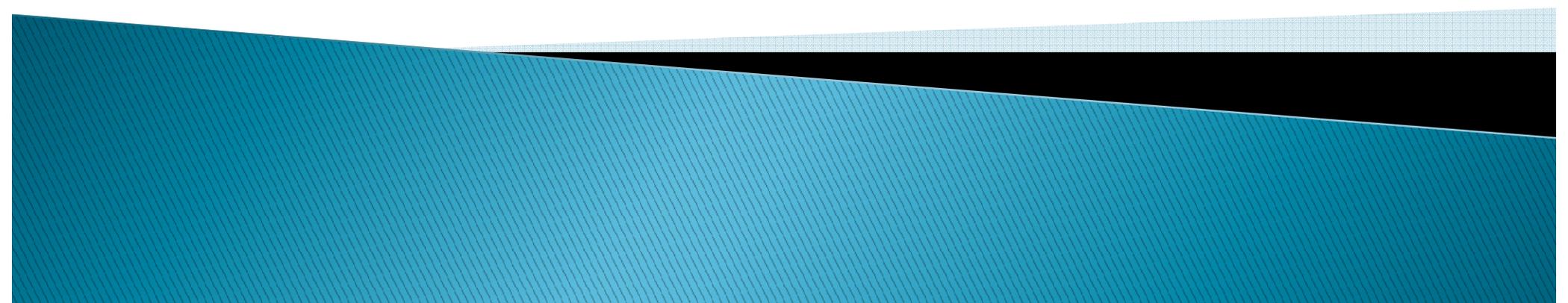


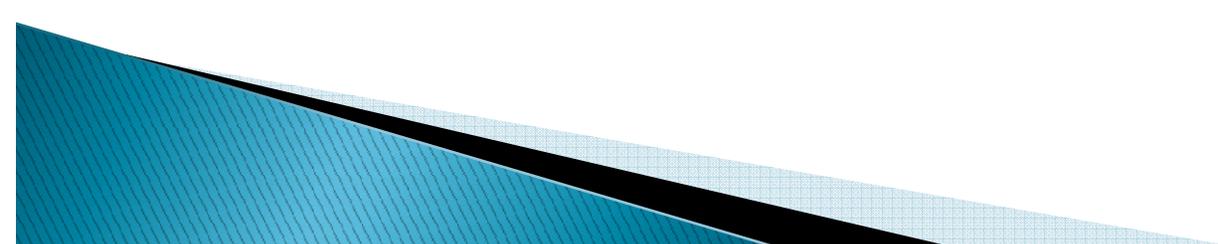
Mobilising a confessing technology and techniques in vocational teaching and assessment

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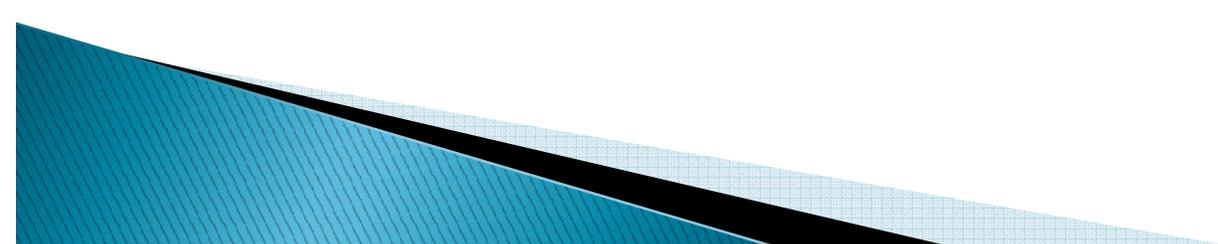
Positioning the presentation

- ▶ Part of the forthcoming book: Dahlstedt, M. & Fejes, A. (2012) *The confessing society: Foucault, confession and practices of lifelong learning*. London: Routledge.
- ▶ Based on the article: Fejes, A. (2010) *Confession, in-service training and reflective practices*. *British Educational Research Journal*. IFirst.



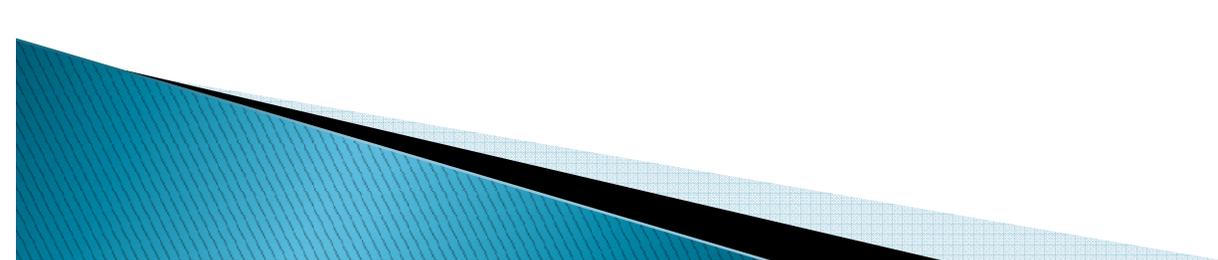
The confessing animal

- ▶ [T]he confession became one of the West's most highly valued techniques for producing truth. We have since become a singularly confessing society...Western man has become a confessing animal [Foucault 1998, 59].



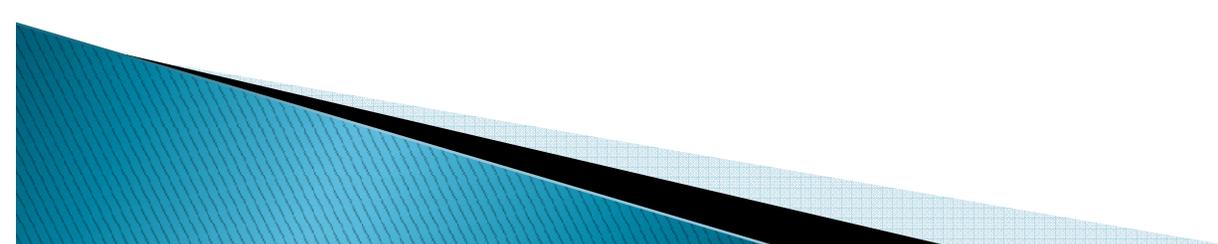
A genealogy of confession

- ▶ The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also as ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presences (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console and reconcile. (Foucault, 1998, p. 61–62)



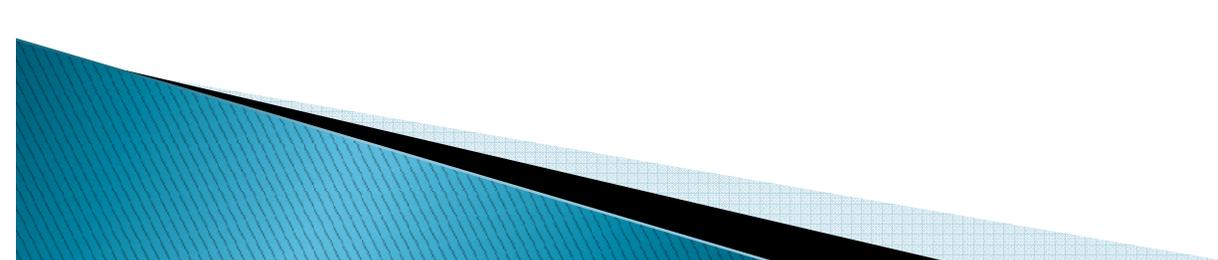
Care of the self

- ▶ Technologies of power/domination and technologies of the self
- ▶ Focus on care of the self as aesthetic practices of self formation – it is about ontology
- ▶ Know yourself and care of the self
- ▶ In the Greco–Roman period the former was seen as a consequence of the latter while in Christianity the former obscured the latter



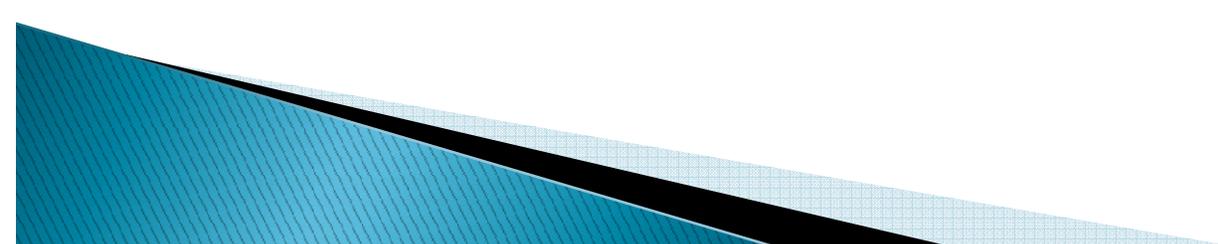
Greco-Roman period

- ▶ Life as an art (existence) – a *tekhne*
- ▶ Writing emerges as an *examination of conscience* aimed at finding out how one can become successful with ones intentions
 - Letters
 - Notebooks
- ▶ The goal was to find the truth that has been forgotten (rules)



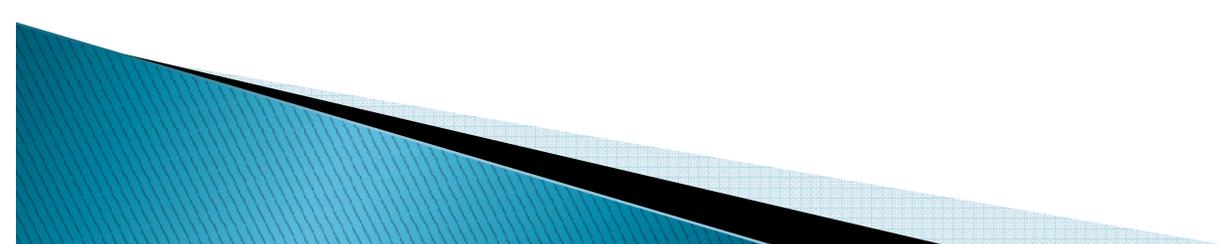
Askesis among the Stoics

- ▶ The goal was to remember the teachings of the master which was a way to gain access to the reality of this world
- ▶ Melete – meditation tested the preparedness for life
- ▶ Gymnasia – Physical exercise which tested the individual independence in relation to the world



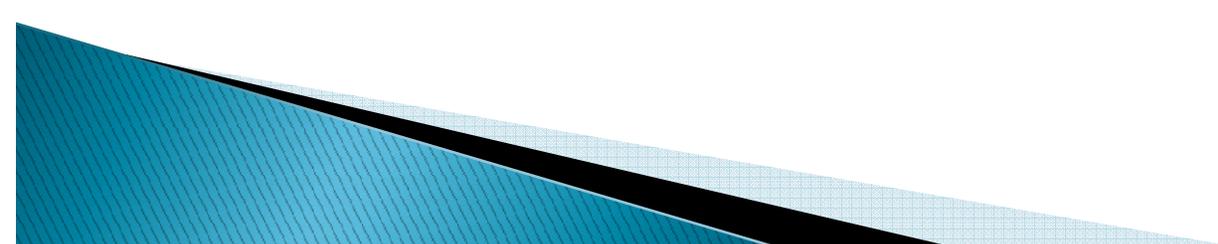
Christianity

- ▶ Duty to know who you are (find faults, locate temptations) and disclose this to others
- ▶ Aesthetics is linked to purity (instead of to existence)
- ▶ The self should be renounced (instead of being made)
- ▶ Writing becomes a test which brings into light the true self



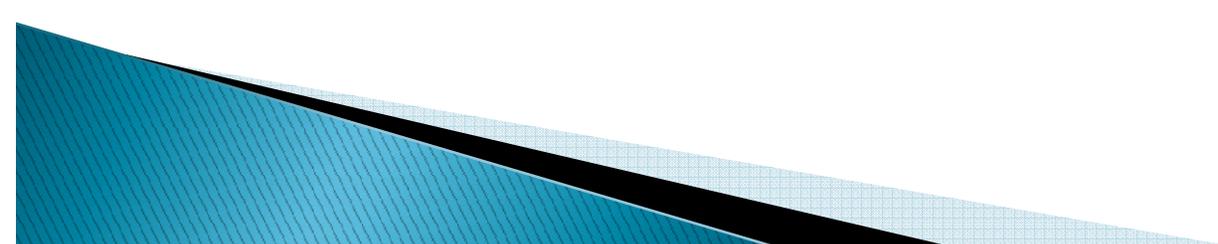
Exomologesis

- ▶ Exomologesis – Ritual of recognizing oneself as a sinner which needed to be made public
- ▶ Exomologesis rubs out the sins at the same time as it recognizes the penitent as a sinner
- ▶ This contradiction is most often explained through the model of death, torture and martyrdom – the sinner here illustrates that he is able to renounce both the self and his life



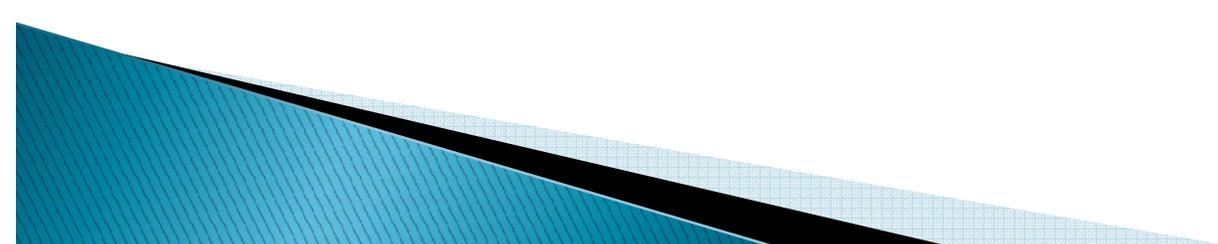
Exagoreusis

- ▶ Total obedience to the master which is a sacrifice of the self
- ▶ Contemplation – to always turn ones thoughts towards God
- ▶ Moneychanger of thought – Discriminate between good and bad thoughts
- ▶ Verbalize ourselves to our master



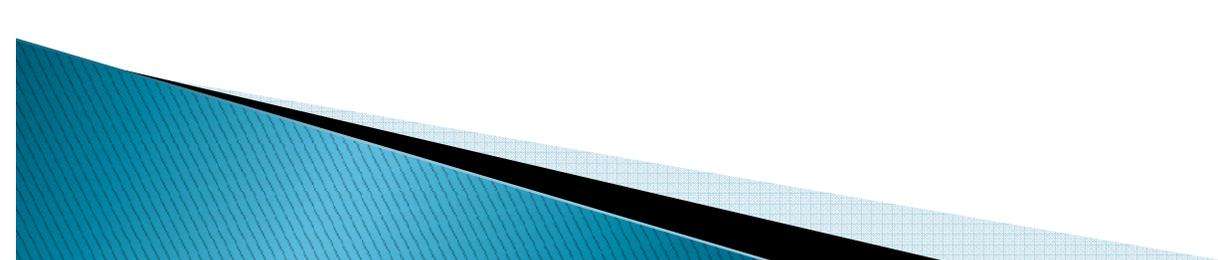
Renouncing ones' self

- ▶ We can not disclose without renouncing
- ▶ In examologesis, 'the sinner must "kill" himself through ascetic macerations...disclosure of the self is the renunciation of one's own self' (Foucault 2003a, p. 167).
- ▶ In exagoreusis one constantly verbalizes oneself and obeys ones master, thus one is renouncing ones will and ones self. This practice continues until the 17th Century.



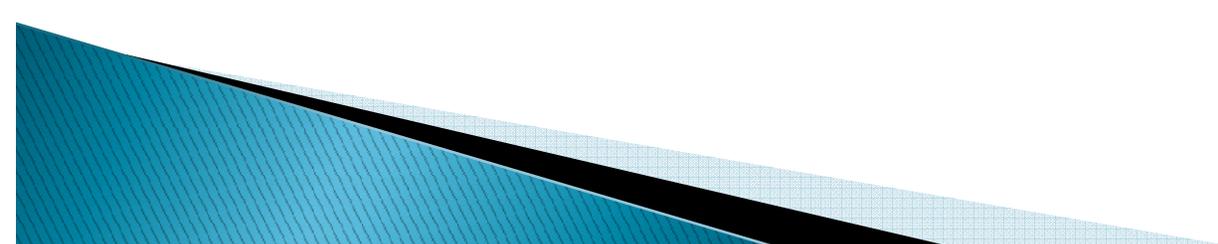
Contemporary confessional practices

- ▶ Verbalization without renouncing
- ▶ Relation to others (counsellor, family, friends, colleagues, virtual other)
- ▶ Making visible (disclosing) ones desires, goals, ambitions, learning outcomes etc.
- ▶ In the confessional relation scientific knowledge is mobilized in relation to knowledge of the self
- ▶ Why disclosing? Because we can, it is our freedom to do so, and such activity is construed as desirable
- ▶ This interlinks with how governing operates
 - Governmentality
 - Freedom



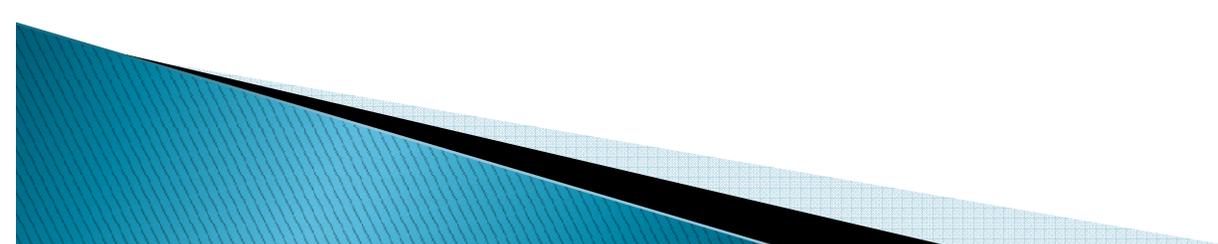
Practices analyzed in the book

- ▶ Reflective practices mobilized in in-service training programs within elderly care
- ▶ Cognitive behavioural therapeutic programs in school
- ▶ Educational guidance
- ▶ Nanny TV



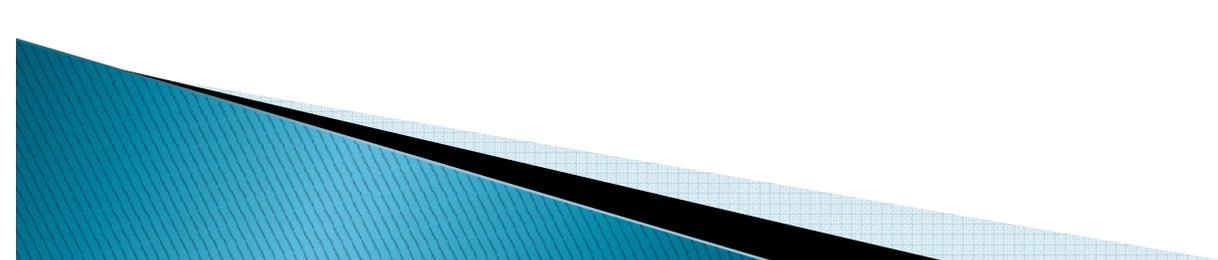
Reflective practices

- ▶ Examples from a study of an in-service training program within elderly care. See Fejes 2010 and Fejes, A. (2008) Governing Nursing through reflection. Journal of Advanced Nursing.
- ▶ Two different kinds of reflective practices that do different kinds of work
 - Learning conversations
 - Log-books/diaries



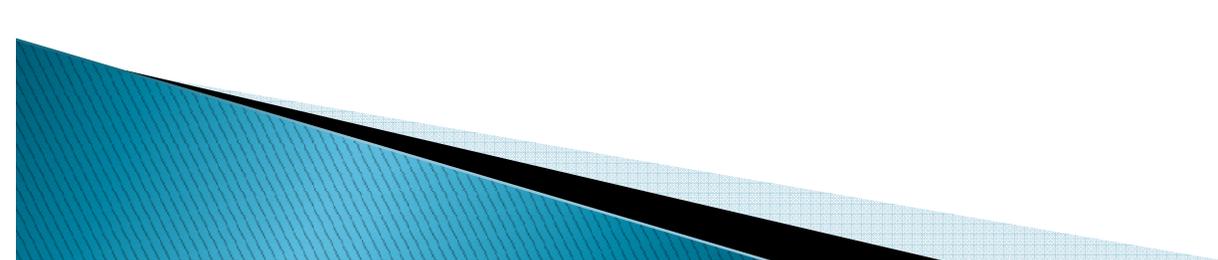
Learning conversations

- ▶ I was thinking, that in some way you could – through supervision, through these techniques – through them create those opportunities for the reflection we often lack. With a deeper cultivation of these questions which are problematic – questions that we have here everyday at our nursing home. It is a way of raising the issues...the knowledge which is actually here already. Instead of searching for it outside.
(Miriam)



Log-books / diaries

- ▶ We have a log-book that everyone should take notes in. And if someone believes they have written something good or if they have any queries about, then they can raise that during our sessions...there are questions in the log book that you can. Or, think! Thoughts, so you can think really. Write your thoughts in the log-book concerning things you can do to pay attention to your own way of communicating and collaborating in the job. So, then you need to think and then write. (Helen)



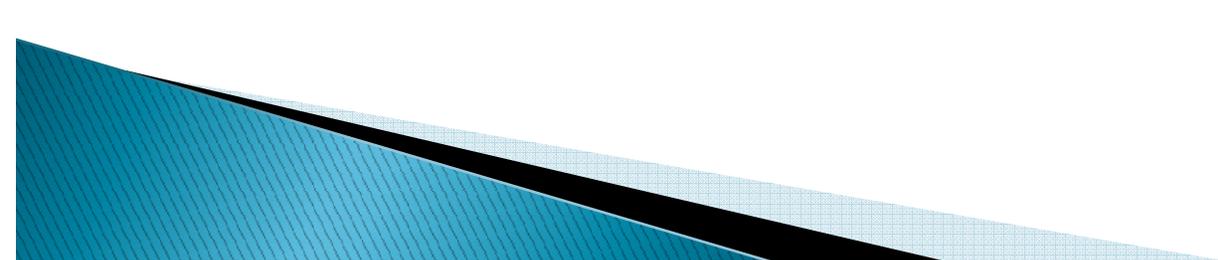
What do they do?

▶ Learning conversations

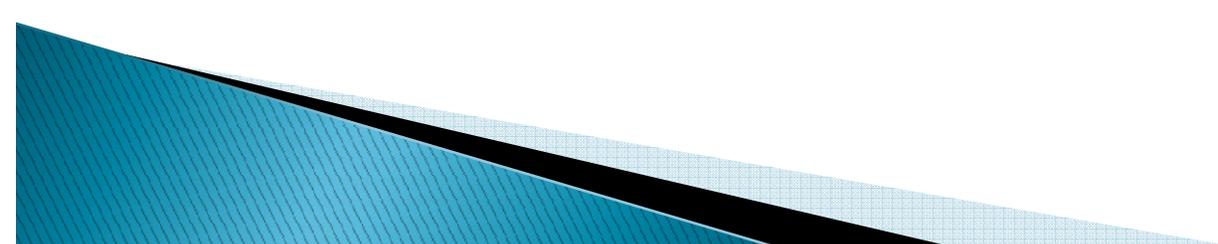
- Reflection as a way to produce better quality in care, define and find solutions to problems, learning from each other
- Disclosure to others, but not foremost of the self, but of work related issues.
- It is not so much a deciphering of the self as it is a disciplining of the self in relation to examination – technology of power.

▶ Log-books/diaries

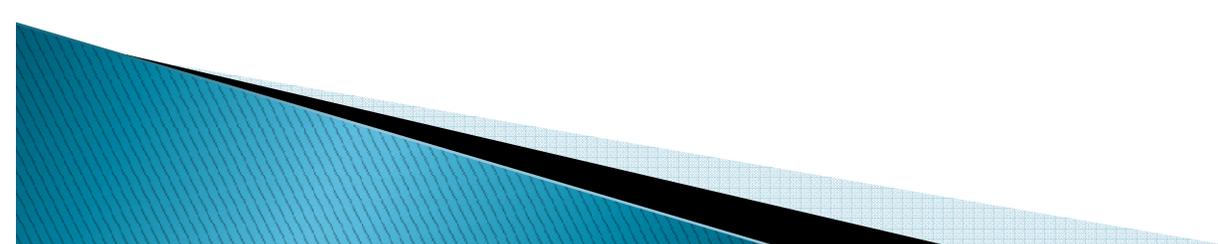
- Reflection as a way to learning which produce better quality in work
- Disclosure of the self to oneself and virtual others and potentially to "real" others.
- It is about deciphering the self, in order to find the real self as a starting point for change – technology of the self.
- However, there is also disciplinary power operating in this relation as there is a potential of these notes might be part of the examination during learning conversations – technology of power



- ▶ If I have learnt anything since taking this course, (it is) to reflect more about issues. That's what I learnt. And I think that is good. It is also something one has to learn, to reflect on, every day. To reflect about what one has done. To scrutinize yourself, to ask myself, what good have I done today? And what have I done that could be improved? (Helen)

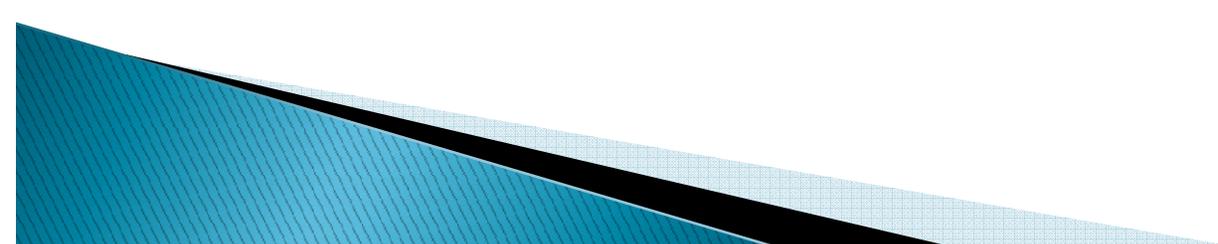


- ▶ You do a lot based on routine. You never think about why you do something. Instead...everyone else does it that way, therefore I also do it...and here there might be an opportunity to reflect about it, why did I do it that way? Then, if we...yes that's the ambition to wake! Yes, to awaken.
(Nora)



Alternatives

- ▶ Critique by example instead of a foundational critique – destabilise the taken-for-grantedness of the present
- ▶ To do otherwise – mobilizing marginal discourses in order to not get enmeshed within the confessional
 - The memoirs of Pierre Rivière
- ▶ Books of life as care of the self
 - Hupomnêmata were books of collected wisdom used for action It ‘was a matter of constituting oneself as a subject of rational action through the appropriation, the unification, and the subjectivation of a fragmentary and selected already-said, (1994, p. 221)’
 - The books of life as technologies of power and technologies of the self. However it is a choice made out of a concern for and monitoring of the self. Today, we are monitored without having chosen to be so, and we internalize this.



Free ourselves from confession?

- ▶ Free ourselves from confession as a practice through which we come to know who we are.
- ▶ The contradiction is that these practices of confession makes us believe that its purpose is to secure our freedom (cf. Simons & Masschelein, 2008)– Confess and you will be free, confess and you will be rewarded with redemption, confess and you will come to know who you truly are.
- ▶ The very act of confession takes freedom as both its prerequisite and its effect.

