

Title of doctoral thesis:

„Problem of the Body in Michel Foucault's Philosophy”

Abstract

My doctoral thesis entitled „Problem of the Body in Michel Foucault's Philosophy” analyses a vital and very actual for contemporary philosophy problem of human's body. The aim of this work is to research the body (*le corps*) and the flesh (*la chair*) in the relation to social and political notion of the truth. Researching this phenomenon in the context of historical periods, Foucault discovers many heterogenic and ideologic „truth regimes” which govern bodies in societies and create local values. The philosopher states that they should be traced and brought to light.

In the introduction I present a philosophical lineage of Foucault's philosophy: I describe Hegel's french reception in XX century, philosophical investigation of scientific discontinuities by Bachelard (and medical by Canguilhem), I analyse french descriptions of Marks', Nietzsche's and Freud's philosophies etc. Thereby we obtain a very wide domain of Foucault's philosophical investigation which includes onthology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, politics and ideology, sociology, history of science (medicine, pathology), history of philosophy, ethnology.

The main part of my thesis contains three chapters. The first one presents early, „structuralist” Foucault's writings in which discourse is superior to any social practics. This part contains questions of the body of madman, clinical experiences of the body, the body in its relation to socially constructed „soul” explained here as an „empirical-transcendental doublet” and the body understood as „heterothopy”. Chapter number two presents the „poststructuralist” period – here practics are superior to discourses. Foucault researches then the body as historical, abstract „non-space” and his methodology seeks to change this order. In this chapter I analyse also the „device (*le dispositif*) of sexual body”, „histeric body”, violence to hermaphroditism, the body as an object for debates wih sexual minorities, the body in context to the power and the problem of „biopolitics of populations”. The third chapter describes the latest part in Foucault's philosophy where social practics have its sources in personal „practics of the Self”. We have got here an analysis of Foucault's historical process of leaving the culture of sexuality influenced by new religion, which is christianity. I stress here „aesthetics of existence”, Foucault's problematisation of cynic philosophy, „technology of the Self” in late Antiquity, the trait of great self-denial, excercising body and soul in many personal attempts, ascetic recomendations of John Cassian an saint Augustin, medieval practics of body's self-subordination and research of „convulsive body”. In the conclusion I sum up all the questions, present the most controversial Foucault's judgements and show the most popular continuations of his work in the filed of „philosophy of the body” (Giorgio Agamben, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Bryan Turner).

Wojciech Mackiewicz