


## REFLECTIONS ABOUT ACADEMIC FORMATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION ON THE LIGHT OF TECHNOLOGIES OF SELF IN FOUCAULT

*REFLEXÕES SOBRE A FORMAÇÃO ACADÊMICA NA EDUCAÇÃO  
FÍSICA À LUZ DAS TECNOLOGIAS DE SI EM FOUCAULT* 

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**Abstract:** This article seeks support in Foucault's conceptions of ethics and aesthetics of existence to compose reflections on academic training in Physical Education. As a way to mobilize this intent, the notion of "technologies of the self", found in the last stage of Michel Foucault's work, is contextualized. Next, heterogeneous and differential approximations are outlined between the ethical problem posed to the constitution of the subject and academic training. Although these approximations must be seen with caution – in order not to take the constitution practices of ancient subjects as a distant origin to forge and explain a formative model for modern subjects – such approximations point to other non-hegemonic rationalities that oppose the enabling logics commonly attributed to academic training, which tend to be reduced to its instrumental aspects only. In this way, the reflections ahead here do not affirm general theories, nor good or bad truths about training, but give visibility to the composition of alternative discursive and non-discursive practices of elaboration and shaping of the self, established in the power dynamics that support them throughout the formative journey.

**Keywords:** Technologies of the self. Physical Education. Training. Process of Subjectivation.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This article discusses, through Foucault's contributions linked to technologies of the self, another approach to training in Physical Education, considering other approaches that also do so. To do this, he starts from the following problematic delimitation: the discourses and practices regarding academic training, not infrequently, focus on the affirmation of instrumental aspects that prepare students within a certain system of production and professional performance. Within this perspective, training is understood as a process of training, preparation and qualification, which ensures the achievement of a certain "know-how", without which the academic path seems to be meaningless. However, training cannot be reduced to the aforementioned instrumental education.

In the work of Imbernón (2010), this capacity-building disposition is at the service of a mercantile academic policy that, in an effort to transform training into merchandise, drastically summarizes the training process, based on excessively content-oriented teaching systems that demarcate the protagonism of theoretical, objective and disciplinary knowledge in the acquisition and qualification of professional skills.

In view of this scenario regarding training, we are interested in presenting some reflections that allow the visualization of other perspectives that are not purely training, but sensitive to the visceral and intensive dynamics that extend along a training path and that, due to the demand for the creative work operated by the subject about themselves, reaches the level of a certain stylistic of existence in the process of composition throughout life.

First, however, so that the statement of this reflective proposal does not take the place of an ultimate truth about the problem of academic training – reiterating dichotomies that are based on the game between true and false, or even in the discussion about good or bad training – it should be noted that the route taken here points to other non-hegemonic rationalities, which are placed in opposition to the enabling logics commonly attributed to academic training, in order to make visible the composition of alternative discursive and non-discursive practices of elaboration and shaping of oneself along the formative path.

To guide these discussions, we start from the notion of "technologies of the self", found in the last stage of Michel Foucault's work, which allowed the delimitation of the following question: What movements does the ethical problem posed to the constitution of the subject by Michel Foucault invite us to think about academic training in Physical Education?

Faced with the affirmation of this problem, what will be of interest from now on is the composition of broader readings about training, which do not only concern the mere acquisition of specific skills and abilities, but which place the subject in a process of self-intensification, or that is, in an aesthetic, ethical, and existential relationship with what they want to take for themselves.

## 2 TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF

Technologies of the self refers to actions “exercised by oneself towards oneself [...]. Hence a series of practices that are, for the most part, exercises” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 14-15). Thus, as practices, the technologies of the self enter into the composition of “certain ways of training and modifying individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills, but also of acquiring certain attitudes” (FOUCAULT, 2004, p. 324).

With the theme of “technologies of the self”, Foucault (2004) begins to be interested in the subject’s relationship with their own constitution of themselves. To arrive at this “self”, which is not confused with the contours of the modern “I”, Foucault starts with a historical analysis of sexuality, as he realized that this theme was particularly potent to reflect on the subject’s obligation, to tell the truth about oneself.

In this sense, this technological category deviates from the idea of technologies understood as tools for the operationalization of a certain system of symbols, power, or production, with strictly functional purposes, since the technologies themselves imply life and, therefore, concern the elaboration of ways of being and existing.

Before proceeding with this reading about the technologies of the self, it should be noted that in order to overcome the functionalist and strictly operational purpose of technology and better situate his study interests on this topic, Foucault distinguishes four technological categories: (1) related to production, which “allows us to produce, transform, or manipulate things”; (2) related to sign systems, which “allows us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or meaning”; (3) those related to power, which “determines the conduct of individuals and subjects them to certain ends or domination”; and finally, (4) the technologies of the self, which refer to the practices through which a subject places themselves as an artist of their own way of life (FOUCAULT, 2004, p. 323-324). It is in the midst of this last technological category that we support our view on training.

## 3 SELF-CARE

Within the scope of technologies of the self, the principle of self-care pulsates. This principle of action will be particularly important for the development of the notion of training that we want to elucidate here.

In general, self-care refers to the starting movement towards self-improvement, “which seeks the ethical coherence of its actions” (VINTGES, 2018, p. 134). In this sense, self-care reveals the work of self-knowledge, considering it not in the depths of thought, but mainly expressed on the singular surface of a certain way of acting that is fully visible in the subject’s relations with the world.

The notion of self-care has expanded in such a way over the course of history that its meanings have been multiplied and displaced, so that its expressions go beyond their original framework, “disconnecting from their first philosophical meanings”, to acquire, “progressively, the dimensions and forms of a true culture of the self” (FOUCAULT, 2002, p. 50).

According to Foucault, the culture of the self is dominated by the principle of self-care: “It is this principle of self-care that underlies its need, commands its development, and organizes its practice” (FOUCAULT, 2002, p. 49). Thinking about the principle of self-care based on the ancient Greco-Latin culture of the self is important to avoid anachronistic readings about care.

Thus, in the domains of a culture of the self, it can be considered, in a very general way, that self-care “is a general attitude, a certain way of looking at things, of being in the world, of practicing actions, of having relationships with the other. Caring for oneself is an attitude towards oneself, towards others, towards the world” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 14).

You take care of yourself when you turn your gaze from the outside, from others, from the world, to yourself. However, this conversion of the gaze does not close in on itself; the necessary self-monitoring does nothing if it does not promote a global movement of existence. Seen in this way, self-care anchors perception, moving the subject to relate to themselves and the world without losing sight of themselves.

The displacement of the subject towards themselves is not a gratuitous movement for everyone who simply wants to take care of themselves, as it outlines a trajectory that involves risks for the subject and, consequently, claims for a labor, that is, for an exercise of oneself about oneself. Therefore, the subject must be prepared to face this path, investing all their attention and disposition in the process. Thus, this trajectory of converting oneself into oneself implies the elaboration of practical knowledge, without which the subject does not conduct themselves.

Conducting oneself requires the subject to become intensely involved in what they want to take for themselves and consequently requires the subject to make their attention and energies available to what instigates them, shaping them in a certain way. This availability is not done without courage! The courageous attitude, typical of care, is the starting point, the engine of all other accomplishments of the subject in the exercise of self-management. It is through courage that the subject demarcates a certain ethical position on themselves, which guides their relationships with themselves, with space, and with others.

Seen in this way, it is noted that self-care places the individual as the central object of their own training path. In this sense, care inaugurates another look at training, which cannot be reduced by the pedagogical dimension precisely because it traverses life, from end to end, mobilizing and elaborating existence.

As a training exercise, which is not limited to its pedagogical dimension, but which involves life, in the multiplicity of existence, self-care rescues the importance of experiencing before knowing, which moves us to think about it between the lines of knowledge.

#### **4 SELF-CARE BETWEEN THE LINES OF KNOWLEDGE**

There is something disturbing about self-care, which prevents us from framing it under the terms of knowledge. Through this injunction, thinking about the principle

of self-care necessarily implies observing a form of thinking that is different from that circumscribed by objective and formal thinking. Thus, for a broader understanding of care, an interesting strategy is to analyze the principle to which it is dissimilar: knowledge, as understood by the Cartesian moment.

Foucault is very careful to punctuate Cartesianism historically, because, according to him, the ruptures and displacements of forms of thought are not so clearly demarcated in a linear conception of history. By precisely punctuating the figure of Descartes as a landmark from which modern thought was built, a cataloging of history is assumed and, consequently, the reflection on history becomes a secondary task. Thus, to avoid this reduction, Foucault prefers to deal with the expression “Cartesian moment”, even to rescue the notion of temporality, as a space of accommodation and adjustment that concerns not only a chronological scrutiny but also the dispersion of this frame – which escapes the full record of official history. The notion of “moment” creates an environment conducive to reflection on the processes and transformations constituted therein (FOUCAULT, 2006).

For Foucault, the Cartesian moment finds its place and meaning in the modern age, when another era in the history of relations between subjectivity and truth was consolidating. An era in which the subject seeks the truth by sneaking into the possibilities of treating this truth under the limits imposed by knowledge. At this point, modern thought structures its founding question: What is possible to know? This question interrogates “not of course what is true and what is false, but what determines that there is and can be truth and falsehood and that one can or cannot separate the true and the false” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 19).

The notion of knowledge stemming from scholarship is based on a logical and rational structure, which allows the subject of knowledge to have a certain control over the object (the element to which the researcher applies himself in the investigation). Thus, to reach the truth from the knowledge of the object, says Foucault: “It is enough to reason sanely, correctly, and constantly keeping the line of evidence without ever loosening it, and we will be capable of truth” (2006, p. 234).

Later, Kant supplements this perspective by considering that “the limits of knowledge are constituted in the very structure of knowledge, so that it seems chimerical and paradoxical to think of a knowledge that cannot be reduced under the terms of knowledge” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 235).

In these terms, modern thought was built, in the mobilization of a knowledge that is limited to knowing. Descartes knows that it is not possible to understand everything that is of the order of the infinite – and that bears witness to God – but, even so, it is still possible to engender knowledge, for this purpose:

It is enough that I understand the infinite, and that I judge that all the attributes that I clearly perceive and know to imply some perfection—and perhaps countless others of which I am ignorant—are present in God either straightforwardly or in some higher form. This is enough to make the idea that I have of God the truest and most vivid and clear of all my ideas. (DESCARTES, 1962, p. 151).

Thus, verification of all experience is established in the light of evidence, that is, of the element that enables the determination of knowledge. In this way, the field of consciousness invades the space of knowledge and bars the possibility of doubt, allowing the definition of the philosophical-scientific procedure.

What escapes evidence does not produce knowledge, because conscience, as a faculty of understanding, does not reach what is not evident to it. It is in this supposed inability that care for oneself transits in its irreducibility. Therefore, we are facing two quite different regimes of veridiction.

Now, if self-care escapes the apprehension of modern consciousness, which defines us as subjects of knowledge, how can we manage care? To answer this question, Foucault will bet on a reading about spiritual exercises, from ancient philosophy.

## 5 ECHOES OF SELF-CARE IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

In the course entitled “Hermeneutics of the Subject” (2006), Foucault gives clues to think about self-care, based on ancient philosophy, dating from the Hellenistic period.<sup>1</sup> According to the author, talking about self-care nowadays implies, at least in part, having to revisit this peculiar period of philosophy, where schemes of existence attentive to self-care were constituted through the proposal of spiritual exercises.

A difficulty, however, arises: the Christian model used and repatriated the expressions of care constituted in the Hellenistic model, acclimating them and elaborating them to make them “something that today we mistakenly call Christian morality” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 314). Such an injunction prevents one from looking at Hellenistic culture without being contaminated by the vision of the Christian tradition so firmly grounded in modernity.

To think about Hellenistic philosophy, Foucault takes as a reference, at least in part, the studies of P. Hadot. In reading Gros, what matters to Foucault, in his reading of P. Hadot, is the understanding of ancient philosophy as “elaboration of ways of life, of schemes of existence through the proposal of spiritual exercises, the art of living” (2008, p. 128-129).

In these terms, Foucault calls spirituality the “set of searches, practices, and experiences [...] that constitute, not for knowledge, but for the subject, [...] the price to pay to have access to the truth (2006, p. 19).

Spirituality, at least as it appears in the West, has three characteristics. First, it postulates that a simple act of knowledge does not give full right to the truth to the subject, because the truth is not simply what is given to the subject in order to fulfill their desire for knowledge. This means to say that the desire for knowledge, in spirituality, is more than a simple contingency – it is a practice. Therefore, in order to have access to the truth, it is necessary – and this leads us to the second characteristic

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<sup>1</sup> The aforementioned course was taught in 1982 at the Collège de France, transcribed, and only later published in a book, which ended up receiving the same title as the course that gave rise to it.

of spirituality – that “the subject change [...] become, to a certain extent and to a certain point, other than themselves, to have the right to access the truth. The truth is only given to the subject at a price that puts the very being of the subject at stake” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 20).

To this movement of putting oneself into play, Foucault gives the name of *eros*. Through it, the subject is pulled out of their current conscious condition, placing them in a relationship. However, this process is not gratuitous – and this leads us to the third characteristic of spirituality: a progressive effort is necessary for the so-called “putting yourself into play” to have intensity. The subject is responsible for a long work focused on listening and modifying themselves that progressively transforms them under the auscultation of care prior to the movement of knowledge. This is *Askesis*.

*Eros* and *askesis*: These are the two great ways in which Western spirituality conceived the possibility of transforming the subject and expressing self-care.

## 5.1 THE HARD ELABORATION OF THE SELF – ASKESIS

When talking about *askesis*, it is about practical knowledge, which prepares the individual for life’s events. *Askesis* requires a preparation (*paraskeue*), which is embedded in the individual’s muscles, in order to elaborate their ways of being and acting.

Based on a text by Demétrio about an athlete’s preparation, Foucault will verify the importance of repetition in the athlete’s ascetic movement. It is repetition, understood as an exercise in remembering, which guarantees mastery of *logos*. Said *logos* is the material equipment of the athlete, his armor, and as such it is a proposition that prescribes what needs to be done. The *logos* must always be within reach. It is necessary to have it, in a way, almost in the muscles and in such a way that it can be updated immediately and promptly, automatically. It really needs to be a memory of activity (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 393). Therefore, this preparation needs to be not only acquired, but also endowed with “a permanent presence, at the same time virtual and effective, which allows [it] to be used whenever necessary” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 391).

In this permanent presence, according to Demétrio, the inseparable relationship between preparation and ways of being is established. For this permanent presence to be possible, in addition to repetition, it is also necessary to follow a regime of abstinence. Such a regime in Plato aims to form the physical courage of the individual, so that they can withstand external events without succumbing to them and form their moderation, that is, their self-control. However, in the period of the Roman Empire, athletic preparation disappeared completely.

Seneca goes so far as to “make fun of people who spend their time exercising their arms, shaping their muscles, swelling their necks, strengthening their backs.” The preparation for Seneca should open conditions for “intellectual activity, reading, writing, etc.” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 519).

In Musonius Rufus, a thinker of the imperial period, preparation will come from a regime of resistance in relation to hunger, cold, heat, and sleep: what is at stake, therefore, is a body of abstinences. In addition to repetition and abstinence, there is also the practice of tests. According to Foucault, in his reading of the practice of tests in the imperial era, “the test always involves a certain interrogation: interrogation of oneself about oneself”. In a test, it is about “measuring the point of progress one is at, and knowing deep down what one is” (2006, p. 521). The test is, therefore, a formative exercise, and as such, it approaches the exercise of living itself. Thus he emphasizes: “life must be recognized, thought about, lived, practiced as a perpetual test” (2006, p. 531).

As these different modes of preparation expand and affect the individual’s life as a whole, a true discourse is progressively elaborated. Such a discourse is always about conquest, in the course of a job, and requires the individual to invest their time, their strength, and their will, to take for themselves a certain technique of living and move it to the whim of their desires.

With regard to the conquest of true discourse, other movements are fundamental, such as the work of listening. According to Seneca, the act of listening plants seeds in the soul of those who are open to listening, therefore it is an activity that requires attention. Quoting Epictetus, Foucault says that “in listening, we begin to have contact with the truth” (2006, p. 409). Thus, listening requires a certain ability to accept what is said. Assiduous practice helps to develop this listening skill, but listening can only be purified through silence.

For Plutarch, learning silence is one of the essential elements of good a education. Life needs to be guided by “a kind of strict economy of the word. It is necessary to remain silent as much as possible [...] one should not speak when another person speaks”. It is necessary to surround listening with silence and “not immediately convert what was heard into speech” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 410-411).

However, silence is not enough, as highlighted by Foucault (2006), based on the reading of Plutarch. It also takes a certain active attitude that recruits the physical during listening, as a resource to make sprout in the body what was planted by listening. It is also necessary to pay attention, without which one cannot apprehend what is said. In Pythagoreanism, Foucault finds the rules of pedagogical silence – silence in relation to the master’s word. In this silence, an art of listening is engendered, in which the word is only allowed to the most advanced students and the master himself. In the plots of this art, silence is understood as an exercise in memory, which keeps the listener listening and recording the words spoken by the master. All learning exercises start from this first exercise, where one learns the two most difficult things of all: “be silent and listen” (2006, p. 502).

The hard work of a look that turns on itself, through silence and listening, opens the possibility of conquering the true discourse, providing opportunities for the composition of an “ascetic attitude”, that is, a “courageous attitude of change”, which mobilizes the constitution, always in displacement, of the subject (CANDIOTTO, 2010, p. 133-141).



## 5.2 SELF-CARE IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS – *EROS*

In addition to *askesis*, another form of expression of care in ancient philosophy was constituted through *eros*. Such a means of expression testifies to a care that does not close in on itself, but that is oriented towards the world, without losing sight of itself. The movement of *eros* is inscribed there, that is, the expression of care constituted in the relationship of a “self” with the other.

As Foucault points out:

In the practice of the self, someone else, the other, is an indispensable condition for the form that defines this practice to effectively attain and be filled by its object, that is to say, by the self. The other is indispensable for the practice of the self to arrive at the self at which it aims. (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 158).

In this relationship with the other, there is the figure of the master: the mediator in the individual’s relationship with their constitution as a subject; the director of the constitution of the subject as such.

In Plato – quoted by Foucault – the relationship of direction is inscribed in the love relationship. To this extent, the master is the one who takes care of the care that the subject has for themselves and who, in the love he has for the disciple, finds the possibility of taking care of the care that the disciple has of themselves. Loving the boy disinterestedly, he is thus the principle and model of care that the boy should have of themselves as a subject (2006, p. 73-74). Already in the authors of the imperial period, particularly in Seneca, the relationship of direction “is inserted within friendship, esteem, and already established social relationships.” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 483).

The master, as the one who not only transmits knowledge, but who intervenes on the subject, extending his hand to help him to appropriate a way of being, needs to guide his intervention in the light of ethics. From this need arises the notion of *parrhesia*, which can be translated as a courageous and frank attitude. According to Foucault, it is “a game rule, a principle of verbal behavior that we must have towards the other in the practice of the direction of conscience” (2006, p. 202). Foucault will deal with thinking about *parrhesia* from the perspective of Epicurean philosophy, where he finds powerful arguments to think about the paradoxical and dangerous dimension that this dimension entails, especially when imperatives are at stake that intend to control and correct individual conduct.

The rules of *parrhesia* are defined by the occasion, that is, it is in the act and in the relationship established with the other that the form of true discourse is modalized (FOUCAULT, 2006).

A relationship mediated in the light of *parrhesia* does not refuse knowledge. Those who practice *parrhesia* dare to suspend the status that maintains the subject as the object of a true discourse in order to requisition that truth that affects them, that is, that sets them in motion: that transforms them. This truth is none other than the one mobilized by physiology. According to Foucault’s reading of Epicurus, physiology is the knowledge of nature - *physis*.

Such knowledge can:

serve as the principle of human conduct and as the criterion for setting us free, and also [...] it can transform the subject [...] into a free subject who finds within himself the possibility and means of his permanent and perfectly tranquil delight (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 294).

However, Foucault puts us on alert regarding the conditions of this relationship with the master, by demarcating that, in the midst of the frank encounter, control mechanisms are also installed that reduce the voice of care, shaping it as it suits.

It was in the Stoic tradition that Foucault observed this injunction with greater intensity. According to the author, it was in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries that the practice of the self became more intensely linked to social practice, allowing the regulation of care according to a due order. Henceforth, the subject does not look back at themselves without the mediation of another. By constituting this relationship between individuals, the practice of the self has become a kind of “principle of control of the individual by others” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 191-192). In these terms, the master’s direction operates the function of correcting the subject, rectifying and reforming them from the corrosion imputed by vice. The function of the master, in the Stoic tradition, is to make the apprentice master themselves by being virtuous, firm, serene in adversity, and strong against passing pleasures. To do so, it is necessary to cultivate a series of extremely rigid prescriptions that constitute a Stoic asceticism, based on practices of renunciation, abstinence, and interdiction. It is measured in these terms – in the Stoic tradition – the price to be paid by the subject in mastering themselves (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 161).

There is, however, another side of this story that moves Foucault’s bets on the practice of *parrhesia*. On this other face, instead of inscribing the master’s conduction in the order of moral rectification, the possibility, always in development, of composing a new ethics of social relations is installed: an order that links theory and practice, truth and act, saying and doing, truth and life. Therefore, it is necessary to give voice to a modality of knowledge that puts the subject in motion, transforming them, according to the situational demands installed in the relationships in which the subject is involved.

## 6 REFLECTIONS ON TRAINING – BETWEEN ASKESIS AND EROS

Before placing our focus, it is necessary, first, to problematize this approximation between a current demand – concerning training in Physical Education – and a historical perspective, in the light of Foucault, about self-care, to avoid constituting an anachronistic reflection about our purposes of study.

It is therefore appropriate to ask: What is the point of this reading about self-care for academic training in Physical Education? What does this reading prompt one to think?

To answer these questions, we seek support from Gros (2008). According to the author, what Foucault seeks, in his historical perspective on the notion of self-care, is to capture the pre-doctrinal element that crosses this principle of action, diagonalizing itself in history, to erupt in the present. In this sense, the bet on the reading of the past,

about care, escapes the proselytizing vision to put on the agenda questions about the structuring of the subject's relationship with themselves and with others.

In other words, self-care encourages thinking about academic training in its inseparability from subjectivization processes, focusing mainly on self-elaboration practices (*askesis*) and relationships (*eros*), which shift the understanding of the formation of terms of knowledge to the domains of ethical and aesthetic action. It is this attitude – or, if you prefer, this pre-doctrinal element – that echoes from the reading of self-care and invites us to think.

As a consequence of this ethical and aesthetic attitude, the reading about academic training reaches a more sensitive and visceral function, which, as it demands creative work, operated by the subject on themselves, is not merely empowering, given that it is constituted in time, in an ethical and aesthetic movement of the composition of existence – as an exercise, in short, of oneself over oneself.

It should be noted that the approaches suggested here (between the ethical problem posed to the constitution of the subject by Michel Foucault and academic training) must be seen with great caution. This is because when Foucault makes use of genealogy in a long-term retreat to Greco-Roman antiquity, such retreat is undertaken not to take the practices of the constitution of ancient subjects as a distant origin to forge a model for modern subjects. Rather, the philosopher seeks to reassemble, in our own Western tradition, a theme that accounts for a set of voluntary and optional practices that classical Greco-Roman culture produced in the sense of conceiving ethically, politically, and aesthetically autonomous subjects.

Such a distinctive trait seemed to him to produce fruitful resonances for thinking about impasses that were too normative and analytically binding to scientific knowledge of the constitution of modern subjects. We can find the emblematic synthesis of this problem in a famous interview given in 1983 entitled *On the Genealogy of Ethics*.

I think it is not entirely necessary to link ethical problems to scientific knowledge. [...] We don't have to choose between our world and the Greek world. However, since we can see very well that some of the most important principles of our ethics have at one time been related to aesthetics of existence, I think this kind of historical analysis can be useful. For centuries we have convinced ourselves that between our ethics, our personal ethics, our daily life, and the great political, social, and economic structures, there are analytical relationships, and that we cannot change anything [...] I think we have to get rid of this idea of an analytical or necessary link between ethics and other social, economic, or political structures.

What impresses me is the fact that, in our society, art has become something related only to objects and not to individuals, or life. This art is something specialized or provided by "experts" who are the artists. But couldn't every person's life become a work of art? Why can the lamp or the house be a work of art and our life not? [...] From the idea that the individual is not given to us, I think there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art (FOUCAULT, 1984, p. 50).

It can be inferred, from these citations, that the sense of ethics employed implies a process of subjectivization, understood as a process of constitution of oneself. It is from this crossing between the ethical problem and the processes of

subjectivization in Foucault that we dare to approach questions concerning academic education, taking due care not to confuse these different processes, taking them as coinciding, not as the origin and destination of one another.

Having said this caveat, we return to our starting point, remodeling it in the following terms: In what way can this set of practices originating from the ancient Greco-Roman world be of interest to the theme of training in Physical Education today?

Our hypothesis is the following – Similarly to what Foucault sought to build to find an alternative to the normative impasses of the modern constitution of the self, making genealogical appeals to the ancients, we believe that we can also find in this set of reflections, in particular, in the singular status that the Greeks gave to self-exercise practices for their training, a fruitful opening to reconsider the issue of training in Physical Education from a new perspective.

At the height of this fruitful opening, we are provoked to think about academic training from another principle of action, beyond the terms of objective and rational knowledge: self-care. And what matters about this other principle of action – and which can contribute to broadening the discussions about academic training in question here – is that it points to a discontinuity: a practice of constituting subjects that is done not through self-knowledge, but for self-care, which provokes us to think about training, understanding it not only as a training process, but before, and primarily, as a movement of self-intensification.

This intensification movement opens the way for the mobilization of other types of knowledge that are more sensitive to the visceral and intensive dynamics that extend along a formative path. These other types of knowledge, such as those concerning *askesis* and *eros*, point to other non-hegemonic rationalities that, instead of making visible the instrumental aspects attributed to training, dare to give voice to a laborious and progressive process of taking an ethical position of the future professional, without which one cannot go beyond the logic of training in the context of academic training.

Ultimately, this ethical position is only approached when the future professional dares to turn attention away from themselves, to revisit their relationships with their body and with the ethical, aesthetic, and existential movement that expands from there, tracing the grooves of a trajectory of meeting, transformation, and constant mobilization, both of themselves and of Physical Education as a training area. In this trajectory, the centrality of another domain of knowledge composition, more dynamic and pulsating, is affirmed, which calls for the body and its relationships to continuously intensify training, integrating it into the course of life itself.

In the wake of this idea, it should be remembered that academic training in Physical Education is largely traversed by the body and its relationships, insofar as it claims for movement, that is, for the “knowledge of experience”, as Larrosa-Bondía would say (2002, p. 22), without which physical education studies and practices are not widely mobilized in the subjectivity of those who want to take it for themselves.

We could even say that through physical education (as well as in the broader field of training in education) movement makes us eternally passionate! A passion (recalling here the reflections of Larrosa-Bondía (2002) about this term) that intensifies our relationships of meaning with physical education.<sup>2</sup> Even those more theoretical and conceptual disciplines distributed in the curriculum of basic training in Physical Education demand a certain passionate attitude from future teachers, without which students cannot effectively learn. Such passion, much more than training, points to a process of intensification.

This passionate characteristic opens the way for the composition of alternative discursive and non-discursive practices, among which *eros* and *askesis* transit. However, we are not always aware of this opening that, not infrequently, remains hidden by dominant rationalities that intend to delimit teacher training *a priori*.

Nevertheless, Foucauldian studies, particularly those inspired by this author's conception of the ethics and aesthetics of existence – and which go back to the context of technologies of the self-outlined in this manuscript – have helped to tread fields of research in the scope of education more suited to the visualization of other movements, always alternative to the already consolidated and universalized training pathways. The formal limit of construction of this manuscript in article format prevents us from having, even if in a preliminary way, a discussion in this direction, which points to a certain state of the art in this field of educational research mentioned above.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, as a way of concluding this manuscript, it should also be pointed out that thinking about training in Physical Education from the dimension of the intensification of the self opens up interesting alternatives to affirm the powers that run under the knowledge and skills trained and automated, forcing their mobilizations, always and every time they occur as an event in the relationship between oneself and oneself, as well as in the relationship between oneself and space and with others.

It is in the relational field where these mobilizations are forged, that academic training always and every time appears as a creative force, that is, as an exercise of oneself over oneself, instigating us to think between the lines of the logic of instruction and of training, in order to continuously territorialize and reterritorialize the training path in more moving terrains, composed of intensities, lines of force, relationship and movement.

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2 For Larrosa-Bondía “in passion, the passionate subject does not possess the loved object, but is possessed by it. That is why the passionate subject is not in himself, in the pose of himself, in self-control, but is outside himself, dominated by the other, captivated by the other, alienated, and hallucinated. [...]. The passionate subject is nothing else and does not want to be anything other than passion.” (2002, p. 26).

3 By way of referencing and preliminary direction of the aforementioned field of educational research, it is worth remembering, for example, the studies of the Spanish educator Jorge Larrosa-Bondía (2002), who seek in Foucault important references to make visible other educational rationales, more concerned with knowledge of experience and with its relationship of tension and opposition with the forces that sustain this knowledge throughout the formative path, than with an educational debate focused on the instrumental, reflective, and enabling perspective.

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**Resumo:** Este artigo busca respaldo nas concepções foucaultianas de ética e estética da existência para compor reflexões sobre a formação acadêmica na Educação Física. Como guisa à mobilização desse intento, se contextualiza a noção de “tecnologias de si”, encontrada na última etapa da obra de Michel Foucault. Na sequência, traçam-se aproximações, heterogêneas e diferenciais, entre a problemática ética colocada à constituição do sujeito e a formação acadêmica. Ainda que essas aproximações devam ser vistas com cautela – para não tomar as práticas de constituição dos sujeitos antigos como origem longínqua para forjar e explicar um modelo formativo para os sujeitos modernos – tais aproximações apontam para outras racionalidades não-hegemônicas que se contrapõem às lógicas capacitativas comumente atribuídas à formação acadêmica, que tendem a ser reduzidas apenas a seus aspectos instrumentais. Deste modo, as reflexões que aqui se avizinham não afirmam teorias gerais, tampouco verdades boas ou ruins sobre a formação, mas dão visibilidade para a composição de práticas discursivas e não-discursivas alternativas de elaboração e lapidação de si, estabelecidas nos jogos de força que as sustentam ao longo do percurso formativo.

**Palavras-chave:** Tecnologias de si. Educação Física. Formação. Processo de Subjetivação.

**Resumen:** Este artículo busca apoyo en las concepciones de Foucault sobre ética y estética de la existencia para reflexionar sobre la formación académica en Educación Física. Como guía para esta reflexión, se contextualiza la noción de ‘tecnologías del yo’, que se encuentra en la última etapa de la obra de Michel Foucault. Posteriormente, se establecen aproximaciones heterogéneas y diferenciales entre la cuestión ética planteada en la constitución del sujeto y la formación académica. Aunque estas aproximaciones deben ser vistas con cautela – para no considerar las prácticas de constitución de sujetos antiguos como un origen lejano para forjar y explicar un modelo formativo para los sujetos modernos – tales aproximaciones apuntan a otras racionalidades no hegemónicas que se oponen a las lógicas capacitativas comúnmente atribuidas a la formación académica, que tienden a reducirse a sus aspectos instrumentales. De esta forma, las reflexiones que aquí se adelantan no afirman teorías generales ni verdades absolutas sobre la formación, pero dan visibilidad a la composición de prácticas alternativas, discursivas y no discursivas, de elaboración y transformación del yo, establecidas en los juegos de fuerza que las sustentan a lo largo del camino de la formación.

**Palabras clave:** Tecnologías del yo. Educación Física. Formación. Proceso de subjetivación.

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### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declared that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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