reflect Marcus' extensive reading, from which he has selected and ordered those fragments he evidently finds most valuable; (2) they reflect a disparate, heterogenous discourse, each of which has been selected for its individual, "local" truth, enhanced and made useful by virtue of being brought into relation with other citations; (3) though disparate, they constitute together a kind of unity with each other and in relation to Marcus' particular circumstances (such as being a Stoic or being Emperor of Rome), and this in particular is what I have tried to show by considering what I called the "movement" of this group of chapters.

Before moving on to Foucault's account of correspondence, and from there to reading the *Meditations* in terms of correspondence, I want to reiterate that in "Self Writing," Foucault clearly understands *hupomnēmata* as a distinct practice, able to achieve the subjectivation of discourse in its own right; the same will hold true for correspondence. However, as mentioned, Foucault does allow that correspondence *can* use *hupomnēmata* as its basis, and whether or not it does the two practices are clearly closely related; one achieves subjectivation of true discourse through the selection, collation, and citation of true discourse, while the other achieves it through an enunciation made in relation to that discourse. As such, I believe it is in keeping with Foucault to read the accounts of these two practices together, as ideally working in tandem to effect the subjectivation of true discourse as, properly speaking, a confession. And this is precisely what we see, I argue, in the *Meditations*.

### III. Correspondence and the *Meditations*

In this section, I will proceed identically to the preceding section: first, I will explicate Foucault's account of correspondence in "Self Writing," and then I will read select chapters of the *Meditations* as representative examples of this practice.

In terms of confession, we can say that *hupomnēmata* is the process of constituting the true discourse to which one seeks to relate oneself. The bringing together of that discourse is, of course, itself a way of relating oneself to it, in ways we have already seen. Correspondence, on the other hand, is best understood as the enunciation through which confession takes place, i.e. the "telling the truth about oneself," to refer back to the general definition of the Dartmouth lectures. In this sense, it can be understood as, at least potentially, one of the exercises for which *hupomnēmata* constitutes the raw material.

In this context, "correspondence" refers, of course, to the writing of letters, and the letter is, Foucault tells us, "by definition a text meant for others."<sup>47</sup> I will problematize this claim shortly, but for now let us take it at face value. Initially, Foucault appears to have in mind only a particular kind of letter: the philosophical missive, typified by the letters of Epicurus and Seneca, which provide recapitulations of philosophical principles and/or practical advice and opinions offered with those principles in mind. In such a text, the goal is, of course, the intellectual and moral betterment of the recipient, or in other words to effect a certain transformation of self in the reader. But the letter is also, like the *hupomnēmata*, a means of effecting this transformation *in the writer*:

The letter one sends in order to help one's correspondent – advise him, exhort him, admonish him, console him – constitutes for the writer a kind of training: something like

soldiers in peacetime practicing the manual of arms, the opinions that one gives to others in a pressing situation are a way of preparing oneself for a similar eventuality.<sup>48</sup>

Yet, unlike *hupomnēmata*, it does not seem that the desired effect can be accomplished in isolation. *Hupomnēmata* constitutes a discourse for oneself. Correspondence is a discourse for oneself, as well as for another, a reader; indeed, the goal of correspondence is precisely to establish a relation between self and other, through the writer's manifesting themselves for the reader:

The letter makes the writer "present" to the one to whom he addresses it. And present not simply through the information he gives concerning his life, his activities, his successes and failures, his good luck or misfortunes; rather, present with a kind of immediate, almost physical presence.<sup>49</sup>

This presence is manifested through a recounting of the writer's daily life for their correspondent, in all its banal detail. In turn, the correspondent responds with advice and with recounting their own day; between correspondents there is, therefore, a continuous reciprocal relation, the aim of which is not simply to seek and/or provide guidance, but to establish a relationship of confession, in which the writer becomes the subject of the true discourse in light of which they relate to their reader. "The reciprocity that correspondence establishes," writes Foucault, "is not simply that of counsel and aid; it is the reciprocity of the gaze and the examination."<sup>50</sup>

It should be clear at this point that not *every* letter constitutes correspondence in this sense. Foucault underlines the difference between the kind of letter described above and other kinds of "personal" missives, such as those of Cicero. The latter involve "accounting for oneself as a subject of action (or of deliberation for action) in connection with friends and enemies,

fortunate and unfortunate events.” By contrast, in the kind of letter with which Foucault is concerned, such as those of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Pliny, “the narrative of self is the account of one’s relation to oneself.”<sup>51</sup>

This clearly recalls Foucault’s earlier discussion of confessional practice, and in particular his readings of Seneca in the Dartmouth and Louvain lectures. Here too, the confession is a narrative of self-relation, whether delivered to oneself as in the self-examination of *On Anger*, or to another as in Serenus’ confession in *On Tranquility of Mind*. The confession is an account, in a very straightforward sense, of oneself: “an account of the everyday banality, an account of correct or incorrect actions, of the regimen observed, of the physical or mental exercises in which one engaged.”<sup>52</sup>

It is true that, in Foucault’s discussion of correspondence in “Self-Writing,” he emphasizes the role of the other in a way that he does not in the earlier lectures. In this sense it more closely recalls the *History of Sexuality*. However, as I argued in that context, Foucault seems to open himself up to the possibility of the self as other, and I want to insist on that possibility for Foucault’s account of correspondence as well. And it is on this basis that I believe the *Meditations* can be read as a correspondence between Marcus, the writer, and Marcus, the reader – understood as the “virtually present” other whom Foucault already allows for in *The History of Sexuality*.<sup>53</sup>

As I did with *hupomnēmata*, I will now turn to certain chapters in the *Meditations* that best evidence the practice of correspondence. In this case, those chapters are the numerous instances in which Marcus, the writer, appears to directly address Marcus, the reader. By this I do not mean simply mean Marcus’ consistent use of the second pronoun “you” in a text meant solely for himself (though this, in itself, is worth noting). What I have in mind are chapters

in which Marcus appears to address himself in regard to some specific circumstance, problem, or event, if only obliquely. These, I will argue, are moments of correspondence in the sense Foucault outlines: that is, a narrative confession through which the true discourse that Marcus has collected is subjectivated, i.e. becomes the truth *of Marcus*.

On my reading there are thirteen such chapters; I will summarize each, briefly, in turn. In 2.6, which opens by addressing “my soul,” Marcus castigates himself for an unnamed “self-harm,” and for letting “[his] own welfare depend on other people’s souls.” 3.14, which we have already seen, features Marcus admonishing himself for “wandering,” and for spending time on writing when he should, instead, be striving to “rescue” himself. In 4.30, Marcus compares himself to philosophers without material possessions, indeed without books, who are nonetheless “faithful to reason.” In the comparison, he judges himself as coming up short: “But I for my part have all the food of learning, am yet I am not faithful.” 4.37 contains the observation that “your death will soon be on you,” and goes on to measure the various ways in which he has yet failed to achieve tranquility or virtue in his lifetime. In 5.5., he remarks that “They,” whoever *they* are, “cannot admire you for your intellect,” but goes on to list other benefits which could aid him in achieving virtue, though of course he chastises himself for failing to make use of them. In 7.17, he addresses “my imagination,” apparently in regard to some trouble it has caused him: “Go away, in the gods’ name, the way you came: I have no need of you. You have come in your old habit.” In 8.1., he notes that there is no longer any chance of living his life as a philosopher, in particular given his present station in life (presumably, that of being Emperor of Rome). In 8.9., he warns himself not let anyone hear him “blaming palace life,” and indeed not to let himself hear him doing so. In 8.22., he remarks simply: “You deserve what you’re going through.” 9.13 showcases a rare moment of self-praise; Marcus lauds himself for recognizing that the

“bothering circumstances” in which he had found himself were the result of nothing but his own judgements. In 9.26, he resolves to cease enduring the “innumerable troubles” which result from “not leaving your directing mind to do the work it was made for.” In 10.16, as noted earlier, he commands himself to be a good man rather than just discuss what makes a good man in the abstract. And, finally, in 11.17 he reminds himself that the “walk of life” in which he now finds himself is more conducive to philosophy than any other. Given earlier remarks in which his present circumstances appear to be *barriers* to philosophy, this chapter suggests an attempt to will himself into the right frame of mind, or it may reflect a genuine change of heart.

Can such remarks really be taken as self-narration? While Marcus is undeniably vague, my brief gloss of these passages should suggest that many appear to refer to specific circumstances in Marcus’ life, and may well have been intended as reminders or attempts to commit to memory specific acts or situations. We can consider these passages in light of Foucault’s reading of one of Marcus’ letters to Fronto, which Foucault here explicitly characterizes as the written form of the self-examination that Seneca describes in *On Anger*. Marcus enumerates the banal details of his day, in sequence: he woke up late, owing to a cold; he spent several hours reading and writing, judging the quality of the latter to be better than that of yesterday; he attempted to relieve his throat by gargling honey and water, and so on.<sup>54</sup> More detailed, certainly, than the cryptic remarks of the *Meditations*, but hardly more “personal,” and in both cases the goal is the same: to manifest, for the gaze of another, one’s acts, the better to examine them in light of the truth one has accepted.

And that truth is always at issue, even if only implicitly. In the background of all of Marcus’ self-admonishments are principles or ideals of conduct that he understands himself as having failed to follow or live up to; the idea, presumably, is to remind himself of such failures,

the better to avoid them in the future. In some cases it is not clear precisely which principles Marcus has in mind, but it nonetheless *is* clear that a failure of principles is at play. In 4.30, for example, it is not clear in what sense Marcus understands himself as “unfaithful to Reason,” but in noting that he is such despite all of his learning, he clearly implicates a failure to adhere to a truth that he already knows and has accepted. In other cases, the specific truth in question *is* clear, as in 2.6’s acknowledgement of failure to abide by a traditional Stoic maxim that we have already: that one’s welfare does not depend on “other people’s souls,” but only on oneself.

The appearance of this maxim is one concrete illustration of the link between *hupomnēmata* and correspondence in terms of the subjectivation of true discourse. Through the former practice, Marcus renders the principle near at hand through the citation of true discourse, in this case traditional Stoic discourse as taught by one of its principle authorities, Epictetus. And through correspondence, he reactivates and reminds himself of the very principle which he has rendered close at hand by recounting, as writer-Marcus, the manner in which he failed to adhere to it. As in Serenus’ confession to Seneca, he makes (or remakes) himself a subject of that principle precisely through enunciating himself as a subject of actions in relation to the discourse he has accepted as true.

### **Conclusion**

To recap: in this paper I have undertaken an explication of Foucault’s conception of the role of writing in the arts of the self, and particularly its *confessional* role, where confession is understood as the subjectivation of true discourse. Specifically, I have looked at Foucault’s descriptions of two practices, *hupomnēmata* and correspondence, alongside the illustrative example of Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations*. The broad goal of all of this was to accomplish the

preliminary steps of a Foucauldian genealogy of writing, and at this point it should be clear that Foucault identifies writing as closely linked to subjectivity by way of practice.

In terms of the *Meditations*, I have shown that it evidences both aspects of the subjectivation of discourse – the gathering together of true discourse through *hupomnēmata*, and the enunciation of correspondence, in this case understood as the correspondence of Marcus with himself. The illustrative value of the *Meditations* in terms of a Foucauldian genealogy of writing practices is thus quite clear: it offers, side by side, examples of both of the practices which Foucault describes.

As well, it should now be more clear what Foucault might have to offer in terms of an alternative to the Derridean conception of the role of writing in philosophy. At the very least, the analysis of the *Meditations* in Foucauldian terms can suggest what it might mean to conceive of writing as an art or practice of the self, and of the philosophical text as a tangible manifestation of such practice.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault “Self Writing,” trans. Robert Hurley, in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 1997), 207-22. The period in question begins around 1980, and continues up to the publication of the second and third volumes of the *History of Sexuality* in 1984, just a few months before his death. “Self Writing,” first published in French as “*L’écriture de Soi*,” was initially intended as the introduction to the second volume, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990). See: Michel Foucault, *Dits et Ecrits: 1954-1988*, vol. 4 (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 415.

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<sup>2</sup> Foucault offers a good general treatment of such practices in a 1982 seminar, later published as “Technologies of the Self.” Here, they are described as practices “which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality;” Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” trans. Robert Hurley, in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 1997), 223-52.

<sup>3 3</sup> By “genealogy,” I refer to the practice that Foucault, following Nietzsche, opposes to “history,” understood as the search for ostensibly stable origins that reaffirm present states of affairs as the inevitable result of an ordered and logical progression of events. Genealogy rejects this view for one of events as heterogeneous and as more the product of breaks, errors, and contingency than of any kind of stable progression. To undertake a “genealogy of writing,” then, is to examine events or practices in the history of writing without assuming there *is* a “history of writing,” as such. See: Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow, ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 76-100.

<sup>4</sup> In the background of such a project, one might locate Foucault’s famous debate with Jacques Derrida over, among other things, the nature of writing. Paul Allen Miller has argued that part of what motivates Foucault’s turn to the ancients is the desire to provide an alternative to Derrida’s conception of the status and function of writing in the Western philosophical tradition, as famously established in the latter’s reading of Plato’s *Phaedrus*. In particular, Miller reads Foucault’s emphasis on the Stoics throughout this period of his work as a “subtle retort” to the Derridean project. Whereas Derrida sees Western philosophy as constituted by the *Phaedrus*’

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exclusion of writing and privileging of speech, Foucault sees this exclusion as wholly abandoned by the time of the Roman Stoics, for whom writing is no more or less than one of a number of practical tools. Foucault thus aligns himself with a conception of the history of philosophy that is not tied up, as is Derrida's, in a complex relationship with the *logos*, but with an ethics of practice and self-formation. Whether Miller's reading is tenable or not, at the very least it indicates something that might be additionally philosophically at stake in drawing out Foucault's conception of ancient writing practices. See: Paul Allen Miller, "The Art of Self-Fashioning, or Foucault on Plato and Derrida," *Foucault Studies* 2 (May 2005): 54-74, 61; Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 61-172. For an extensive collection of recent scholarship on various aspects of the Foucault/Derrida debate, see: *Foucault/Derrida Fifty Years Later: The Futures of Genealogy, Deconstruction, and Politics*, Olivia Custer, Penelope Deutscher, and Samir Hadad, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Foucault's earliest discussion of confession, neither as extensive nor as influential as that of the *History of Sexuality*, appears in an introduction he wrote for a 1962 edition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Dialogues*. For an in-depth discussion of this text, see: Lauri Siisiainen, "Confession, Voice and the Sensualization of Power: The Significance of Michel Foucault's 1962 Encounter with Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Foucault Studies* 14 (September 2012), 138-153.

<sup>6</sup> Michel Foucault, *About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Lectures at Dartmouth College, 1980* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 20.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, *Wrong-Doing, Truth-telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice*, trans. Stephen W. Sawyer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 2n.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 15. It is on similar grounds that I disagree with Chloe Taylor's framing of Foucault's treatment of the arts of the self as offering an *alternative* to confession, rather than as continuous with a general form of confessional practice. Cf. Chloe Taylor, *The Culture of Confession from Augustine to Foucault: A Genealogy of the Confessing Animal* (New York: Routledge, 2009), especially 191-235.

<sup>9</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 62.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>11</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Routledge, 2010), 97-98. For a good treatment of the notion of the statement in Foucault, and of the Foucauldian conception of discourse in general, see: Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), especially 44-79.

<sup>12</sup> Michel Foucault, *On the Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures as the Collège de France 1981-1982*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005), 332.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 332-33.

<sup>14</sup> Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Self*, 32.

<sup>15</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 62.

<sup>16</sup> Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Self*, 28-29.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 30-31.

<sup>18</sup> Foucault, *Wrong-doing*, 102.

<sup>19</sup> Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Self*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> Foucault, *Wrong-doing*, 102.

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<sup>21</sup> Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 332-33.

<sup>22</sup> Foucault, "Self Writing," 214.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 210. For a brief overview of *hupomnēmata* as a genre of ancient literature, see: Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 31-32. Alongside the *Meditations*, Hadot cites, as prominent extant examples of *hupomnēmata*, Plutarch's *On the Tranquility of the Soul* (which Foucault also cites), and Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* (which he does not). The preface of this latter work is worth reading in light of "Self Writing," as Aulus Gellius conceives of his methodology and of the purpose of his *hupomnēmata* in a manner that broadly aligns with Foucault's account. See: Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Vol. 1., trans. John C. Rolfe (London: William Heinemann, 1954).

<sup>25</sup> Epictetus' *Handbook*, for example, features an unfavourable comparison of the ability to elaborate Stoic principles with that of living by them: "When someone says to me 'Read me some Chrysippus,' I blush rather than feeling any pride, when I'm unable to show that my actions match up to his words and are consistent with them" (49).

<sup>26</sup> Foucault, "Self Writing," 210.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 210-11.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>30</sup> Foucault, "Self Writing," 211-12.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

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<sup>33</sup> Loc. cit.; Seneca, *Letters on Ethics to Lucilius*, trans. Margaret Graver and A.A. Long (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> This influence extends to Foucault, as he himself acknowledges; Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> As Jean-Baptiste Gourinat notes, Hadot's categorization of the *Meditations* as *hupomnēmata* is now widely accepted in Marcus Aurelius scholarship; Jean-Baptiste Gourinat, "The Form and Structure of the *Meditations*," in *A Companion to Marcus Aurelius*, M. Van Ackeren, ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 317-332.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Hadot, *Inner Citadel*, 36-53.

<sup>37</sup> Taylor, *Culture of Confession*, 27.

<sup>38</sup> All quotations from the *Meditations* are from the translation of Martin Hammond (London: Penguin Books, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Hadot, *Inner Citadel*, 30.

<sup>40</sup> Foucault, *About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self*, 28.

<sup>41</sup> A similar sequence occurs from 7.35-52. For a comprehensive list of Marcus' citations, see the "Index of Quotations" in Martin Hammond's translation, 222-24.

<sup>42</sup> All references are to the chapters of the *Meditations* in which the quotations appear; for exact references for the quotations themselves, see Hammond's translation notes, 207-09.

<sup>43</sup> On this point, cf. Hadot, *Inner Citadel*, 59-66.

<sup>44</sup> On Epictetus' treatment of Socrates and the Socratic heritage of Epictetan Stoicism, see A.A. Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), especially 67-96.

<sup>45</sup> This is a favourite theme of Epictetus'; compare *Handbook*, 21: "Day by day you must keep before your eyes death and exile and everything else that seems frightening, but most especially

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death; and then you'll never harbor any mean thought, nor will you desire anything beyond due measure."

<sup>46</sup> Compare *Handbook*, 8: "Don't seek that all that comes about should come about as you wish, but wish that everything that comes about should come about just as it does, and then you'll have a calm and happy life."

<sup>47</sup> Foucault, "Self Writing," 214.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>50</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 219. In *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 112-15, Judith Butler emphasizes, I believe rightly, that the process of self-narration that Foucault outlines in the Dartmouth lectures is not the manifestation of an "inner self," but she perhaps places too much emphasis on the external nature of the self, arguing that what is constituted is only ever an "outward appearance," a public performance of self-constitution. This does not seem in keeping with what Foucault repeatedly stresses about the arts of the self: that they are undertaken *for oneself*. Indeed, Foucault stresses, in the Dartmouth lectures, that on the Greek conception one enters into the confessional relationship with another provisionally, for the sake of one's own self-transformation; the presence of another may be provisionally called for, but it is not for this other that the exercise is performed. See Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Self*, 28-29.

<sup>53</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 61. To be clear, there is no question of the *Meditation's* comprising correspondence in the straightforward sense of a text sent to a literal other. The first

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evidence of its publication does not emerge until centuries after Marcus' death, and it is unlikely that he ever intended it to be seen by anyone but himself. See: Hadot, *Inner Citadel*, 21-23.

<sup>54</sup> Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Self*, 219-20.

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