

The Art of Telling the Truth:

Language, Power and the Play of the Outside in Michel Foucault

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by

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This thesis titled “The Art of Telling the Truth: Language, Power and the Play of the Outside in Michel Foucault” submitted by Abhilash G Nath, Centre for Linguistics, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree, diploma of any university or institution.

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Introduction

I

The present study revolves around a series of related questions that connect one of the central arguments in Foucault's work. Foucault argues that the self (or the 'I') that contemplates is indeed only a fold of outside. Consequently, thinking itself is essentially folding of the outside. It is the distancing of itself from itself, through folding thought as it arrives from the outside. Man, *The Order of Things* suggests, is compressed and withheld in a hollowed out space formed at the middle of the folds of life, language and labour. Still, these respective folds, Foucault insists, can unfold themselves in him that is, only in man (Foucault, 1994, p. 313). These folds that are prior to his own birth and, for that very reason, having an existence ontologically independent of his own, do not actually carry the truth of his own being, and still it can only be

through his life, labour and language that he (man) can evaluate himself and the world. What unfolds at the very heart of this field of movement is a recurring absence – a signal of the presence of an absolute other. The innermost inside of all thoughts is a recurring absence – an absence that incessantly splits the very instance that releases them. “A Preface to Transgression,” for instance, proposes that “the interior is an empty skull, a central absence” (Foucault, 1980, p. 49).

Consequently, it is the very recurring of a central absence, (an absolute limit) that infinitely unfolds the folds of life, labour and language in man. No absolute truth, nothing in man is stable enough (and that means, not even the material body) to hold the truth of both himself and the world. The very absence of a univocal truth, in contrast, establishes a differential relationship between the space of the body and the time of the culture. In the modern discourse on man, Foucault suggests, the recurring of the absolute absence – a radical finitude that hollows out the instance by splitting it, relentlessly fibrillates the time that presences thought to itself through differentiating and repeating of the empirical (the space of the body) and the transcendental (the time of the culture) contents within that thought. It, then, establishes a field of forces between these contents of thought, given thought *a nocturnal dimension*. Man, consequently, is constituted as an empirico-transcendental doublet. He is always in a ceaseless unfolding within a field of temporal becoming, within a play of repetition, where repetition will always repeat itself with difference. What, then, itself repeats as the same is nothing but the model of movement – and Deleuze would call it: the repetition of pure difference.

The present study poses to itself: if thinking comes from the outside, then under what condition thinking can encounter itself – its colour, texture and topography? That is, under what condition can man *encounter himself and the world*? If put differently: the present study, essentially, takes the form of time

meditating upon the condition of its own origin, in order to make sense of its own space and movements. Since this problem does not have its origin in Foucault's work, this work does not arrive at any conclusion, merely by analysing and evaluating his work alone. Rather, it aims to explore how Foucault has incorporated Kant and Nietzsche into his thinking, on the one hand, and contextualises him within the Western tradition in general and his responses to contemporaries Deleuze and Derrida, in particular, on the other. Consequently, this study is limited by the sheer weight of its own problematisation.

It is important to make sense of Foucault's work not just with an academic interest, but also to make sense of our own present. Through a broad comparison (and that is just to make sense of the implications of his work), one could suggest that if Deleuze is a giant in building a new system of thought, Foucault is a warrior who prefers to position himself strategically at the threshold, at the very frontiers that divide the interior from the outside of Western sensibilities. In *The Order of Things*, while going through Borges' Chinese encyclopaedia, one, for instance, finds him showing the audacity to laugh at himself – at the very limits of his own sensibilities (Foucault, 1994, pp. xviii – xix). In him, one encounters a modern-day Samurai at war. His campaign, however, is not directed against the outside and, for that reason, is anti-expansionistic. It is a war directed against oneself, against the interiority of one's own culture. Still, like the flash of reflected light on a swinging sword in mid-air, he hides more than what he reveals of himself. He is a master strategist and a tactician, who uses them like weapons and tools to subvert systems of normalised practices. His genealogical critique of the present explores the possibilities for the creation a new man. At the very heart of the Foucauldian endeavour is empiricism, and a concern with the everyday life.

To Foucault, the place of man reveals to himself when language recovered its lost consistency that would thicken it into words that can be deciphered. He appears to himself as a private concern, when language lost its transparency that shaped Classical world, and transformed itself into a reality with its own density. In the modern age, man appears to himself as compressed and withheld in a hollowed out space formed at the middle of the folds of life, labour and language, and still it can only be within him that these respective folds can unfold themselves. For that reason, Foucault in his work on Kant's *Anthropology* suggests that it can only be in man that a synthesis of the world (known) and the God (unknown) is possible. Since these folds are prescribed to him in advance, and have their own modes of being independent of his own, their folding towards themselves allows him to constitute a self that is external to them and yet, in relation to them, in a state of ceaseless becoming.

Consequently, Foucault defines modernity as an attitude. It is a mode of relating to contemporary reality, a voluntary choice made by certain people and played out against the attitudes of counter-modernity. In the end, it is, according to Foucault, a way of thinking and feeling, and a way, too, of acting and behaving. It is a way of constituting oneself, through ceaseless active and passive syntheses, as a man who is responsible for his own actions. Unlike the Cartesian *cogito* with innate qualities and the Leibnizian monad that is folded towards itself, the self, according to Foucault, is only a fold of the outside, and it is so, due to the changed relation between being and representation in the modern age.

When language regained its lost opacity and became a reality with its own density, a new form of discourse came into being whose internal tension would keep separate the empirical and the transcendental, while being directed at both, and with its birth, it became possible to analyse man as a subject. With the emergence of the tension within a new form of discourse

that keeps the space of the body and the time of the culture separated from each other, man quickly appears to himself as an object of analysis. One encounters three forms of ontology in Foucault's work: the first analyses man as the subject of truth; the second takes up man as the subject of power; and the third analyses man as an ethical being. Though Foucault has developed these ontologies in the above-given order at different stages of his career, the present study reverses the order and examines his work in its totality from the standpoint of his later writings that deal with the problem of truth and ethics, and tries to connect two questions that pop up at different stages of Foucault's work. *The Order of Things*, for instance, asks the question 'what is man?' and in his later writings, he labours with the question 'how should I live my life?'

From a philosophical standpoint, these questions, however, are interconnected. One would be immediately forced to ask to oneself the question "What is man?," when following the question, "How should I live my life?." And still, Foucault poses these questions at different stages of his career.

In his later writings, Foucault differentiates the ancient Greek ethics from the Christian experience of the flesh. According to him, if the Christian experience of the flesh revolves around the decipherment of the hidden truth, then the Greek developed a mode of being that is based on the ontology of force. In the Greek experience of the *aphrodisia*, act, desire, and pleasure formed an ensemble whose elements, though closely bound to one another, were actually distinguishable. The ethical question that the Greeks raised was not: which desires?, which acts?, which pleasures? But rather, with what force is one transported by the pleasures and desires. Since forces, by nature, are excessive, they demand a play of differential relation, an agonistic relation between oneself and oneself. To check the passive forces that would transport one by pleasures and desires, they aim to build a counter force. Consequently,

freedom is essentially the freedom to choose and control one's own actions, and, for that reason, as free men, the ancient Greeks subjected both the body and the soul to *practical reason* and trained and controlled them through techniques that they could practice on an everyday basis.

II

Any act of production that involves a sense of value is, essentially, played out ritualistically, that is, they involve a play of seduction and deception. Writing is not an exception, as signs, by their nature, are modular¹ and, therefore, they are only symptoms of immanent signs. Writing as an act, then, is becoming in its most immanent play that involves signs and self in the very material presence of the body. It is such an act that at once inflames interpretation (in space) and evaluation (in time), which means an author is at once the writer and reader of his own work; in other words, he has to follow both himself and the marks that he makes on the sheet of paper, as he has to think, evaluate and rework both his own attitude towards the marks and the marks themselves. Since this act, or else a sequence of acts, actually unfolds within an always-already functioning field of temporality, that is, within a swarm of undifferentiated *difference*, they are backed by (and are built upon) an endless

¹ Saussure in *Course in General Linguistics*, for instance, points out *the dual essence of language*, that is language in itself is composed of more than one element and, for that reason, it has *no essence of its own*. A linguistic sign, consequently, is nothing but a combination of a *concept* (which is generally an abstract) and a *sound-image* (Saussure, 1959, pp. 66 – 67), a sign, then, is a unity of sense and sound (Foucault and Deleuze, from a Nietzschean point of view would rather argue that both the sense and the sound-image take form, or are assembled within a field of undifferentiated forces. See, Deleuze's theory of assemblages in *A Thousand Plateaus* that explains the notion of the relations of exteriority). Saussure writes, "Language is speechless speaking" (Saussure, 1959, p. 77) and, for that reason, "by himself the individual is incapable of fixing a single value" (Saussure, 1959, p. 113). According to him, language then is "a depository, a thing received from without" (Saussure, 1959, p. 66). Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* suggests that we do not actually encounter *ourselves* and *the world* through the absolute authority of an evidence, rather through our involved act; like in the case of games, we learn the rules neither through detached observation nor through contemplating their various nuances, but unconsciously through participation (Wittgenstein, 1986, p. 3"). In his response to Sartre's 1945 lecture titled "Existentialism as Humanism," one finds Heidegger suggesting in the "Letter on Humanism" that "Thus language is at once the home of being and the home of human essence." Online source: Heidegger (19 Nov, 2013), "Letter on Humanism:" http://pacificinstitute.org/pdf/Letter_on_%20Humanism.pdf .

series of active and passive syntheses. It is the doubling and redoubling of both the self and the signs within a field of forces that lead to the at once becoming of both the self and the sign in an act of writing. For that reason, like any act of writing, this present study also unfolds from such a play involving signs, self and body.

The present study is not organised around a preconceived plan (in other words, it does not try to prove a preconceived idea), but rather both its structure and content have taken form along with the act of writing, and this work is, actually, written with the spirit and curiosity of a solo traveller, who has never before been this far into a terrain so foreign. It is divided into four chapters. The *first* chapter identifies two *a priories* – light and language – in Foucault's thinking, which the *second* and *third* chapters develop further and the *fourth* chapter initiates a fresh and a finer analysis, based on the insights and suggestions that the first three chapters have brought along with them.

The Foucauldian 'ontology of the present' aims a recession into a future. As the past itself cedes back in an act of recession, it unfolds a future that clings little to its own past. The ontology of the present, then, traces the potentials within the present, the living present, to produce a radical new. The first chapter, therefore, opens itself by tracing the Heraclitean traces in Foucault's thought. For Heraclitus, it is only the un-presupposed that is able to trace and expropriate if anything at all from that which is yet to become knowledge. To trace the traces within itself, thinking has to approach itself from the vantage point of a distance. In other words, to establish a relationship between the self and itself, it is imperative that it approaches itself from outside, that is, it has to place and see itself as other. It has to engage itself with a certain detachment. The chapter explores the condition under which such a relationship with oneself becomes possible.

In the modern age, the *cogito* appears to itself as an object of analysis, when a grave (internal) tension surfaces within a new form of discourse that keeps the transcendental and the empirical separated while relating them to each other. In such a form of discourse, “thought bridles and mutilates life, making it sensible, and life takes revenge and drives thought mad, losing itself along the way” (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 66 – 7). When the *space* of the body and the *time* of the culture establish between them an antagonistic relationship, there forms a field of flux between them – a field of forces. Knowledge, consequently, belongs neither to the object nor to the subject, causing a grid of knowledge a possibility. Object and subject, here, actually become mere reversible within this field of knowledge and power. Thus, once again, it becomes possible for man to start following closely both himself and his world, as their present themselves before him. The first chapter consequently establishes the presents of *two a priori* – that is, two “there is” – in Foucault’s thinking: the visible and the articulable. Put differently, they are visibilities and statements. They are formed, when language regained that lost consistency that would inspissate from within itself to become words to be deciphered. When it recovers its lost opacity and materialises itself into a reality with a density of its own, it starts refracting light, and establishes a differential relationship between light and darkness. It is this play of the light (*known*) and the darkness (*unknown*) that unfolds reality in us. The following two chapters develop an analysis of the mode of being of light and language in Foucault’s work.

The second chapter deals with the fold of light. In Foucault’s work, beings do not become more beingful (in a Heideggerian sense, *unhidden more unhidden*) towards light, that is, they do not reveal their essence in light. Things do not reveal their *essence* under its transparency. Rather, light essentially is reflected and refracted light. In Foucault’s work, the flood of light fills the space

through invisible windows and inaccessible corridors. It does not actually reveal anything vital, but rather it either merely signals its own presence or illuminates the surface on which it strikes. Even at a time, when light appears from the depth (the practice of the care of the self in antiquity that Foucault examined in the later stage of his career is such a case), it only initiates self-examination by establishing reciprocity of gaze between friends or correspondents. Writing correspondences at that time, according to Foucault, was that possibility that can “project oneself into view, to make one’s own face appear” in the presence of the other (Foucault, 1997, p. 216). Still, light is necessity that neither belongs to the subject nor the object. What Foucault introduces into the play here is the very idea that light can be folded. According to him, the self itself is a fold of the outside that means: it is through folding the outside towards itself that a self can indeed be created. The chapter opens with a reading of Plato’s cave allegory and his differentiation of two distinctive worlds – the world of the senses and the world of pure forms, and progresses through Foucault’s reading of Stoic philosophy and his attempts, through the Stoics, to develop a philosophy that could identify itself with the divine within the mundane. The Stoic thought is marked by the presence of an addressee and involves the establishment of reciprocity of gaze and examination. Foucault suggests, it flourished once in antiquity, under a culture of listening, where they (the Stoics) reconciled their minds to wait (without any purpose), like a tranquil lake under the blue sky. Their soothing minds, like the serenity of a grand theatre that gently fans breath into the unfolding scenes, sense without ever disturbing the scenes unfolding before and within them. The missives that the Stoics circulated among them mainly demand a detached engagement with the soul, the principle of one’s own life.

The third chapter explores the play of the outside, *the field of undifferentiated forces*, in Foucault's thinking. It is the tension between *the empirical and the transcendental* within a new form of discourse that causes the field of force to activate itself. The 'I' or the self, then, is formed through ceaseless (active and passive) syntheses. It is formed from without, and yet within a field of force that would open a network of connections between it and an always-already functioning system of signs – the language. The 'I' or the self, consequently, is produced through a series of internal coupes that ceaselessly transform it from within. It is formed through ceaseless *affecting* and *being affectedness* within a field of forces. The third chapter opens with a reading of Philippe Delerm's short-fiction, in which he tries to show how a knife from the childhood produces incorporeal effects on its holder. The very use of this particular knife produces on the holder, he suggests, a series of incorporeal transformation, even when you are not a child anymore. The chapter progresses through juxtaposing and repeating Foucault and Derrida. Language, according to Foucault, is strictly spatial. It resides out there in the void that separates the subject from the object (Foucault, 1990). Foucault, for instance, in *The Order of Things* poses the question: "what is language, how can we find a way round it in order to make it appear in itself, in all its plenitude?" (Foucault, 1994, p. 306). In the modern age, language, Foucault suggests, has regained its lost consistency to form a material reality, a word to be deciphered, that is, it has become a reality, with its own density. The spatial existence of language suggests, for Foucault, the opening of an outside. Against the objectivity of language that Foucault advocates, Derrida, on the other hand, develops the idea of a self-deconstructive "text." For him, our very encounter with ourselves and the world actually takes place in *iterable*

graphemes of experience.² By juxtaposing and repeating these two thinkers (each time with a difference), the chapter also invites the readers to consider for reflection the temporal movement that such a playful juxtaposition can effect on them. One of the significant differences their thoughts vehemently guard

² Derrida develops a deconstructive reading of one of the central binary oppositions in Western thought that Saussure repeats uncritically. The privileging of the phonic signifier – essentially gains force from other similar binary pairings (Plato’s preference of) Idea over being, soul over body, essence over appearance etc. The entire uncritical tradition that Saussure evokes here, according to Derrida, suggests that “there would be first a natural bond of sense to the senses and it is this that passes from sense to sound: “the natural bond,” Saussure says, “the only true bond, the bound of sound”” (Derrida, 2002, p. 35). Thus, by privileging the phonic signifier, Derrida suggests, Saussure has constituted an interior that is close to nature, against which the exteriority of the written-image has to be considered. In *Phaedrus*, Plato claims that the evil of writing comes from outside. Derrida writes: “writing would thus have the exteriority that one attributes to utensils” (Ibid, p. 34). It is merely a double of a double. What this tradition fears then is usurpation – a double overthrowing what is pure and innocent. “What is intolerable and fascinating is indeed the intimacy intertwining image and thing, *graph*, i.e., and phone, to the speculum of writing, which “manages to usurp the main role.” Representation mingles with what it represents, to the point where one speaks as one writes, one thinks as if the represented were nothing more than the shadow or reflection of the representer. A dangerous promiscuity and a nefarious complicity between the reflection and the reflected which lets itself be seduced narcissistically. In this play of representation, the point of origin becomes ungraspable. There are things like reflecting pools, and images, an infinite reference from one to the other, but no longer a source, a spring. There is no longer a simple origin. For what is reflected is split in itself and not only as an addition to itself of its image. The reflection, the image, the double, splits what it doubles. The origin of the speculation becomes a difference. What can look at itself is not one; and the law of the addition of the origin to its representation, of the thing to its image, is that one plus one makes at least three” (Ibid, p. 36). Then, writing, a mnemotechnic means, here supplants good memory, spontaneous memory, signifies forgetfulness (Ibid, p. 37). It is largely usurpation into nature, and consequently, a deviation from nature. Spontaneous life, the traditionalist suggests, must be protected. Derrida, however, insists that language is first writing and consequently “there is [yet] an originary violence of writing. Writing cannot be reduced to the exteriority of the written-image, besides the phoneme itself is unimaginable and, therefore, no visibility can resemble it. However, he writes: “now we must think that writing is at the same time more exterior to speech, not being its “image” or its “symbol,” and more interior to speech, which is already in itself a writing. Even before it is linked to incision, engraving, drawing, or the letter, to a signifier referring in general to a signifier signified by it, the concept of the *graphie* [unit of a possible graphic system] implies the framework of the instituted trace, as the possibility common to all systems of signification” (Ibid, 46). Trace, for Derrida, is self-occultation, as it always produces itself as self-occultation, and still, it is instituted, and therefore, firmly within culture. It then cannot be nature. It is in the trace that the relationship with the other is marked, and is the very structure of the arbitrariness of the sign. He writes: “the instituted trace cannot be thought without thinking the retention of difference within a structure of reference where difference appears *as such* and thus permits a certain liberty of variations among the full terms. The absence of *another* here-and-now, of another transcendental present, of *another* origin of the world appearing as such, presenting itself as irreducible absence within the presence of the trace, is not a metaphysical formula substituted for a scientific concept of writing. This formula, beside the fact that it is the questioning of metaphysics itself, describes the structure implied by the arbitrariness of the sign,” from the moment that one thinks of its possibility short of the derived opposition between nature and convention, symbol and sign, etc. These oppositions have meaning only after the possibility of the trace. The “unmotivatedness” of the sign requires a synthesis in which the completely other is announced as such – without any simplicity, any identity, any resemblance or continuity – within what is not it” (Ibid, pp. 46 – 7).

and juxtapose to each other is in Foucault the self, which unfolds outside but in relation to an always-already functioning system of signs – the language – and, on the other hand, in Derrida’s work, the self or the ‘I’ essentially unfolds from within iterable graphemes of experience.

The fourth chapter tries to link (though interrelated) two questions that Foucault poses at different stages of his career: “what is man?” and “how should I live my life?” It explores the condition under which man encounters himself and the world. The chapter opens with a reading of *Hamlet*. One finds Hamlet, in that play, is kept suspended between the reality of the king and the time of the revenge by a combination of fear and fury. His peculiar form of relationship to the time, on the other hand, allows us to examine other forms of relationships to time, and later enables us to contextualise and evaluate Foucault’s non-metaphysical thinking better than it would have been evaluated otherwise. The section titled ‘Form and the Play of the Outside’ in the chapter traces the Nietzschean influence, by examining the play of *form* and *force* in shaping reality. The section titled ‘Foucault, Kant and Pragmatism’ traces the Kantian influence in Foucault’s thinking, especially Foucault’s take of Kantian *Anthropology*, and the section titled ‘Philosophy as a Life-form and a Way of Life’ further develops the stress on the everyday-life by examining Foucault’s journey into antiquity, exploring the Socratic idea of the care of the self, that first appears in Plato and later became a culture with the Stoics and the Epicureans.

The fourth chapter tries to understand Foucault’s conceptualisation of the everyday. The everyday, or else the realm of the mundane, is precisely what it reveals as it is, because what splits ceaselessly the living present into past and future is a repeating central absence. In the “Preface to Transgression,” one finds *being* (which is essentially *pure movement* and, therefore, it has *no existence* outside movement) transgressing the *Limit* (that is, the mask of an already consolidated force) around a *central absence*, an empty skull. It is

actually the same model of movement around a central absence that would produce a tension between the empirical and the transcendental within a newly formed discourse in modern age. The same model repeats again in *The Order of Things* when Foucault suggests that man is kept suspended at a hollowed out space formed at the middle of the folds of language, labour and life, and yet it is within him that these folds can unfold themselves.

In his journey to the antiquity in the later stage of his career, he differentiates the ancient Greek ethics from the Christian experience of the flesh, and disapproves the Christian methods of deciphering the truth beneath one's actions. Unlike the Christians, the trouble the Greeks took was not to choose what desire, what act or what pleasure they could follow, but rather how to control them. For them, forces by nature are excess, and therefore, they aimed to control the passive forces that swirl them around desire, pleasure and acts by building counter force through techniques of life. For that reason, the Greek ethics, Foucault suggests, revolves around an ontology of forces. Rather than trying to decipher the hidden truth beneath everyday acts, they thought it would be much more useful if one could identify the forces that carry and transform them from desire to act, act to pleasure and pleasure to desire. For the ancients, there is nothing hidden beneath (and therefore, no absolute truth) to decipher. The everyday is exactly what it presences. Hence the everyday rather unfolds alone with the studied movement of understanding. The Greeks subjected both the body and the soul to techniques of life that are governed by practical reason. Foucault developed the 'aesthetics of existence' that he advocated in the later writings modelled on Greek ethics.

The important theme that the present work follows till the end is a concern with the everyday life and tries to develop theoretical and practical insights that can transform the otherwise mundane into a journey, involving joy and pain – the joy of frequently encountering the new and the pain of departure and loss.

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Part I

Subject, Power and Method: What is Thinking?

I

“But other men are oblivious of what they do awake, just
as they are forgetful of what they do asleep”

Heraclitus, 1979, p. 29

“Not comprehending, they hear like the deaf. The saying
is their witness: absent while present”

Heraclitus, 1979, p. 29¹

This idiosyncratic and poetic usage of language is a typical Heraclitean style. Because of this peculiar usage of language, where language confronts itself and thought strives to transgress its own boundaries, Heraclitean *Fragments* may not suggest much to an unrefined eye, and even some of the finest minds of antiquity couldn't gather their truth.² They quite evidently rebel against any casual interpretation. It is a use of language that is organised around a

¹ Cited in Charles H Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary*

² Heraclitus has been a theorist of *universal flux*, for Plato. Ignoring the importance of Heraclitus' style of writings, which is remarkably personal and poetic and the kind of fragmentary sensibilities it generates, both Aristotle and his successor, Theophrastus, classified Heraclitus along with other pre-Socratic philosophers. When Aristotle has preferred to refer Heraclitus as a *material monist*, Theophrastus has preferred to call him as *natural philosopher*.

rigorous self-critical method of philosophical inquiry. What do then these aforesaid statements suggest to us? One can quite clearly decipher an advice of caution in them – but then from what kind of possible threats?

Here the thinker is not exactly worried with the mode of existence of “other men,” when he refers to them as “sleepwalkers.” One should not even decipher a troubled thinker – a man who is trying to convey his vision of truth in a world in which his thought is in danger of an “almost pathetic epistemic isolation”(Kahn, 1979, p. 99). Though it is quite obvious that Heraclitus is trying to distance himself from Ionian science, especially from men like Pythagoras and Xenophanes, and the popular tradition dominated by poets and the early sages, particularly the culture of Homer, as suggested by Kahn, his concern, rather, here is of a very different kind. The aforesaid statements explicitly concern the problem of *thought* – the repeated failure of thought to comprehend the immediate truth. What is actually suggested is that one has to be alert on the very nature of the plinth on which thought unfolds.

At the very heart of thought, Heraclitus deciphers a violent, yet often *unapparent*, scuffle between antagonistic forces: that which fixes the very nature of thought itself, a war of rational and irrational forces, often eludes our attention. Thus an inadequate understanding of the conditions within which thought unfolds itself leads to faulty thinking. The question that preoccupies Heraclitus here is not of an epistemological nature, that is, he is not primarily concerned with the problem of deciphering the exact meaning of any specific phenomenon or to understand the reality as a whole. Neither is he even concerned with the meaning of Being – that is, to decipher the truth of Being as an ontological priority. The problem he is concerned with is rather a much more humble one. It is a problem essentially of a methodological nature.

What is at the core of Heraclitean problematic is: how can one enable oneself to understand the reality in a relatively better way? It is an enquiry into the very structure of one's own cognition, and, therefore, is directed towards oneself. It is in this context that Heraclitus cautions particularly against the risks that are linked to *expectations*, which are anchored around certain presuppositions. If anchored on the certainty of presupposition, thought can ultimately become the regular displacement of mere presuppositions. Heraclitus, therefore, insists that only the un presupposed is able to expropriate if anything at all from that which has not become one's own.

Heraclitus suggests elsewhere that it is only through a rigorous examination of one's own method that one becomes skilled to 'expect the unexpected' – the pure *alterity* that has already become one's own – and subsequently embrace the unexpected with an open mind (O'Connell, 2006, pp. 47 – 48).³ The sense of alert against the lack of *rigor* and *care* in the attention to *how* and *what* that usually defines thought evolves precisely from Heraclitus' understanding of the ontological condition under which radical thought activates itself. The rigor and care in the attention to how and what, Heraclitus advises, can significantly ease the difficulties in cognition that arise from either directions, that is, both from the subject and the object, which are clearly in a state of flux.

What is Enlightenment? When the periodical, *Berlinische Monatschrift* posed this as an open question to its readers in 1784, Kant wasn't addressing a subject about which everyone already has an opinion, neither the periodical was intending an opinion collection, when it posed the question to its readers.

³ Heraclitus has written, though in a different context, in the same work *Fragments* that "nature loves to [tends to] hide," suggesting that one should always expect the unexpected, the call of the Other, in nature. The pure alterity of the Other can only be identified and reconciled with the self, if not entirely, only if one is modest enough to constantly re-examine one's own structure of understanding, the *logos* of understanding. However, it is quite interesting here to note that, under what conditions one is able to judge, as suggested by Heraclitus, one's own *logos* of understanding? What is the condition that evokes such modesty in oneself?

Rather all its readers, including Kant, were caught by the mere novelty of the question itself, that is, its very clear resistance to what was, at that time, very obvious to knowledge. It is precisely the reason why, it was not just Kant, but readers belonging to very different philosophical traditions, such as Moses Mendelssohn, responded to the very same question (Margarel C Jacob, 2001, pp. 208 – 219).

According to Foucault, it was a question, posed to the public, with a “problem that did not yet have solutions” (Foucault, 1984, pp. 303 – 319). It was a question with a problem, that is, never was it addressed with such a similar rigor and care. It was a question that is radically new, when it was posed to the present; yet it was a question that actually springs out from that particular *present*, the particular present that includes Kant and other readers of the periodical, and Mendelssohn’s response too is directed (Ibid).⁴

It is interesting to note that here the present is also the present of the radically new. It is the locus of discontinuity, of becoming. Foucault writes, it is neither on the basis of a totality nor of a future achievement that Kant has intended to comprehend the present, rather what concerned him the most is the question of *difference* – ‘the difference today introduces with respect to yesterday’ (Ibid). Therefore, present, for him, is an “exit,” a release from one’s *fidelity* to a self-imposed status of immaturity (Kant, 1983). How is this “exit” of the present possible? Does power always mimic exactly the prior procedure – or with a difference – that leads to the duplication of itself? Does power always reproduce itself with a *difference*? What is that power, which is closer to the *present* that can free one, at least temporarily, from the grip of yesterday?

⁴ For Mendelssohn, this particular present is charged with forces that can declare a religious enlightenment.

Why reason, time and again, fails to recognise the unexpected, the call of alterity? Quite clearly, at the heart of the issue there is a judgment of reason itself. Heraclitus writes “he who does not expect will not find out the unexpected, for it is trackless and unexplored” (Kahn, 1979, p. 31). Hence to track the untrackable demands not just a mere declaration but also an intense engagement. Foucault traces a quite similar concern in Kant when he notes that “man himself is responsible for his immature status” (Foucault, 1984, p. 306). It is he, who is answerable if the process, finally, has limited his own freedom. Inadequacies in the process, which lead to the restriction on the use of freedom, are hence only a direct result of an inadequate role of agency. Men then “are at once elements and agents of a single process.” Kant suggests, therefore, one can escape one’s immature status only by ‘a change that he himself will bring about in himself’ (Ibid). The central problem of Enlightenment here, for Foucault, is not the question of the liberation of man in his own being, but the demand on man to face the task of continually producing himself.

Rather than a program of deciphering the truth or uncovering the being of an entity, it is, therefore, a program for the creation of a new man. It is a program that demands the reactivation of a permanent historico-critical attitude in oneself, an attitude that is intended to undertake a critical ontology of ourselves, and to examine the limits of our contemporary experience. Apparently, a permanent reactivation of such a critical attitude in oneself demands and, therefore, invokes questions concerning an apt mode of being. In his writings on fearless speech and the care of the self, Foucault strongly supports a mode of existence that he refers to as aesthetics of existence.

If aesthetics of existence is a mode of critical ontology of ourselves, then what condition of possibilities can constitute such a mode in ourselves? How can one detach oneself from the extensive relations of power within our own society? Is it an effect of a final reckoning that the world around us is actually meaningless and suffocatingly banal? Is aesthetics of existence really an effect of a mood of

anxiety, a mood that Heidegger considered to be rare and subtle? What is the mode of being that surfaces itself with a methodological function in Foucault's writings, especially in his later writings – that is, that which detaches Foucault from the order of things that is, of knowledge itself and the power relations, so that he was able to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions? What is the nature of asceticism that Foucault demands from us?

II

It seems a study, like the present one, of a major thinker, such as Foucault, to attain its goals, should launch itself by clarifying and critically examining precisely that vital force, that central goal that which has guided that thinker's thought. The question, obviously, to start with is: what exactly is the core of Foucault's concern? Is it actually the phenomenon of power, its foundations and its particular form of functioning? Foucault himself has suggested several times that his early works are not aimed actually to analyse the phenomenon of power. Has he rather concerned with the deciphering of the fundamental nature of human kind? No, he says. In his "Human Nature: Justice versus Power" debate with Chomsky, telecast on Dutch television, Foucault, for instance, has firmly positioned himself against Chomsky's Cartesian logic. Citing the individual's ability to learn not only languages, through partial and fragmentary sets of experiences, but also to creatively use them at will, like tools, Chomsky has stressed the importance of uncovering the basic structures of mind, the need for a theory of mind. Chomsky has argued that his aim has been to develop a testable mathematical theory of mind (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006, pp. 9 - 14).⁵

⁵ At this stage of their debate, when one finds Chomsky developing his argument by combining the seventeenth-century rationalism with notions of freedom and creativity, Foucault delimits seventeenth-century rationalism and wonders whether Chomsky does transpose to Descartes ideas that are actually found elsewhere. Mind in itself, for Descartes, is not essentially very creative. To perceive and then to illuminate by evidence, in themselves, are not creativity. Besides Descartes, according to Foucault, is not much concerned with how one could pass from one intuition to another, and what status the evidence has in this passage.

Is Foucault actually concerned in giving a definitive answer to the question: what is man? No, seems to be the reply. *The Order of Things* through an analysis of the mutations at the level of discursive formations and its ramifications at the level of episteme, for instance, traces the difference between man represented in classical thought and modern thought. In classical thought “man, as a primary reality with its own density, has no place in nature” (Foucault, 1994, p. 310). Consequently, human nature was completely interwoven with nature. Foucault writes: “the modern themes of an individual who lives, speaks, and works in accordance with the laws of an economics, a philology, a biology, but who also, by a sort of internal torsion and overlapping, has acquired the right, through the interplay of those very laws, to know them and to subject them to total clarification – all these themes so familiar to us today and linked to the existence of the ‘human sciences’ are excluded by classical thought: it was not possible at that time that there should arise, on the boundary of the world, the strange stature of a being whose nature (that which determines it, contains it, and has traversed it from the beginning of time) is to know nature, and itself, in consequence, as a natural being” (Ibid, 1994, p. 310).

This historical analysis, here, is driven to recognise differences from a distance. After examining and evaluating the relation between representation and things in modern thought against classical thought, Foucault, for instance, suggests that modern man is essentially an empirico-transcendental doublet (Foucault, 1994, pp. 318 – 19). In his work on the question of enlightenment, Foucault defines modernity as an “attitude.” This later shift towards the study of the self is actually a change in the point of view. It is actually a change of position within a field of forces. If the analysis of discursive formations in *The Order of Things* is directed to bring to light their discontinuities and their ramifications at the *epistemic* levels, then the work on

Kant's problematisation of the enlightenment project is driven to analyse the condition for the possibility of the new. It is mainly a project for the creation of a *new* man. However, neither *The Order of Things* nor his work on Kant attempts to define man in any definite terms. In both these works, man essentially is a subject. It is only in the light and force of his own history that he could become an illumination even for his own eyes to see.

Foucault's reading of Alcibiades' case in Plato's *Alcibiades* quite clearly suggests the futility of any such projects to define man. When Socrates encounters the young Alcibiades, who wishes to become the ruler of Athens, he tests his character, through questioning. At one stage of their conversation, Alcibiades suggests that if a government can maintain a state of harmony amongst parties it can be considered to be good, but here he fails to define harmony. Subsequently, the dialogue advances, with Socrates revealing Alcibiades' pedagogical weakness and suggests him to consider the need to take *care of oneself* in order to enable oneself to properly govern others. Here when Alcibiades enquires about the nature of this 'care' and the structure of this 'oneself,' Foucault's reading emphasises the Platonic dialogue's stress on not to develop a general theory of man. Instead, he engages himself with an analysis of the shift of the meaning of the word 'use,' each time a relation is established between a disembodied subject and the tool he uses (Foucault, 2005, p. 56). As a set of positions that *uses* the thing as a tool, the 'I,' therefore, rebels against any universality. He argues that neither Socrates nor Plato would wish to establish an instrumental relation with the soul, through a general theory of the care of the self.

If not the question of power, nor the question of human nature or a theory of man, then what is at the heart of the Foucauldian problematic? Quite evidently, it is only the problem of subject itself. Foucault suggests, "my objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by

which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (Foucault, 1982, p. 208). In one of his late interviews, Foucault tries to re-imagine the genealogical studies that he has undertaken over the years on science, politics and ethics in the light of his turn towards ethics and in the same line his arguments on ethics have developed: to find a new ethics is to wish to recreate ourselves.

Foucault suggests that it is possible to identify three domains of genealogy: “first, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as the subject of knowledge” (Foucault, 1997, p. 262). In this domain of the genealogical, one, for instance, objectifies oneself in relation to philology and linguistics to elevate oneself to the statures of science. Second, “a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as the subject acting on others” (Ibid, p. 262). This is what Foucault refers to as a “dividing practices,” that is, here the subject is divided either within himself or divided from others, along discursive structures, such as, the mad and the sane, the criminals and the good boys etc. Third, “a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents” (Ibid). It is the third possibility of genealogy that deals with the realm of ethics. It addresses the mode of *subjectivation* by which the subject brings himself to obey or disobey a set of moral codes. *The History of Sexuality*, for instance, examines how men, in relation to ethics, have learned to recognise themselves as subjects in a domain of sexuality.

Foucault himself suggests that though he has been, at times, quite involved with the problem of power, it is not the central concern of his research. It is rather only an integral part of a larger concern. It is the concern for subject, the modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects that are at the heart of the Foucauldian problematic. In the conversation with

Chomsky on human nature, Foucault clarifies his position on the question of subject. Unlike Chomsky's stress on *creativity*, that is the creative aspect of human nature, Foucault focuses on things that have been *destroyed* just before its birth. Innate capacities, qualities that are akin to Descartes' innate ideas, for Chomsky, qualify human nature. Foucault, on the other hand, is rather concerned with the effect of power on normal human creativity. When Chomsky stresses on the spoken, the uttered, Foucault sympathises with the unspoken, the silenced. He focuses on the field of forces, on the system of rules and regularities that differentiates and constitutes the one who speaks, and governs the speech-act, and stresses that of the many possibilities that are before human beings, only a very few can actually be realised.

Thus the question of 'subjugation' or to make one subjected to a form of power is at the very heart of Foucault's idea of subject. Elsewhere, Foucault has considered two meanings for the word *subject*: One can be a subject either by control of or through his dependence on someone else. He can also be a subject if he, through self-knowledge or by conscience, denies to change himself, and ties himself to his own identity (Foucault, 1982, p. 212). Foucault leaves here an impression that the forces that are at play, the forces that transform human beings into subjects, are actually beyond their intelligence. It is actually within a historically formed field of forces that human beings become subjects. Having said that, one still finds Foucault outlining different theories of power at different stages of its intellectual endeavour. Since ethics and the question of truth that he has developed in his later works are the points of departure of the present study, the following section will try to examine some of the features of the theory of power that appeared in his later works, by juxtaposing and comparing it with the theory of power that Foucault has developed in *Discipline and Punish*, particularly his reading of Bentham's panopticon.

If nothing is exterior to the economy of power, any scope of resistance to power is also always-already framed in it. One is left with not much choice, but to adjust oneself to the fact that nobody is exterior to power, therefore, nobody can escape it, even if he or she wishes to do so. The panopticon that Foucault examines in *Discipline and Punish* is such a system. The panoptic institution by introducing dissymmetry, disequilibrium and difference into play, through organising gazes, spatialises power, and transforms it to a form of device that anyone can deploy and use. The panoptic institution, through organising space, regulates a field of visibility. Foucault writes: "In order to make the presence or absence of the inspector unverifiable, so that the prisoners, in the cells, cannot even see a shadow, Bentham envisaged not only venetian blinds on the window of the central observation hall, but, on the inside, partitions that intersected the hall at right angles and, in order to pass from one quarter to the other, not doors but zig-zag openings; for the slightest noise, a gleam of light, a brightness in a half-opened door would betray the presence of the guardian. The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (Foucault, 1995, pp. 201 – 2).

Quite clearly, the Foucauldian subject here displays a kind of helplessness, even when his intentions – as expressed in the debate with Chomsky – are to resist power. One can find similar dispositions at work in some of his early writings; at times he even seems to be speaking from the side of power. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes: "A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. So it is not necessary to use force to constrain the convict to good behaviour, the madman to calm, the worker to work, the schoolboy to application, the patient to the observation of the regulations. Bentham was surprised that panoptic institutions could be so light: there were

no more bars, no more chains, no more heavy locks; all that was needed was that the separations should be clear and the openings well arranged. The heaviness of the old 'houses of security,' with their fortress-like architecture, could be replaced by the simple, economic geometry of a 'house of certainty.' The efficiency of power, its constraining force has, in a sense, passed over to the other side – to the side of its surface of application. He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects: it is a perpetual victory that avoids any physical confrontation and which is always decided in advance" (Ibid, 1995, p. 202).

Power is subtle, all-inclusive and is attached to space, and it is power that opens up the field of visibility.⁶ Power is strictly *spatial*, and therefore, like a *device*. The panopticon is such a device, as it 'automatises' and 'disindividualizes' power. Foucault writes, "power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up" (Foucault, 1995, p. 202). Power, therefore, is not dependent on any particular person, rather like a device, anyone can operate it. It is power that not only decides who is good and who is bad, and who is mad and who is sane, but also marks and guards the

⁶ The elocutive content, Foucault suggests, can only be assembled precisely in a system of elocutive forces, that is, the assertion "I swear" can no longer have a fixed content anymore. It rather transforms itself internally with the change in space. The "I swear," that is asserted before a teacher, in a classroom, can no longer resemble a similar assertion in a family or between two lovers; they all are fundamentally different from a similar assertion in a courtroom. For a postcolonial critique of Foucault's spatial analysis of modernity, see: *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha, 2004, pp. 355 – 57).

boundary between them. Power is such a machinery that assures 'dissymmetry', 'disequilibrium' and 'difference.' The problem that panopticon, actually, addresses is surveillance, and power here functions quite like an *organ* of control and repression. The spatial and device-like nature of power with real effects that Foucault is portraying here actually leaves a strong impression that it can hardly be reversed. For instance, in the collection of writing and interviews titled *Power, Politics and Culture*, Edward Said, for instance, has argued that Foucault, at various stages of his career, has displayed a kind of *quietism* (Said, 2002, p. 53). He there cites 'a lack of temperament' in Foucault's thought (Said, 2002, p. 170).⁷

However, to properly understand the theoretical concepts of subject, power and the relationship that develops between them, one has to examine their functions at various stages of Foucault's thought. The first stage of the encounter between subject and power, in Foucault's thought, is shaped by the centrality of, what Foucault calls, an *event*. The early studies on madness and discipline that look at the evolution and functioning of institutions, such as, asylum and prison in Western culture, problematises the events that lead to the objectification of the mad and the criminal in discourse. Power is a self-sustained field, a *system* with a population in its totality, as its object (Foucault, 1980, p. 151). Since the individual has no other choice but to engage in an always-already functioning net of relations, in a system that is comprised of institutions, men and things, he cannot escape being in the position of subject. Everyone here is a subject of relationship with other people, of instrumental action, of behaviour and of his attitudes (Foucault, 2005, p. 57).

⁷ Said here locates a fundamental difference between Foucault and Gramsci in their readings of power and differentiates his own reading of power from the former. According to him, Gramsci's conception of "knowing thyself" is a consequence of a historical process that has deposited an infinity of traces in the self. Therefore, 'it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.' Compiling one's own inventory is nothing but a political act, since it opens a space of an 'eternal return,' a becoming. It enables one to confront oneself and to radically transform oneself.

Event, however, is singular and, therefore, it has nothing to do with the existing order of things and the nature of relations that this order establishes between man and things, man and man, and oneself and oneself. An event, for that reason, "is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of a masked 'other'" (Foucault, 1980, p. 154). Event then is that which instigates discontinuity into the relations of forces and the related play of true and false that Foucault calls thought (Foucault, 2003, p. 23).

The concepts of subject and power, and their relationship with each other, radically change, when Foucault defines power as a network of relationships and, linked power to the immediacy of everyday life. Such a shift in approach has demanded further qualifications to the omnipresence of power. Power here is fundamentally different from that which is attached to panopticon, it is not a self-sustained system. It is omnipresent, not because of its privileged position, not even because it consolidates everything under its unconquerable unity. It is omnipresent, because it is in every relation, from one point to another, at every point. It does not embrace everything, but comes from everything (Foucault, 1982). It is the 'moving substrate' of force relations (Foucault, 1976, p. 93).

Foucault here defines power as the 'multiplicity of force of relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and constitute their own organisation' (Ibid). Through perpetual struggles and confrontations, between them, at every point, this force of relations transforms, strengthens, and even reverses power. Through the support that they find in one another, they can form a chain or a system, or even contradict and isolate from one another. The strategies in which such struggles take effect are embodied in the various

social hegemonies, in the formulation of the law, and in the state apparatus (Ibid). What sets forces into motion is difference, and what unfold at each of the points where they intersect each other are events. Consequently, the subject is constituted out of hundreds of such minute events.

What makes this new formulation different from the concept of power one would encounter in *Discipline & Punish* is that power here is the moving substrate of domination and struggle. It is neither a self-sustained machine, nor an organ of surveillance. It is produced in a field of struggle. What is actually striking here is that even though the individual is one of the prime effects of power, it is actually his interactions with institutions, men and things that produce the very field of power. Power, therefore, is neither an institution, nor a structure, or even a quality of a person, like strength. It is not even a phenomenon of one dominating the rest of others; rather it is a complex strategic *situation* that grows out of the *exchanges* within a multiplicity of force of relations. Power then, for Foucault, is a field of multiplicity of force relations that “categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others must recognise in him” (Foucault, 1982, p. 212). Such is the pastoral power that Foucault examines in *The Subject and Power* (Ibid).

Power, Foucault suggests, activates itself through establishing subtle networks, networks through which it circulates and links from point to point. And with each contact between points, power reproduces itself, with a difference. It distributes itself, without localising here or there, without clinging to anyone’s body. It penetrates and flows through bodies, without hindrance. If Foucault is right, then power should pass through human body without leaving any trace, without becoming an experience.

If such is the nature of power, why should we be actually worried about power? Does matter transmit energy through it *without* any loss? Does it gather energy in capillaries, capillaries that are within it, when energy flows through it? Do bodies, such as our own, really lack power? It seems that if *Discipline and Punish* leaves a slight impression that Foucault, out of helplessness, is speaking from the side of power, then his writings in the mid seventies seem to suggest an unrest, at the very heart of his thought, *vis-à-vis* power. Yet Foucault decides to stop himself just before entering the labyrinth. He has ruled out an analysis of power from its *internal* point of view and seems satisfied to diagnose power from a vantage point of an absolute distance, from where he can avoid a direct encounter.

Power does not travel in a linear path. The multitude of folds that the curvature of matter and the inclinations of the soul have created circulates power in all direction, when it passes through the body. What is it that guides the one who exercises power? What has he in mind? Or what is the aim of someone who is seeking power? Questions, such as these, questions that are not strictly spatial by nature, seem to be ruled out and Foucault strives to find solutions along a strictly *spatial* analysis. This leaves an impression that the body is that blind spot in the entire field of power, which is inaccessible and, therefore, cannot be studied. This actually reflects a Kantian twist, which asserts that what is hidden from the activity of knowing is precisely the structure of the knowing. Or, in other words, the activity of knowing has inherent limitations and, therefore, it is incapable of knowing the knowing-subject (Kemp, 2003, pp. xlvi – xlix). Foucault writes, “what is needed is a study of power in its *external* [my italic] visage, at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there – that is to say – where it installs itself and produces its real effects” (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). Both these

different stages are characterised by a strictly spatial explanation of power, subject and the relationship between them.

It is in the last stage of the development of the concepts of subject and power that Foucault is actually concerned with the internal point of view of power, its self-awareness. What exactly concerns him here is the temporal dimension of power – the self's relation to itself when it exercises power on others. It is the government's consciousness of itself (Foucault, 2008). An enquiry on: "how to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor" (Foucault, 1994). These are actually problems concerning only the subject; subject who is constituted within a field of power relation. When power passes through the body, the curvature of the matter and the inclinations of the soul fold and redirect it to all directions, constituting one's behaviours, attitudes and desires. The art of government is actually the art of governing oneself as a prerequisite for governing others (Foucault, 1994).

It also concerns what transformations the subject has to undertake upon himself to assure the access to the truth. Or what price he has to pay for saying the truth. Such a concern is actually anchored around a sustained practice of *care*, both for oneself and the other. Foucault, for instance, in a sequence of lectures titled, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* given at College de France has offered a genealogy of an ancient spiritual practice, which first appeared in a Socratic-Platonic moment and later became a cultural phenomenon among the Stoics: the art of the care of the self (Foucault, 2005, p. 30).

The care of the self, Foucault argues, is actually a pre-philosophical theme, and a quite popular Lacedaemonian maxim (Foucault, 2005, p. 31). However, it is only in Plato's *Alcibiades* that it first becomes a coherent philosophical argument. It is impossible to attain truth, Plato argues, if the subject is not

willing to transform himself. Since subject is subject to his own desires, behaviours, attitudes and certain instrumental thinking, he is practically denied access to the truth, both of himself and of the reality. Subject, therefore, has to transform his mode of being. He has to assert the liberty to modify himself, by constantly transfiguring himself to guarantee the access to the truth of himself and of the reality. Here one encounters the ascendance of a new form of subject, a subject that is disembodied and is willing to encounter power. It is here one finds a new subject that is capable of examining the representations that power leaves in his mind; a subject that folds power back to itself in such a way that power encounters itself and forces encounter themselves. Here we have a subject who is capable of exercising his freedom.

III

Before moving to the next section, which is a detailed study of the question of method, the prerequisites for the subject to access the truth of himself and of the reality, it is important to explore, in theory, how the passivity of the subject has lost its importance, over time, and subject becomes, subject that is concerned with himself and the other. A whole lot of writings have been dedicated to Foucault's commitments to Nietzsche's philosophy and particularly, his genealogical approach. Studies have also been dedicated to Foucault's occasional comments on Heidegger's thought. Yet it is quite certain that Kant has been a central figure, for Foucault, in his intellectual development. Foucault, for instance, has written a fine introductory monograph for the translation of Kant's lectures on anthropology.⁸ Comments on Kant can be found both in Foucault's early and later works (Foucault, 1972, pp. 203 – 04; Foucault 1994, pp. 322 – 28; 341). In an interview with George Steiner in 1971, Foucault even associated his works with the Kantian ontology

⁸ Michel Foucault, "Introduction to Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*," <http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpfoucault1.htm>

of the present. His text on enlightenment is an obvious testament of Foucault's encounter with Kant. Foucault there explores the condition under which "new" can arrive.

Here it is helpful to investigate certain points in Kant's thought that might have attracted Foucault towards him. Kant developed his theory on space and time against the debates between Leibniz and Newton's supporters, and his own critique of Berkeleyan idealism. Newton's proposition of an *absolute* space and time, that is space and time as two actual entities in their own rights, was challenged by Leibniz, in a series of correspondence with Samuel Clarke, an English supporter of Newton. In the correspondence, Leibniz proposed, against the Newtonian theory, a relativist theory of space and time, and argued that one must think of space and time, not in absolute terms but, as inherent in objects and their relations. However, both Newton and Leibniz considered space and time to be entities independent of intuition, and therefore, belonging to transcendental realism. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defines his project by implicitly suggesting that Newtonian physics and Leibnizian metaphysics that dominated intellectual landscape belongs to the mathematics of nature and the metaphysics of nature, respectively (Kant, 1998, pp. 42 – 3).

Berkeley, on the other hand, argues that both space and time are dependent of intuition (Kemp, 2003, pp. 153 – 60). Just like any appearances in space, space, to him, is also an empirical representation. It means one can understand space by means of experience or perception. In his assumption on space and time in *Critique of Pure reason*, Kant, on the contrary, argues that space is neither objective nor real; it is neither substance nor a relation, but space is subjective and ideal. And space rather originates, in accord with a stable law as a scheme, from the nature of the mind (Kemp, 2003, pp. 88 – 122). However, where Kant differs from Berkeleyan analytic is, in that for him, space and time

are *a priori* representations, which means, it is a pre-condition for all possible appearances in space. Space and time are, therefore, beyond the grasp of any empirical intuition. It is in space that our *outer sense* represents to ourselves every object that is outside us; it is only in space that those objects that affect our mind have shapes, sizes and relationships. On the other hand, the inner state, the way mind intuits itself, does not have any parallels with the way our outer sense operates. The *inner sense* that is mind intuits on itself does not place itself as an object. The inner sense is temporal, and the form of such an intuition is, what Kant calls, time. Time, therefore, cannot be intuited externally (Kant, 1998).

Space and time are two *a priori*; two immutable *forms* that firmly deny themselves for any empirical intuition (Kemp, 2003, pp. lvi – lvii).⁹ However, they themselves constitute the *a priori* condition for every possible intuition. Consequently, the form of affirmation – I think – does not rest on an undetermined element – I am – rather it rests on those pure constitutive elements – space and time. Hence, for Kant, only the *a priori* pure forms of time and space can determine the affirmation, I think. One actually will find a ‘transformed version’ of this problem in Foucault – a play of two *forms* with distinct nature. One will find in him a play of two distinctive “there is,” a forceful tango of light and language, of determinable visibilities and determining statements (Deleuze, 1988, p. 61). Foucault, from the beginning, has been stressing on a difference in quality between the visible and the articulable; that is, even though discursive and non-discursive forces frequently overlap each another, constituting forms of knowledge, they are essentially different. When words cease to intersect with representation, when a void sharply splits the articulable and the visible, it provides a spontaneous

⁹ Unique and with an infinite existence, they stand apart by themselves. They strictly are not mere ways of thinking, but modes of existence.

grid for the knowledge of things.¹⁰ Speaking is not seeing. That is, what one sees never resides in what one says and *vice versa*. The ‘space where they achieve their splendour is not that deployed by our eyes but that defined by the sequential elements of syntax’ (Foucault, 1994, p. 9).

The non-relation, which defines the articulable and the visible, is a regular theme in Foucault. The commentary on Magritte’s famous surrealist painting, *This is not a Pipe*, for instance, draws our attention to the non-relation between the drawing of the pipe and the sentence that ought to name the painting. Neither the drawing, nor sentence or the ‘this’ in the sentence represent the reality of pipe (Foucault, 1981). Here the relation between painting (light) and language (sentence), that is, the visible and the articulable, is an infinite relation. It is a state of war, fought between antagonistic forces, with a whole series of crisscrossings, moves and counter-moves; quite similar to a state of Heraclitean flux. The visibilities and the articulable exist as two preliminary distributions of historically conditioned plurality, a plurality that is not merely historical, but continuously *changes* itself along with *history*; since visibilities and statements can only exist in a multiplicity of their own kinds, in a multiplicity of discursive and non discursive, respectively, they open a field for a multiplicity of forces (Deleuze, 1988, p. 83).

Consequently, there are three ontologies in Foucault. The *knowledge-being* is determined within a relationship that is formed between the light and the language, between the visibilities and the articulable. However, the rift between light and language here introduces a field of forces into play, turning epistemology into strategy. The *power-being* is constituted in a field of relations of forces. Since forces are directed from *outside*; they themselves will not become *folds*. Since forces can only attach themselves to forces, that is,

¹⁰ Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason* defines representation as the outcome of objects’ affect on our mind. Representation, therefore, is linked to the capacity of sensibility.

forces of the outside, then it is only the outside that can explain the exteriority of forms, both for themselves and for their relations. Hence a fold of being can be created only if the forces could be folded in such a way that they become self-affected and only when the outside itself leads to the constitution of an inside. Only the folding of the outside, therefore, can constitute a self, while the outside itself has formed a coextensive inside.

The *self-being* thus is linked to a process, that Foucault calls, *subjectivation* (Ibid, pp. 114 – 115). Subjectivation is a mode of reflexivity, that is specific to this or that type of care of the self, through which one brings oneself to obey or disobey a set of moral codes. As a mode of reflexivity, it changes itself with history. Here the 'I' that which folds forces from the outside and constitute the self is neither universal nor ahistorical. It is neither directed towards objects and its relationships nor is engaged in a search of the truth of its own being. The 'I' rather here is a set of positions occupied within a One speaks-one sees, One confronts, and One lives. Like all signs, the I that leaps out of an immanent field of temporality signals nothing but its own becoming. In "Introduction to Kant's *Anthropology* from a Pragmatic Point of View," Foucault, for instance, suggests that the I can never be an object but only the form of a synthesis. If the *Critique* located the I as an a priori in the order of knowledge, then the *Anthropology* considered the I as the passage of feeling to thought. The I marks this passage, but neither as an active agent nor as the coming-to-conscious of this passage. It rather presences itself only within a multiplicity of temporal sensibility. And yet Kant's *Anthropology*, Foucault suggests, does not actually offer the I as an apriori given according to this temporal multiplicity, rather it is presented as the mark of passage through a series of active and passive syntheses.¹¹

¹¹ Online source: Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (trans. Arianne Bove), <http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpoucault1.htm> (12/6/2013).

Consequently, history, according to Foucault, has a totally different function. In "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History," Foucault examines three possible uses of historic sense: firstly, the parodic that is directed against reality, opposes the theme of history as reminiscence or recognition; secondly, the dissociative that is directed against identity, challenges the idea of history given as continuity or representative of a tradition; thirdly, the sacrificial that is directed against truth and challenges history as knowledge. In the first sense, "genealogy is history in the form of a concerted carnival" (Foucault, 1980, p. 161). In the second use, "the purpose of history, guided by genealogy, is not to discover the roots of our identity, but to commit itself to its dissipation. It does not seek to define our unique threshold of emergence, the homeland to which metaphysicians promise a return; it seeks to make visible all of those discontinuities that cross us" (Ibid, 1980, p. 162). It, then, discards the search along the vertical axis, that is, its search for the pure form, the origin that lies at a very distant past, and starts carefully diagnosing all that lie closest. In the third use of the historic sense, it is the sacrifice of the subject of knowledge. Foucault writes: "in appearance, or rather, according to the mask it bears, historical consciousness is neutral, devoid of passions, and committed solely to truth. But if it examines itself and if, more generally, it interrogates the various forms of scientific consciousness in its history, it finds that all these forms and transformations are aspects of the will to knowledge: instinct, passion, the inquisitor's devotion, cruel subtlety, and malice" (Ibid, 1980, p. 162).

History, then, becomes nothing but interpretations; and denied of any facts, it essentially is interpretations. It is a field of conflicting interests, and therefore, a true battlefield. Thinking unfolds itself by offending or reconciling, attracting or repelling, breaking, dissociating, uniting or reuniting that which has already unfolded. Consequently, reality is essentially non-Aristotelian. It

doesn't exist independently of our mind, but of the content of our mind. Reality, in other word, is a social construct, and therefore, our understanding of it can also be wrong. When Foucault sympathises with Kantian project, it only suggests that he is not a realist. The "ontology of the present" that Foucault undertook in his work of the Kantian text on enlightenment analyses the attitude of modernity and counter-modernity, rather than spatially categorising them into periods, such as, modern, pre-modern or post-modern is in itself driven by an attitude towards time. It is a project that aims to explore the unconscious of the consolidated systems of knowledge; it consequently will only reverse perceptions. It is a project that is directed against time, in order to unyoke time from its joints.¹² It is basically a project rooted in a living present.

Modernity, Foucault suggests, is "a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving" (Foucault, 1984, p. 309). It is a mode of being that would enable one to access the condition under which the reality is presented to us as truth, than determining the very truth of our own beings. That is, if thought essentially comes from the outside (through the synthesis of the world and the God in man, in other words, through the synthesis of the known and the unknown), then Foucault's ontology of the present allows one to distance oneself from oneself, that is to distance thinking from itself. It enables thinking to approach itself from a distance, so that its own topography and the condition of birth are revealed to itself. It is essentially thinking approaching itself from a distance.

However, thinking can approach itself with such openness only if it is able to consider the pain, sorrow, joy and thoughts that the life affirms as necessary,

¹² Historical ontology rebels against the *certainty* of the successive time, and explores the *probability* of an untimely.

and for that reason, innocent. In other words, thinking must engage with itself without any prejudice or presupposition, and wilfully choose from life's own affirmations. For that very reason, Foucault's "ontology of present," like the Greek ethics that he examines in *History of Sexuality II* (Foucault, 1988, p. 43), is temporal, as it in itself is an ontology of force. Rather than deciphering the hidden truth behind an act, it is an ontology of forces that link together acts, pleasures and desires. What it affirms is becoming itself. In the work on Kant's *Anthropology* Foucault suggests that each affirmation of the 'I' from the density of becoming are only mark of discontinuity. Then, the 'I' is, essentially, a mark of the passage from the feeling to thought. It actually is that very unity of an endless passive and active syntheses that "turns an anecdote of life into an aphorism of thought, and an evaluation of thought into a new perspective on life" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 67). In "What is Enlightenment?," Foucault writes: "and consequently, rather than seeking to distinguish the "modern era" from the "pre-modern" or "postmodern," I think it would be more useful to try to find out how the attitude of modernity, ever since its formation, has found itself struggling with attitudes of "counter-modernity" (Foucault, 1984, pp. 309 – 10).

The analysis of man in *The Order of Things* is worth mentioning here. In "Man and his Doubles," Foucault, for instance, traces the transition from the man of classical thought to the man of modern thought. One of the striking features of this analysis is its absolved objectivity, and yet this objectivity is not of a positivist order. It is rather a detached engagement. The gaze that observes, analyses and differentiates the discontinuities that mark discursive formations is, essentially, outside them and yet refining itself in relation to them. Here the playful objectivity of the analysis spatialises and reorganises thought in relation to relentlessly reconstituting attitudes of an I that contemplate and *vice versa*. And still the analysis is done from a distance. The

point of view of the analysis that Foucault undertook there is strictly external to the object of its analysis. It rather cannot truly be otherwise – that is, to encounter itself, the thought has to approach itself from a distance. The analysis itself is its own testimony.

Foucault differentiates the modern from the classical thought by tracing the change in the relation between representation and being. For Classical thought, man, according to Foucault, does not occupy a place in nature. The “modern themes of an individual who lives, speaks, and works in accordance with the laws of economics, philology, and biology, but who also, by a sort of internal torsion and overlapping, has acquired the right, through the interplay of those very laws, to know them and to subject them to total clarification – all these themes so familiar to us today and linked to the existence of the ‘human sciences’ are excluded by Classical thought: it was not possible at that time that there should arise, on the boundary of the world, the strange stature of a being whose nature (that which determines it, contains it, and has traversed it from the beginning of time) is to know nature, and itself, in consequence, as a natural being” (Foucault, 1994, 310).

He continues: “at the meeting-point between representation and being, at the point where nature and human nature intersect – at the place in which we believe nowadays that we can recognize the primary, irrefutable, and enigmatic existence of man – what Classical thought reveals is the power of discourse. In other words, language in so far as it represents – language that names, patterns, combines, and connects and disconnects things as it makes them visible in the transparency of words. In this role, language transforms the sequence of perceptions into a table, and cuts up the continuum of beings into a pattern of characters. Where there is discourse, representations are laid out and juxtaposed; and things are grouped together and articulated. The profound vocation of Classical language has always been to create a table – a

'picture:' whether it be in the form of natural discourse, the accumulation of truth, description of things, a body of exact knowledge, or an encyclopaedic dictionary. It exists, therefore, only in order to be transparent; it has lost that secret consistency which, in the sixteenth century, inspissated it into a word to be deciphered, and interwove it with all the things of the world; it has not yet acquired the multiple existence about which we question ourselves today; in the Classical age, discourse is that translucent necessity through which representation and beings must pass – as beings are represented to the mind's eye, and as representation renders beings visible in their truth. The possibility of knowing things and their order passes, in the Classical experience, through the sovereignty of words: words are, in fact, neither marks to be deciphered (as in the Renaissance period) nor more or less faithful and masterable instruments (as in the positivist period); they form rather a colourless network on the basis of which beings manifest themselves and representations are ordered" (Ibid, 1994, pp. 310 – 311).

In the Classical age, language, according to Foucault's analysis, exists only in order to be transparent. Like light, it is that translucent necessity through which representation and beings must pass. Consequently, as a common discourse of representation and things, the Classical language, "as a place within which nature and human nature intersect, absolutely excludes anything that could be a 'sciences of man.' As long as that language was spoken in Western culture it was not possible for human existence to be called in question on its own account, since it contained the nexus of representation and being. The discourse that, in the seventeenth century, provided the link between the 'I think' and the 'I am' of the being undertaking it – that very discourse remained, in a visible form, the very essence of Classical language, for what was being linked together in it was representation and being. The transition from the 'I think' to the 'I am' was accomplished in the light of

evidence, within a discourse whose whole domain and functioning consisted in articulating one upon the other what one represents to oneself and what is. It cannot, therefore, be objected to this transition either that being in general is not contained in thought, or that the singular being as designated by the 'I am' has not been interrogated or analysed on his own account" (Ibid, 1994, pp. 311 – 12).

Then, the place of man surfaces itself, when language recovers the lost consistency that would thicken it into a word to be deciphered, when language loses its transparency and gains a material form and existence of its own. Man appears to himself as a primary reality with his own density only when language recovers its lost opacity. Consequently, the very materialisation of the words into a reality with their own density has consequences. When words regained their material density, they started reflecting, refracting and dispersing light according to their texture, thickness and opacity – discharging a play of light and shadow. It is within a field of refracted light and darkness produced when light encounters matter that the play of light and language unfolds in man.

Man is kept suspended at that very threshold that marks and differentiates the known from the unknown, and vice versa. He is actually kept suspended at the very threshold where a field of forces (that which he can only feel) intersects with a play of forms (the order of knowledge). It is through this play of light and darkness that the world unfolds within man in all its colours. It is actually at the boundary between light and darkness that the colours arise. For the question: is colour simply a matter of light? No, says Goethe. To present itself as a ray, a ray (of darkness or light) needs to be surrounded either by darkness or by light. Then, according to Goethe, reality presents itself only within the play of light and darkness; they are, for that very reason, equals.

According to science, light is electromagnetic wave – bundles of energy, and yet light presences itself only when it strikes something – matter for instance. It is only when light encounters something that it reveals itself; that means, light in itself is actually invisible. It is only in the presence of something other than itself that light forms a differential relation with darkness. In the absence of matter, it will at once fade into (and become one with) darkness. Reality, therefore, is that state of fluidity, that very music that accompanies the play of Dionysian and Apollonian forces – dispersed light, thought, darkness and life (as a vital force). When matter disperses light and establishes a play of differential relation between a divine light and darkness, reality unfolds itself. The play of this differential relation is essentially that which *at once spatialises time and temporalises space*. In other words, it is coexistence (space) becoming succession (time) and vice versa. Could, then, this be the reason why Foucault insists that man “is a being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible” (Ibid, 1994, p. 318)?

Foucault argues, in the modern age, man appears to himself as compressed and withheld in a hollowed out space formed at the middle of the folds of life, labour and language, and yet it is only within him that these respective folds can unfold themselves and, for that reason, “man, in the analytic of finitude, is a strange empirico-transcendental doublet, since he is a being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible” (Ibid, 1994, p. 318). Knowledge, as a consequence, becomes the prime object of its own analysis. It becomes so when an internal tension within a new form of discourse keeps separating the empirical and the transcendental. When the space of the body and the time of the culture are kept separated due to an internal tension within a new form of discourse, it deploys, between them, a field of active and passive connections – a field of forces. Knowledge,

essentially, exists detached both from the subject and the object.¹³ When the mutations that turn the words into transparency and opacity intensify and become frequent in the modern age, both the object and subject become mere reversible positions within a field of forces.

All human faculties – imagination, understanding or intuition – depend upon this field of temporality, that is from within the very density of becoming to activate themselves. Imagination, for instance, is auto-affection. In other words, it is pure temporality. In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze shows that even intuition involves more than one meditation, because it actually surfaces from the very depth of a virtual (simulated) field, like a flash of light on a dark sky. It is the flash of sensibility that the material presence of the body produces, when it spatialises time, and vice versa. It surfaces itself, when the spatial presence of the body churns knowledge (sensibilities) from that which man can only feel (a field of forces) and those gathered sensibilities stimulate and intensify a fresh series of spurs.

¹³ In the “Introduction to Kant’s *Anthropology*,” one finds Foucault arguing that though Kant’s *Anthropology*, as a collection of empirical observation, is different from the *Critique* that reflects upon the conditions of experience, this difference is not of the order of a non-relation. According to him, through a certain analogy, one can always half-see in the *Anthropology* a kind of (photo) negative of the *Critique*. Besides, it is in the question of “what is man?” towards which the enquires of anthropology ought to be directed that the three questions (what can I know?; what must I do? and; what can one hope for?) that surface in the *Critique* acquires meaning. Still Kant poses the question of ‘what is man?’ not in *Anthropology*, but much later in the *Logic* and in the *Opus postumum*. According to Foucault, the *Opus postumum* poses this question in the relation between God, World and the man. The God and the world attain unity in man, only because man exercises his sovereignty as a thinking-subject. Here man is like the verb ‘to be’ of the judgement of the universe. In Foucault’s reading of *Anthropology*, time and space that appears as apriori in the *Critique* become temporal, that is, words and things can be illuminated only within the density of becoming. The empirical and the transcendental that the *Anthropology* and the *Critique* posed respectively, that is the question of ‘what is man?’ and the three questions of the *Critiques* actually unfolds within the same field of temporality, within the density of becoming. It then becomes a tension within the very form of a discourse rooted in everyday practice – “a discourse,” Foucault writes, “whose tension would keep separate the empirical and the transcendental, while being directed at both; a discourse that would make it possible to analyse man as a subject, that is, as a locus of knowledge which has been empirically acquired but referred back as closely as possible to what makes it possible...” (Foucault, 1994, p. 320). See, figure I.

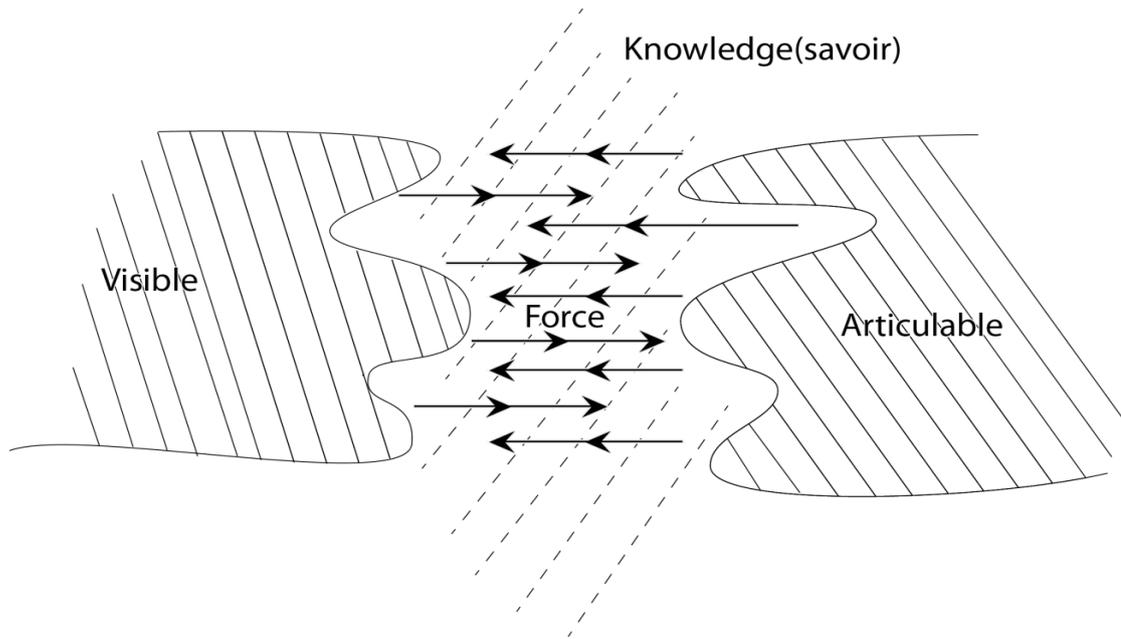


Figure I: Foucauldian Ontology

The above reading has profound ethical ramification. If Foucault's analysis is correct (that is, if man, as he claims to be, is indeed compressed and withheld at a hollowed out space formed at the centre of his own reality and still it is only within him that the reality can unfold), then it must indeed be in man that the colours that mark and differentiate the reality have its effects. In other words, it is in man that the reality is assumed as coloured (and that does actually mean that reality in itself is colourless. Rather it is in man that a synthesis of the known and the unknown – the world and the God – becomes possible). In that case, one could deduce through a finer abstraction that the luminosity of matter itself is the very source of light; whether it is the sun, a lantern or a glow of wisdom in a refined eye, all forms of light have their source in (*pre-ontological*) matter. Then, the materialisation of language into word, or else as a form to decipher, opens before thinking a new possibility and it can follow itself, and that means, it can now illuminate for itself its own ethical, aesthetical or logical limits, and even take itself to its own absolute Limit. And still, the word will gain the required mutability within itself to oscillate between transparency and opacity, only if they are always already in

a temporal field, that is within the realm of culture, the prime carrier of history. It can only reveal itself within a field of temporality.

IV

One of the central concerns of Foucault's work is the analytics of the modes of reflexivity, or the conditional forms of experience that tie together the subject and the truth. The individual is constituted as subject only through forms of reflexivity. Foucault's ontologies of the present, for instance, have opened up three major forms of reflexivity – memory, meditation, method. The *first* form of reflexivity – reflexivity through *memory* – is rooted in Foucault's insistence on light and language as two *a priori* forms with fundamental differences – that is a difference in quality. We have already seen the state of affairs between the discursive and the non discursive; divided and in constant confrontation, they terminate any form of reflexivity anchored in objects and their relationships. It is exactly the reason why Foucault, following Blanchot, is able to say 'speaking is not seeing.' The rift – between speaking and seeing – impulsively opens up a grid of knowledge (*savoir*), a kind of knowledge, which is embodied in empiricism. Knowledge (*savoir*), as the social practice of knowledge, can, however, cross an epistemological threshold or create a particular corpus of knowledge, that is, a particular discipline of knowledge (*connaissance*).

It is *savoir* - the historical *a priori* of both subjects and objects – that gives subject to *connaissance*, the conceptual and the theoretical knowledge. *Savoir* is at once grounded in memory that it activates and in the modalities of regulation. Since light and language are two distinct forms, subject is denied of any synthesising functions. And the mode of reflexivity, therefore, is neither regulated by words nor by things, that is, neither by language nor by light. Discourse thus is not the loyally unfolding expression of the subject,

who is thinking, knowing and speaking. It rather merely indicates the *dispersion* of the subject and his repeated *inconsistency* with himself within a totality. The *second* form of reflexivity, on the other hand, is linked to the outside, in a field of forces. The rift between the language and light initiates a war between the two, leading to the deployment of a field of forces.

The second form of reflexivity, which one finds in Foucault's ontology of the present, is mediated through power. The pastoral power, for instance, is such a form of reflexivity. It essentially eliminates the singular and the contingent through downplaying the significance of self-examination. Self rather is constituted through the confession to and the examination by agencies, in a field of forces. The ascendance of professionals moreover has disseminated the pastoral power within societies. It is a form of power that objectifies and categorises individuals along 'the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys"' (Foucault, 2002, p. 326). It is for this reason that enlightenment for Foucault becomes a *permanent* possibility of questioning, with the actual point being the denial of what we are (Gordon, 1993, pp. 23 – 24).

The *third* form of reflexivity that appears in the work of Foucault is that of a mode of reflexivity through an event of method, a set of spiritual practices as method to access truth, both of oneself and of the reality. The event of method is actually rooted in Foucault's ontology of the present – the contemporary. Since the *visible* and the *articulable* are divided apart, when seeing and speaking differs in form, the subject loses his position as the synthesiser, and the knowledge that he gains is also a kind of knowledge, which is without an object. The act of knowledge (*connaissance*) itself cannot enable a subject to access the truth; that is, knowledge (*connaissance*) as such has nothing to do with the truth of the reality. Knowledge as truth, therefore, can only be attained through practices. The absence of both subject and object in the social

practice of thought, that is, in the discourse, however, suggests, for Foucault, that both the visible and the articulable can be folded back to itself at will, if engaged with proper method. The *outside*, if folded towards itself, will create a *self* that consistently transforms itself in relation to the knowledge (*savoir*) that it acquires in itself. This is the function of the domain of asceticism in Foucault.

Truth is *not* given to anyone by right. It is given only at a price. Spirituality asserts that the individual, as he is always a subject to his attitudes, behaviour and instrumental reasoning, has no rights, on his own, to access the truth. Foucault's reading of the Socratic tradition that is passed onto us through the work of Plato stresses the demand for a specific mode of being to enable one to access truth. The Greeks called it an *ethos*. For that reason, a distinction is drawn between philosophy and spirituality, in such a way that it becomes quite clear, once and for all, that it is only through some forms of spirituality, that philosophy can activate itself. Foucault suggests, philosophy never asks questions such as 'what is true and what is false' rather it explores the conditions and limits under which a certain statement is determined as either true or false. Philosophy enquires into the 'what' that enables the subject to access the truth. On the other hand, spirituality refers to the necessary transformation of the subject that can ensure his access to the truth. It is "the set of these researches, practices, and experiences, which may be purifications, ascetic exercises, renunciations, conversions of looking, modifications of existence," etc., which are, as such, not for knowledge, but for the subject (Foucault, 2005, p. 15).

The antiquity, in quite different modalities, had always related to the philosophical question of "how to have access to the truth" with a set of researches and practices of spirituality. Pythagoreans, for instance, never draw a line between them; for Socrates and Plato, the question of the care of

the self (*epimeleia heautou*) is truly a spiritual question – a set of conditions of spirituality, for transforming the self, to enable the subject to access the truth. The Stoics, the Cynics, the Epicureans, and the Neo-Platonists all were practitioners of one or another form of care of the self. However, the conflicts and debates within Christianity, from the end of the fifth century broke this link and drew a strict line between philosophy and spirituality. The conflicts here were not between spirituality and science, rather between spirituality and theology. Thus the disengagement between philosophy and spirituality is not rooted in the appearance of modern science. Theology, as a rational subject, has overruled any set of spiritual practices intended to modify the subject's being to enable him to access God. With the Cartesian moment, it reached its final stage, with a further widening of the rift, moving spirituality further from philosophy (Ibid, p. 27). Foucault writes:

Now, leaping over several centuries, we can say that we enter the modern age (I mean, the history of truth enters its modern period) when it is assumed that what gives access to the truth, the condition for the subject's access to the truth, is knowledge (*connaissance*) and knowledge alone (Ibid, p. 17).

If Aristotle is an exception from the antiquity, then Spinoza is an exception in the modern time. Thus Spinoza, according to Foucault, is the last philosopher, who explored the connection between spirituality and philosophy.

Conclusion

The present chapter has attempted to see Foucault's work as a unified corpus to examine the development of the concepts of power and subject and, the relation that Foucault envisaged between them, in relation to other concepts, at various stages of his intellectual trajectory. It is intended to liberate the subject from the general perception that visualizes it as passive, without temperament and often docile. The chapter also revives the question of the subject, by locating it within the problems of power and the self, and presents

it as an active force that is willing to use its freedom. Here thought rather than an act of a synthesising subject is a *succession* of events. Rather than anchored in the real objects and their relationships, thought is an effect of a constellation of forces. It is an event. Consequently, knowledge (*connaissance*) alone will not guide a thinking-subject to access truth. To access truth, thought has to work upon itself, know its own genealogy, and continually transform itself.

.....

Optics and the Folding of Light

I

The bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is perplexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the brighter life, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light (Plato, 2010, p. 270).

The cavemen and the Platonic allegory of the cave can be a point of departure to examine some of the central concerns of Foucault. The allegory of the cave explores questions central to the nature of reality, the condition of human being, and the ways to attain enlightenment. Intrinsic to it is also an exploration into the reality of light and a problematic of seeing, which are also central for Foucault. The study, through its reading of Plato, locates Foucault

in the general context of Western thought, particularly his leaning towards Stoic philosophy. Such an undertaking, however, can be sincere to its stated goals only if the Platonic allegory is seen in perspective. The allegory of the cave is intrinsically linked to Plato's metaphysical and epistemological claims, especially, the dualism that he introduces in the realm of experience. According to Plato, the realms of experience are fundamentally of two kinds – the physical world and the world of forms. The physical world, that is, the world we perceive through our senses, is undoubtedly in a state of constant change. It is the realm of objects, images and shadows, and therefore, always an infinite puzzle. Here Plato clearly resembles the Heraclitean flux or even the Foucauldian economy of forces and their effects on one another. On the other hand, the world of forms is stable and unchangeable. It is the world of pure *forms* and, therefore, it is more than one. Since it is stable, pure and real, the world of forms, in the allegory of the cave, constitutes the upper world, the outside of the cave – and for that matter, inaccessible to the ordinary life – and the world of senses, on the other hand, is the inside of the cave.

In the opening of the seventh book of the *Republic*, in a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon, Plato introduces the allegory of the cave. It explicates the general condition of human beings, trapped in the depth of ignorance and even unaware of the limitations of their own perspective. Socrates himself has suggested that the allegory of the cave is intended to illustrate the need of *education*. Socrates says, "Behold," a number of men living in an underground den that has a mouth opening toward the daylight. The cave is deep, and there, they have been in bonds since their childhood. Legs and necks fastened, they are unable to move and can only see before them. Imagine a fire blazing, at a distance, above and behind them and at an elevation, between this fire and the prisoners, there is a roadway. Then "you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen with marionette players have in front

of them, over which they show the puppets” (Plato, 2010, p. 265). “I see,” replies Glaucon. And along that low wall, men pass, carrying all sorts of vessels, statues and figures of animals made of wood, stone and various materials, which appear over the wall casting *shadows* on the wall in front of the prisoners by the light of the fire behind. Some of those men normally talk and others silent, creating *echoes* in the cave. The simultaneous appearance of both shadows and echoes can only strengthen the prisoners’ belief that the sounds belong to the shadows. Here the prisoners see shadows not as shadows, rather as unhidden. Anything unhidden is nothing but being and, therefore, the truth (Heidegger, 2002, p. 19).

Now imagine, what if one of those prisoners is released and compelled to stand up and immediately turns his neck around and walks and looks towards the light. The glare of course is going to disturb him – suffering from sharp pains, the reality, at first, would not be accessible to him. Socrates asks, “will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?” “Far truer,” replies Glaucon (Plato, 2010, p. 267). Suppose he is reluctantly held fast until he is forced to see the sun itself, after dragging him up the steep and the rugged ascent of the cave. Would it be painful and irritating to him? It seems, very certain! Socrates suggests here that it actually requires time and patience to get accustomed to the sight of the upper world. The prisoner who overcomes the limitations of the cave, through a long and painful intellectual journey, finally, discovers a higher realm and a true reality, through an awareness of goodness. Such a person, who could easily be mistaken by any of those folks, who hasn’t left the cave yet, is actually the better equipped one, according to Plato, to govern the rest of the prisoners and, probably, rest of the society.

Before engaging ourselves in an agreeable analysis of the cave allegory, for the specific needs of the present study, it is helpful to identify, and

differentiate ourselves from those few important concerns that Plato himself and Heidegger, in a later interpretation of the same allegory, have emphasised. Plato's concern is that of education and the possible role of the educated in the society. Education is nothing but learning how to *hold* oneself in relation to objects, in the light of the ideas. Plato differentiates two distinct forms of experiences, and their respective spatial orders – the order of senses and that of ideas, the pure forms. The *inside* of the cave, for instance, is filled with fire-light and echoes, the lower forms, while the *outside* of the cave is shaped by the pure forms, sun-light and language, respectively. Plato through the allegory of the cave explicates an intellectual trajectory, one that is long and seriously painful, one that ultimately involves the movement of the soul from the world of senses to the world of forms. The allegory of cave, from this standpoint, celebrates the primacy of the idea over any kind of practical knowledge.

Heidegger understands education in a purely Platonic sense. Educating oneself is precisely to comport oneself to the unhidden, the thing that which directly shows itself to us, without our effort. Heidegger, therefore, uses the allegory of the cave as a clue to understand the essence of unhiddenness – an enquiry into the being of the object. What is unhidden there? It is one question, according to Heidegger, that actually appears itself as the most simple and straightforward one. Yet, it is a question that demands the most dedicated scholars. Heidegger's reading of the allegory of the cave progresses through tracking the more *truthful* and more *beingful* unhidden. Hence, the objects that appear along the lower wall behind the prisoners in the cave are more beingful than their shadows on the wall in front of them, and the sun, outside the cave, is more truthful than the fire in the cave. The process of comporting oneself to the unhidden then is inevitably a search for the degree of unhiddenness in objects. For that reason, Heidegger writes that what

happens in the second stage of the cave allegory, when one of those prisoners is unshackled, is a failure, as “he who has been unshackled fails to encounter unhiddenness as such. He does not come to it” (Heidegger, 2002, p. 28). Here the prisoner desires ‘to go back to the shackles, *away from the light*’ – the light which is actually the true symbol of his liberation. It is towards the light that the “beings are to become more beingful, the unhidden more unhidden” (Heidegger, 2002, p. 29) Heidegger’s ontology is, therefore, directed towards a search for the essence of the unhidden, the beings, and the meaning of Being.

Thus one finds Heidegger focusing on the *unhidden*, the degree of unhiddenness, and the object in itself. But what has exactly revealed itself in light, before the prisoner, who had been unshackled. Is it the object itself? Plato suggests, and last of all, the most unhidden, the sun, reveals itself, and he continues, the unshackled prisoner then will “proceed to argue that this is he [the sun] who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a way the cause of all things which he and his fellows [prisoners] have been accustomed to behold” (Plato, 2010, p. 267). What is then exactly revealed to the prisoner is not the sun as the more true, unhiddenness – the object in itself – rather, it is the *priori* condition of his own thought that is revealed to him. Once dragged out of the cave, into the sun light, the prisoner suddenly becomes aware of the play of light (shadows) and language (echoes) in the cave that ultimately resulted in his false synthesis. The prisoners in the cave have believed that the echoes belong to the shadows and, therefore, they are one, and thought them as only one and, consequently, they tend to imagine shadows as true unhiddenness. The important point here is – and this is the reason why one needs to go through the Platonic allegory in a different light – the prisoner with such awareness of the ambiguity of the visible, rather than *comforting* himself to the unhidden, can only be careful to the visible. He will be reluctant to give up himself easily to

the unhidden; he ought to be one of the early Spinozaians walked on earth - a rare optician.¹

The passing shadows on the wall, in front of the shackled prisoners, normally would have encouraged them to talk about shadows. Plato confirms that they have compared the shadows, judged them and this often developed competition amongst the prisoners on how to judge them better and come up with superior conclusion. Time, for the shackled prisoners, essentially is *succession*. Only the ongoing fleet of shadows on the wall, in front of them, can leave in them a sense of time. Time, therefore, is linked to space, to the objects and their movement, however, the prisoners shackled in the cave totally lack any knowledge of that space – the space that produces those shadows. For them the shadows are the only unhidden, therefore, they are nothing but objects themselves and any discourse of them is necessarily true. Since time is pure succession and non problematic, it is external to the shackled prisoners. Hence, at this stage of the allegory, the prisoners, essentially, lack the self; that is, the very experience of I-myself or you-yourself. They, consequently, learn to believe whatever is perceived as truth. Even in the second stage, when one of the prisoners is released and the unshackled is provided with the necessary information related to the space that produced the shadows on the wall, he fails to grasp the truth and tends to go back to his former state of being – he prefers to be shackled. The glare from the fire in the cave, to him, is disturbing

¹ The present work, from the very beginning, eliminates all claims of an unrestricted progression of time from past to future. Consequently, history can never be a linear succession of distinctive events. The thesis rather stresses on the *trans-temporality* and the ontological *singularity* of events. The “grammar of the meaning-event,” Foucault writes, “revolves around two asymmetrical and insecure poles: the infinitive mode and the present tense” (Foucault, 1977, p: 174).

For Spinoza, philosophy does not revolve around the problem of the essence of unhiddenness. The unhidden is necessarily infinite and prior to its affections. The unhidden – the substance in itself – is characterized by its quality of affecting and being affected. The unhiddenness of a substance not necessarily directs straightaway to its essence, but only to any of its infinite attributes; to the predicate of one of the possible proposition. Each attribute, however, expresses ‘a certain infinite and eternal essence’ (Deleuze, 1992, p: 13).

and painful to his eye. He struggles to look at the fire and pathetically fails in making any sense of it.

It is only in the third stage that a true struggle occurs in him between the two concepts of truth. At this stage, the unshackled prisoner is forcefully dragged out of the cave and compelled to face the sun. The alterity of the outside, the upper world, compels him to rethink about the reality in the cave. Time consequently has become a problem to him; and it then moves into him, distinguishing the Ego from the I. Time here becomes internal to him. Relentlessly dividing him from within, splitting him from himself, the eternal time ultimately becomes an unavoidable experience to the unshackled prisoner, and here *space* that has been defined as coexistence becomes a form of exteriority. The prisoner, who has been unshackled, finally, develops the self. It is his own self that he has constituted only through the folding of the forces, the forces of the exterior. Hence the unshackled prisoner, once liberated, would not be comforting himself to the objects, as Heidegger has suggested, rather would be interested in folding – the folding of the outside, in Foucauldian terms. Plato is himself convinced that, once liberated, the unshackled prisoner would not be interested any more in accepting the challenges of his fellow prisoners in judging the shadows on the wall in front of them.

The cave allegory – the way we have read it – has given us some important points. Time is eternal, yet it is internal to the subject. For that reason, it is no more a mere succession of moments, rather time itself is an experience, constantly splitting the subject from within, differentiating the Ego from an always altering another – the I in “I think.” Foucault writes, “to be modern is not to accept oneself as one is in the flux of the passing moments; it is to take oneself as object of a complex and difficult elaboration: what Baudelaire, in the vocabulary of his day, calls *dandysme*” (Foucault, 1994, p. 50). One can,

therefore, notice that the concern here is not anymore of comporting oneself to the objects. Rather than posing the question, “what is there?” here one is inclined to ask “what am I?”

It is interesting, however, to note that, both these questions stem out of responses to Plato, his emphasis of the ideas – the forms – as the higher beings. The ideas belong to the upper world, and therefore, in a more general and abstract sense, they are the good. The temporal presence is always anchored in the atemporal, eternal presence – the presence of the Platonic forms. Hence the chair, in the context of everyday life, can only be a chair, if only there exists the very idea of a chair. Heidegger, in contrast, argues that Plato, by establishing the beyond-ordinary as the sole responsible for the ordinary, has in fact covered up *lichtung*, the clearing, an understanding of being. One’s understanding of things is shaped in the background of those shared practices into which he is socialised. The craftsman is neither responding to the grain of the wood nor to the pure form, rather he is responding to the very need of the community itself. Since Plato, Heidegger claims, philosophy has overlooked the clearing that can both limit and open up beings – the clearing that decides the degree of unhiddenness of being. What, therefore, has concerned Heidegger the most is the question of being of things – how things become objects in modern world. On the other hand, Foucault reworks Heidegger, and alters his focus. The things consequently have lost the podium, and the focus is shifted to the selves.² Foucault writes, “Plato is said to have opposed essence to appearance, a higher world to this terrestrial world, the sun of truth to the shadows of the cave (and it becomes our duty to bring essences back into the world, to glorify the world, and to place the sun of truth within man)” (Foucault, 1977, p. 167).

² In one of his last interviews, Foucault, for instance, has confirmed that for him, “Heidegger has always been the essential philosopher” (Michel Foucault, 1990).

II

Foucault's writing carries with it an extraordinarily sensual visual. It is a world that hides as much as it reveals, constantly shaped by the tango of brightness and shadow; it is a world of depth and flows, where light floods in through invisible windows and inaccessible corridors. It is nearly a labyrinth. The flood of light that fills the space, spreading consistently across the surface of things and selves, illuminating them and presenting them as either transparent or opaque, is however the only common locus of representation. Hence one will confront a 'there is' of light, – just as there is a 'there is' of language – an irreducible being of light that illuminates and opens up the outside for sight. The panopticon of *Discipline and Punish*, the 'virtual visibility' of *The Birth of the Clinic*, the 'pastoral power' all are conditioned by such a 'there is' of light. Light is absolute, yet it is not ahistorical, the form and structure of sight are historically determined. Like language, it is the *a priori* of every possibility, the *a priori* that, in combination with the stimulus from other senses, positions the outside open to thought (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 57 – 60).

The *Las Meninas*, the painting by Velasquez, for instance, is described, in one of the celebrated chapters of *The Order of Things*, as a system of light; a flood of light from an invisible window, at the right-hand side within the painting, opens up an entire space of classical representation. The light, here, by distributing both the objects and the models as either perceivable or non-perceivable, establishes among them a network of reflections and exchanges that consistently draw and redraw the line, which divides the outside of the painting from its inside. On the left-hand side within the painting, one finds Velasquez, the painter himself, working on a canvas. He is 'standing a little back from his canvas' and glancing at his models. The arm that holds the brush bent towards the palette, and Foucault describes, between the canvas and the palette his skilled hand, for an instant, is motionless. It is "suspended

in mid-air, arrested in rapt attention on the painter's gaze; and the gaze, in return, waits upon the arrested gesture. Between the fine point of the brush and the steely gaze, the scene is about to yield up its volume." (Foucault, 1994, p. 3) Here the painter – as he is made visible in his own painting – is entirely illuminated by the same source of light, which has opened up an entire representation before him – the light from the window. The *first* proposition, therefore, is: since illuminated by the very brightness – the light – that grants him access to the outside, one can only sense brightness from its internal point of view. In other words, seeing, in itself, can never be an objective act. Since the subject is always internal to the very system of light that illuminates and thereby opens up the outside before him, it demands from his part a considerable intellectual and spiritual strength to overcome that very structure of his seeing and to find a vantage point from where he is able to examine the very conditions that grant him access to the outside.

It is neither the painter's corporeal eye nor his models or even the spectator – of the painting *Las Meninas* itself – at present, who is observing the painter at work, is the actual locus of brightness. Rather every possibility – the directedness of the painter's gaze, the possible exchanges that connect the spectator and the space that is represented within the painting, etc. – unfolds within the condition of light. The *second* proposition, therefore, is: light is neither anchored in the subject, who perceives, nor in the objects, which are perceived. It is rather the *a priori* condition of every possibility. For instance, in "Self Writing," one finds Foucault reading Seneca and the culture of writing personal notebook (*hupomnemata*) and correspondences in the *light* of Greek practice of the care of the self. Seneca writes "I thank you for writing to me so often; for you are revealing yourself to me [*te mihi ostendis*] in the only way you can. I never receive a letter from you without being in your company forthwith. If the pictures of our absent friend are pleasing us...how much

more pleasant is a letter, which brings us real traces, real evidence of an absent friend! For that which is sweetest when we meet face to face is afforded by the impress of a friend's hand upon his letter – recognition" (Foucault, 1997, p. 216). Writing, in the light of the care of the self, then is that possibility that can 'project oneself into view, to make one's own face appear' in the presence of the other (Foucault, 1997, p. 216). Light then is that through which one sees; it not only penetrates through, but also permits penetration. Light then is not just mere *visibility*, that is the opening and spreading out of the open, rather it is also that which lets-through, and therefore, according to Heidegger, its essence is to be transparent (Heidegger, 2002, p. 41).

Matter can be neither transparent nor opaque in darkness. It is the very condition of light that gifts matter its character. By consistently spreading across its surface, light, at times, may only reveal the texture and colour of matter. Matter here folds light and creates within it a void, which is actually inaccessible to light. It opens up capillaries of the *outside* within the *inside*, that is, within the system of light itself. The huge canvas on which Velasquez works in the painting, *Las Meninas*, is particularly of this kind. Since the canvas is placed precisely against the light and the standing spectator, it is inaccessible to his corporeal eye, and for that reason, it hides more than it reveals, initiating a succession of reflections and exchanges between the interior and the outside of the painting. However, at times, light may come from the depth of matter, revealing its very soul – such is the light that Foucault has identified in Seneca's correspondences.

Light, according to Foucault, is deeply divided, and is divided into domains that are *not* at all related. One will encounter, on the one hand, a sovereign white light that spreads and delivers the *being* of things; on the other hand, there is a different kind of light that is never from the depth of things. It "spreads over each thing in rapid bursts. ...in sharp surface bursts, in a

fleeting plan, lightning falls on the surface of things, forming a sudden stroke, transitory, quickly darkened, etching an angle or a bulge, but leaving intact, obstinately in place, in their earlier presence, the things that it illuminates – without ever penetrating them. ...“Rare and slender illuminations run on the water”...on a boat at sea a man is leaning on a railing, his left hand holding the metal rail which runs along the deck; on the first knuckle of his third finger he wears a ring “which in its present position flashes lightning” (Foucault, 1986, pp. 108 – 109). Contrary to the light that *spreads* and delivers the being of things, light here *contracts* and focuses on a particular point on the surface. It is, therefore, not a kind of light that lets-through; rather a kind that only signals the existence of itself and the surface on which it focuses.

Light is divided into domains and, therefore, is inherently ambiguous. It inclines to hide more than it reveals. Only the wicked eye of the uninitiated will consider light as the element in which vision unfolds itself. The truth of light is concealed; as a result, it has an esoteric structure. The normal never holds the truth; underneath the normal, beyond the delusion of the illuminated world, there lies the truth. Here, one will finally encounter the surfacing of the oriental *subtext*, in Foucault, from beneath the thickness of his narration. However, this should be read against his reading of the Stoics, where he tries to undo the Platonic divide – the world of the senses and the world of the pure forms – and tries to see essence in what is mundane. Still, when replying the question that is posed to him on the rising fashions of “mind expansion,” the “new sensibility,” and oriental philosophy among the French youth, during the aftermath of the May 1968 student revolt, Foucault scornfully rejected any link between Western individualism and Oriental spirituality. The mind expansion in Oriental spirituality is directed particularly to ‘destroy the madness of normality and to regain true reality,’

however; in Western individualism it is directed 'to attain an individual madness beyond the rationality of the world.'³

The Occidental mind sees itself and the surrounding reality as something knowable through reason; therefore, it lacks that strive for detaching itself from reality. Hence mind expansion is never directed towards the annihilation of the self, rather towards the *heightening* of individual experience: a heightened *egoism*. In the same interview, Foucault addresses some of the major themes of Indian philosophies: 'the marked distinction between a delusive world of appearances (*maya, samsara*) and a true reality beyond it (*moksha, nirvana*); the striving for attainment of *nirvana* through detachment from delusive reality, including the delusion of a separate and continuous self' (Schaub, 1989, p. 308). The preface to the first edition of *Folie et Deraison* (madness and civilization), which appeared in 1961 – though the entire preface is removed from all later editions – has situated the Orient as the unmitigated *Other* of the Occident. Foucault writes, "within the universality of Occidental *ratio* there is to be found the dividing line that is the Orient: the Orient that one imagines to be the origin, the vertiginous point at which nostalgia and the promises of return originate; the Orient that is presented to the expansionist rationality of the Occident but that remains eternally inaccessible because it always remains the limit" (Schaub, 1989, p. 308).

The Orient is the dividing *line* within the universality of the Occident and, therefore, it is the inaccessible limit of the expansionist rationality of the Occident. It is that immaterial point *zero*, the vertiginous point of origin and, therefore, it couldn't be a space. In Foucault's geometrical metaphor, Orient is a presence without any spatial extension – it is essentially an absent-presence.

³ Paolo Caruso, *Conversazione con Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Lacan* (Milan: V Mursia and Co, 1969) cited in "Foucault's Oriental Subtext," (Schaub, 1989, p: 308).

The Orient is not in the delusive world of appearances, but is completely detached from it. However, the expansionist forces do not know limits – when they expand, the Orient retreats and recoils, and it thereby dodges the penetration and conquest. For Foucault, the Orient essentially is that eternal *Other* that endlessly challenges and frustrates Western rationality (Schaub, 1989, p. 309). In *Discourse on Language*, one finds Foucault, in the light of oriental transmission of a monopolized and secret knowledge, rejecting the great Western myths of the universal communication of knowledge and stressing on the ritualistic aspects, which primarily exclude and select, in Western education and claims of knowledge (Foucault, 1972, p. 225). It is only after Kant that the very ‘question of the condition under which true knowledge is possible’ has become a concern to Occidental thought (Foucault, 2007, p. 99). Foucault’s belated journey to the antiquity is rightly a journey to an Orientalised Hellenism, marked by “the return of gods,” and a “patient reconstruction of a common myth, of a hope” (Schaub, 1989, p. 306). It introduces an image of a guru or a Zen-master, into the Western horizon, who “transmits knowledge like “secret wisdom hidden from the profane eyes of the uninitiated”” (Schaub, 1989, p. 307).

Stoic thought, especially with Seneca, is marked by the presence of an addressee. It is in response to him, who is pledged by a “sickness of the soul” that thought develops in itself. For instance, in *Of Peace of Mind*, the self diagnosis of the state of mind by Serenus, the addressee, is followed by the insightful analysis of Seneca.⁴ The true knowledge, nevertheless, is anchored neither in the one who addresses, Seneca, nor in the addressee, Serenus. Rather the true knowledge that has been concealed at the beginning from both of them surfaces itself eventually with the progression of the dialogue. Seneca himself claims that “the process is mutual; for men learn while they

⁴ L Annaeus Seneca, “Of Peace of Mind,” http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Of_Peace_of_Mind

teach" (Foucault, 1997, p. 215). Yet Seneca writes, "I will tell you what befalls me, you must find out the name of the disease."⁵ According to Seneca, what worries Seneca the most is the state of endless oscillation that disturbs the calm steadiness of mind – he lacks exactly that which can elevate a man almost to the level of a god! The splendour and brilliant luxury that surround him though never could alter his principles; they all disturb him very deeply, and consequently, what he actually lacks is peace of mind. Seneca continues "I beg you, therefore, if you have any remedy by which you could stop this vacillation of mine, to deem me worthy to owe my peace of mind to you" (Ibid). A diagnosis such as these, Seneca argues, demands a certain level of *transparency*. For its success, the entire disease has to be dragged to *light* that is, his vices that have regularly eluded Seneca's self-examination are to be dragged to light; and it is only in light that such vices that Seneca fears and hates the most can be penetrated and resolved for ever (Ibid). The above reading of Seneca's *Of Peace of Mind* suggests that the practice of the self is essentially not a solitary activity; either as guidance or as an *example*, it demands the help of others. Nevertheless, one is inclined to ask what is the condition that can open up the incorporeal – here the implanted vices in Seneca's soul – to visibility, and enables one to access the *true* knowledge? What is the condition that actually opens up the very space for such a diagnosis at the first place?

Since a correspondence such as this, essentially, demands the objectification of soul, according to Foucault, it establishes reciprocity of gaze and examination. It revolves around the philosophical principle: since god dwells in soul, nothing of ourselves is truly *inaccessible* to him. Through the missive, one authorizes oneself to be transparent before the other, who is placed as an inner god, within oneself, and thereby opening oneself to the gaze of the other

⁵ Seneca, op., cit.

for examination (Foucault, 1997, p. 217). The reciprocity of gaze can only be established if only the Self is compassionate to the outside reality, and to time; if only, it folds the outside within itself. Sense in itself is folding. Missives dealing with the account of ordinary day, the detailed presentation of oneself to one's correspondent as the day unfolds in itself, is quite common in Seneca. Lucilius, for instance, is quite comfortable in asking Seneca to "'give [him] an account of each separate day, and of the whole day too'" (Foucault, 1997, p. 219). Reviewing one's day, even if it is like all the others (short of a chain of extraordinary events), is exclusively directed towards self-examination and memorisation. The culture of living under the gaze of others revolves around such practices that constitute oneself as the inspector of oneself in one's own daily activities. Stoicism, therefore, is marked by its fascination with the ordinary, the everyday, the terrestrial. It occupies precisely the opposite side of Platonism (Foucault, 1977, p. 172).

The internal time, for the Stoics, is essentially divided; and it is directed along corporeal causes and incorporeal effects. Time that is linked to the corporeal causes 'must be grasped as a living present in bodies which act and are acted upon;' that is, time must be grasped along the chain of causes that present the corporeal unity of bodies in space and time.⁶ It is the *encasing* of past and future into a vast present in accordance with the pre-existing economy of power; an endless reconstituting of the thinking "I" in relation to a vast present that includes the past and the future. Present is the presence mounted by past and future, that is, it is established by a living memory and a concept of future. Here each point in time is numerically distinct. On the other hand, time alone the chain of incorporeal effects – effects that result from bodies, their actions and their passions – is ontologically singular and, therefore, one Event; time here continuously *eludes* the present by flying towards both past

⁶ For further reading on Stoicism and time see *The Logic of Sense*, (Deleuze, 1990, p. 5).

and future at once (Deleuze, 1990, p. 4 – 11). On the line of the incorporeal effect, time, in its purity, infinitely eludes the “Ego.” Neither anchored in habits nor in memories, time in itself is unrepresentable. The present, therefore, lacks corporeal extension.

On the line of effects, the correspondent in Seneca’s missive is *doubled up* to a pure expression in a virtual-transcendental field. He is folded within the Self, and is elevated to the status of an inner god, the certain source of a secret wisdom. It is under his eternal gaze that one finally examines one’s own soul. The splitting of time into corporeal causes and incorporeal effects, the moment of self-reflection, is dependent on the terrestrial order. It involves the doubling up of the earthly signs and symbols within oneself and the subsequent self-analysis. However, the relations between the events, on the line of incorporeal effects, operate as a kind of quasi-cause. Events actualise themselves in individuals and states of affairs, yet they are not completely manifested in those actualisations, rather they merely subsist in them. A pure event cannot be considered without a metaphysical basis.⁷ However, this “cannot be the metaphysic of substances, which can serve as a foundation for accidents; nor can it be a metaphysical coherence, which situates these accidents in the entangled nexus of cause and effects” (Foucault, 1977, pp. 172 – 73). It must necessarily be a metaphysics with an open structure.⁸ The “event – a wound, a victory-defeat, death – is always an effect produced entirely by

⁷ Kant has defined metaphysics as the study of the *a priori*. In Foucault and Deleuze, it deals with the materiality of the incorporeal.

⁸ The movement of transcendence, an excess over the totality, determines metaphysics in terms of a structural ‘closure.’ Metaphysics then strictly has no ‘outside,’ and there is only immanence within metaphysics. Consequently, overcoming it becomes an impossibility. Derrida locates his project of deconstruction at the limit of philosophical discourse, at the boundary line between the immanent totality of metaphysics and that which exceeds that totality. Deleuze and Foucault, on the other hand, have conceived metaphysics as fundamentally open, with active exchanges with the outside. According to Foucault, what has failed deconstruction and textual analysis is the inability to think the outside of philosophy. Jacques Derrida, “Cogito and the History of Madness,” *Writing and Difference*, (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 1978); for Foucault’s reply on the topic: Michel Foucault, “My Body, This Paper, This Fire,” *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

bodies colliding, mingling, or separating, but this effect is never of a corporeal nature; it is the intangible, inaccessible battle that turns and repeats itself a thousand times around Fabricius, above the wounded Prince Andrew. The weapons that tear the bodies form an endless incorporeal battle. Physics concerns causes, but events, which arise as its effects, no longer belong to it" (Foucault, 1977, p. 173).⁹

Stoic thought revolves around an object of thought. Here the object of thought is action itself and soul is that principle that uses accessories as tools. Taking care of the body does not involve taking care of the self. For instance, Plato in *Alcibiades* conceived the self as a reflexive pronoun. The self, in this proposition, not just means "the same," but also conveys a notion of identity. The second meaning in effect shifts the question from 'what is the self?' to 'departing from what ground shall I find my identity?' (Foucault, 1997, p. 230). The "self is not clothing, tools, or possessions; it is to be found in the principle that uses these tools, a principle not of the body but of the soul" (Foucault, 1997, p. 230). Soul then can never be a substance. It in itself becomes the core principle that governs one's activities. Here the care of the self is essentially the care of one's own activities. The stress on action is at the core of Seneca's thought. His missives meticulously deal not only with the details of daily life, but also with the movements of the spirit and with the self-analysis (Foucault, 1997, p. 233).

⁹ Deleuze, in his reading of Stoicism, gives a considerable importance to the Stoic splitting of time. The appeal of an empty time – *Aion*, a time out of joint; freed from the moralities of good will and common sense, it is the time of ill will, a nonsense or a madness – takes Deleuze to the spontaneous and the instinctive. However, Foucault, in his reading of Stoicism, gives much emphasis on habit, memories, desires and self-examination under the eternal gaze of the other. Hence even though the event of thought is detached from the mixtures of bodies and the state of affairs of the material world, it does not unfold itself in an absolutely unrepresentable time, rather under the eternal gaze of an inner god, the double of the other within oneself.

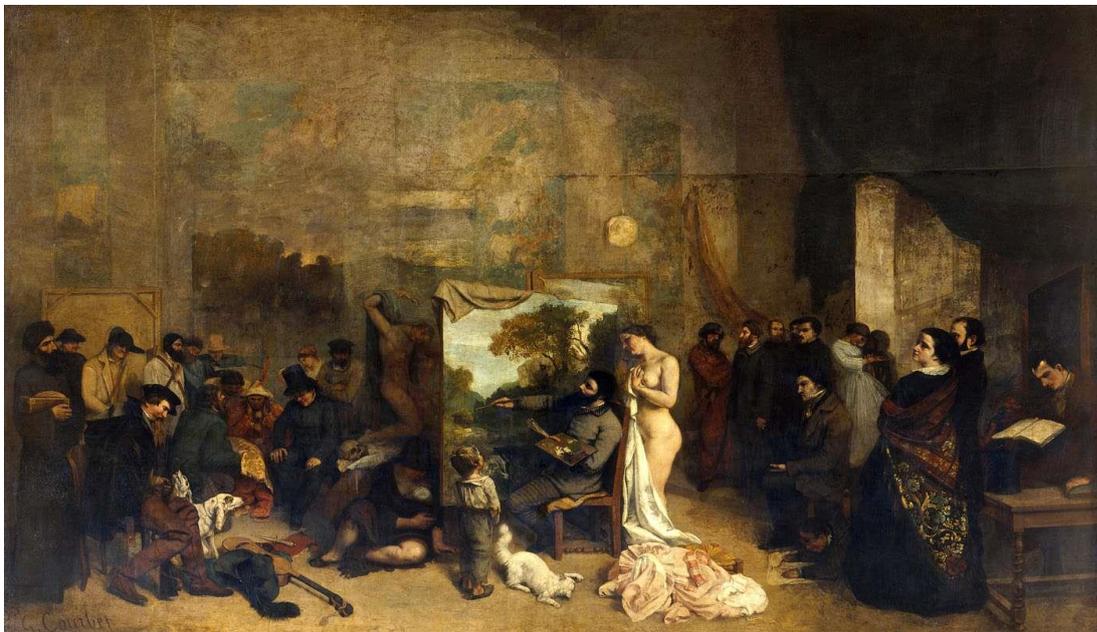
The Stoic aspect of Deleuzian thought, according to Foucault, relates to the incorporeal, where thought unfolds itself in relation to the object of thought and his Freudian aspect deals with the phantasm. Freud teaches us that 'thought is itself capable of thought' (Foucault, 1977, p: 179).

The heart of the problem, however, is actually not an examination of one's own conscience. The question of the care of the self rather takes shape only with one's access to a certain secret wisdom, an ontological knowledge of the self that is inherent to a particular mode of experience of the self, and certainly not with a psychological form of contemplation. The deciphering of a truth hidden inside the self was never part of the Stoic experience of the self. The Stoic experience of the self rather was an attempt to determine the limit of one's own action, the ethical use of freedom. In *Alcibiades*, Plato, for instance, invokes the metaphor of the eye and asks: "how can the eye see itself?" According to him, it is impossible to look *at* oneself, like in a mirror. One can only look into another eye. That means, "one *in* oneself, however in oneself in the shape of the eye of the other...in the other pupil, one will see oneself: the pupil serves as a mirror" (Foucault, 1997, p. 275). Similarly the soul contemplates itself under the eternal gaze of the other. It is only in the divine element of the other soul that it recognizes the divinity in itself. Hence the care of the self inevitably involves the recognition of the divine element of one's own soul. The care of the self, then, is to undertake a certain work upon oneself and to equip oneself to access to truth. It is to equip oneself with a certain ontological truth that takes shape with a particular mode of experience of the self. In the Socratic-Platonic tradition, it involves attaining certain ontological knowledge, certain truth principles on the self and the world (Foucault, 1997, p. 285).

III

Gustave Courbet's painting, *The Studio of the Painter: A Real Allegory*, appeared at a time when French art was seen internally divided into camps. The culture of high art that the idealists celebrated was facing challenge from a new force, realism. The realist, in the 19th century, explored the forces of the everyday sense and introduced direct painting from life. It was a period marked by a struggle between artists who lived in the realm of imagination and those who

lived in the realm of vision. *A Real Allegory* is one such painting that appeared at a decisive stage in the history of modern art, a stage that is marked by the transition from the idealist-realist battle to an age influenced by Baudelaire – and the arrival of the impressionists. Inspired by Velazquez's *Las Meninas*, this work even has influenced some of the impressionist masterpieces. Edouard Manet, for instance, has drawn inspiration from it, while working on two of his early works: *The Old Musician* and *La Musique aux Tuileries*. It is a picture that is packed with forms and external life. It represents the condition of the modern artist.



Gustave Courbet, *The Studio of the Painter: A Real Allegory*

A Real Allegory is a painting of Courbet himself, in the company of his friends, working at his Paris studio. It is painted with a lot of detail, yet the most brightly coloured objects are at the centre of the painting. The painting hardly authorizes any eye movement from one side to the other, leaving the centre of the painting as the only focal point. At the centre, behind the painter one finds a woman. She is exposed, yet seems relaxed and quite indifferent to her nakedness. She seems still and her head is slightly tilted towards the canvas

on which the painter is working. She seems to be carefully reading the painting. In the painting, the naked woman represents the progression of time. At the centre of the painting, before the naked woman, the painter is making the last strokes on his work. He is actually not painting the naked woman; rather he is painting the countryside. Next to his chair one finds his pet and a small boy. The boy, dressed in peasant dress, appears to be totally occupied by the painting. Possibly from the same countryside, which is painted on the canvas, he appears to be daydreaming. Behind the canvas on which the painter works, on the wall, one finds a mural of a naked man in a gesture of crucifixion.

The whole scene actually unfolds around the central figure, Courbet himself, who is at the centre of the painting. On the left hand side of the painting, the working class, and the men from the everyday life, share space. There are priests, street-musicians, beggars, street vendors; they are people from the street and people, who have no place in 19th century Paris. Their actions and gestures in effect suggest the real condition of the working class. One finds them exhausted and tired by their work and poverty. On the right hand side of the painting, one finds the old Parisian bourgeoisie. There are friends and associates of Courbet; some are writers, some are novelists. At the far right of the painting, Baudelaire himself is portrayed; there he seems to be lost in one of his books. Contrasted to the working class, on the left hand side of the painting, the old bourgeoisie is marked by luxury and leisure. While the crowd that gathered at Courbet's studio represents a cross-section of the 19th century Parisian society, its inequality and class division, the figures at the centre of the painting suggest the real message of the painting. The image of a painter, as the creator of his creation, essentially invokes the function of the painter in the society. It is he, who organises the entire scene that unfolds in the painting. He is, therefore, elevated to the status of the creator of the painting.

The painting, on the other hand, also leaves traces of a much deeper thought. At the centre of the painting, the painter juxtaposes images; one finds Courbet painting a landscape that has absolutely nothing to do with the figures depicted in the painting. Here images overlap and cancel each other, opening a space of dreams. The little boy, who is seemed to have lost himself before the painting of the landscape, symbolises such an opening. He symbolises an ontological lack at the very heart of being, a yearning for a different time. That yearning for a different time is essentially rooted in the distrust to a continuum, the successive time. In dreams, the present is not strictly framed by the past and future. It is rather an indivisible present, that is, it neither has a beginning to connect with the past nor has an end to connect it with the future, and therefore, it neither has middle (Borges, 1999, pp. 330 – 331). Hence this present, in a Foucauldian sense, is actually an *exit* or a way out. What Courbet achieved through the painting, *A Real Allegory*, is not a mere representation of a particular present; rather he has succeeded in projecting the timeless themes in an immanent flux. The painting, through the juxtaposing of images, shows modern man's eternal *drive* – a drive that is rooted in an immanent lack – to change himself. In short, it is a painting that celebrates the possibility of a painter; a painter, who is not a mere observer of the flux of time; rather he who takes himself as the 'object of a complex and difficult elaboration' (Foucault, 1994, p. 50).

Baudelaire, in his essay on Constantin Guys, examines the modern painter's relation to the present. He writes, "Imagine an artist who was always, spiritually, in the condition of [a] convalescent..." (Baudelaire, 1964, p. 13). And if "the convalescence is like a return towards childhood" (Baudelaire, 1964). He always will confront things in a state of newness. If a man of genius enjoys a sound nerve, the child celebrates his weak nerve. He delightfully absorbs form and colour; 'he is always drunk.' Baudelaire considers Guys to

be a 'man-child.' However, the present to the modern painter, according to Baudelaire, is essentially a possibility – it is an opportunity to exercise one's own liberty. The present opens space for transfiguring the reality. In Guys, the "natural" is transfigured to "more than natural," the "beautiful" turns itself to "more than beautiful" (Foucault, 1994, p. 50). His transfiguration, however, does not cancel reality; rather it invokes a 'difficult interplay between the truth of what is real and the exercise of freedom' (Foucault, 1994, p. 50).

Conclusion

The present chapter gains itself in strength from the findings of the previous chapter and, for that reason alone, it is nothing but a natural progression of the latter. The previous chapter, through a diagnosis of Foucault's writings, has identified the ontological structure that spreads and organises his writings, and has located, in his works, two *a priori* structures: light and language. The present chapter has tried to examine, in detail, the first of those two, by contextualising Foucault's writings that, directly or indirectly address the problem of light (of visibility) within the discussions that have developed elsewhere in the Western philosophical tradition. It advances itself first; with a study of the physics of the Platonic cave (one of the things Plato analyses through his cave allegory, is the essence of light. He compares the source of light within the cave – the bonfire – with that of the light source outside the cave – the sun – to develop his theory of truth), and then advances itself with a reading of Heidegger's reading of Plato's cave allegory (one will find here Heidegger struggling with the Platonic text, not to locate the essence of light or even to examine the truth of truth, but to locate the essence of beings, the unconcealed).

The chapter then evaluates the futility of a thought on the true experience of reality based on the state of things, and progresses with an analysis of Foucault's reading of Stoicism, especially; its analysis of the materiality of the incorporeal. The reading of Stoicism allowed Foucault to reflect upon the play of the intangible, in the experience of reality. If Plato's dualism opposed essence to appearance, the sun of truth to the shadows of the cave, Foucault has brought essence back into the terrestrial world. Consequently, essence is not anymore a transcendental excess; rather it is immanent within the reality. Then the task of philosophy is not exactly to overcome metaphysics, but rather to do a different metaphysics. In Foucault, the true experience of the reality is related to an open metaphysics. For instance, the text on Baudelaire's essay on Constantin Guys, explores neither the essence of light nor the truth of reality, but rather, it makes a stunning discovery that the light itself can be folded, that is, visibility is nothing other than the folding of light.

.....

Form, Force and the Fold of the Articuable

I

“Within the freedom of the present lurks the past. For a few seconds you become both the bucolic grandfather with his white moustache, and the child at the water’s edge where the scent of elder trees lingers. In the time it takes to open and close the blade, you’re not so much caught between two ages as straddling them.”

Philippe Delerm, 1998, p. 2 – 3

Philippe Delerm in his short-fiction, “A Knife in your Pocket,” writes about the incorporeal transformations that an object, in its materiality, can probably effect on its holder, from within himself. The topic of his writing is actually a knife, and not any knife, but the sort of knife that any child would dream about. It is the sort of knife that every parent always insists to be too dangerous for children – a sort of knife, Delerm says, one could only ‘picture belonging to a perfect, imaginary grandfather’ from the French countryside (Delerm, 1998, p. 1). An evident sign of a simple life, and yet the writer claims it to be a virtual knife, considering its incorporeal affects (though it does not have the power to turn you either to grandfather-like or to a child). Since you

are already a man and, not a child anymore. Delerm says the pleasure however lies elsewhere: it is “an object which you can truly call your own, which makes your pocket bulge pointlessly, which you can take out from time to time, not to use, but just to experience the simple pleasure of feeling it, looking at it, opening and closing it” (Delerm, 1998, p. 2). And yet, it can never be reduced to a mere object of a selfish aesthetic pleasure; it is rather a sign that is both the cause and also the effect of an initiation, the incorporeal transformations.¹ It is a sign like any sign is essentially a symptom of immanent signs, of immanent incorporeal effects of matter on matter, of bodies on bodies. Therein lies, within the play of to affect and being affected, the very matrix of language in its use.²

The play itself is in fact an immanent flux of a Heraclitean nature, a play without seriousness or even playfulness. The play of to affect and being affected in effect constitutes our world and our use of language. It is that which ties man with the world. The incorporeal (or rather, the consciousness) is not a property of matter, rather it emanates from the play that comes into being when forces act upon each other, when matter affects each other.³ Delerm, for instance, wants to write about a particular sort of knife, yet he himself seems unable to fix its physical characteristics, and suggests that “let’s agree on an Opinel No. 6 or a Laguiole pocket-knife” (Delerm, 1998, p. 1). In fact, he is merely occupied – not with its physical characteristics or even with its actual uses, rather – with its virtual potentialities.

¹ Incorporeal transformation is here used in a Kantian sense, to point out the effects of matter on faculties, particularly, on imagination. It is that anonymous that is, at the same time, outside of and yet consistently shapes language. Peter Pal Pelbart writes, “What speaks in the writer is that “he is no longer himself, he is already no one:” not the universal but the anonymous, the neutral, the outside” (Pelbart, 2000, p. 203).

² Foucault, for instance, has famously declared that power and knowledge are mutually reinforcing.

³ The extended nature of our consciousness is quite obvious in the case of a group prayer or even in the case of a violent mob that hits that street.

The play of to affect and being affected infinitely subverts any explicit distinction between cause and effect. They themselves become nothing but mere reversibles within the relation of forces – essentially, draining both the subject and the object positions. Foucault, following Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, has labelled the play of to affect and being affected as power relations. In his ontological project, the Kantian noumenon (the object = x) that is without any attributes, is always in a field of power relations, a site of relentless permutations and combinations. It is this field of forces that shapes the topography of the things we perceive and the words we utter. As a result, identity, essentially, becomes a play within a field of power relations, and consequently, the subject and the object become infinitely reversible positions within that economy of power relations. The question one could pose now is what are these power relations and how are they related to the question of language?

If signs are only the symptom of (un)conscious exchanges, of to affect and being affected, one possible way to understand the nature of the initiation that assembles and imprints certain distinct signs on the body through incorporeal affects cannot be through a mere analysis of the symptom, the sign itself, and the gap that separates and differentiates them from one another, rather can apparently be through a diagnosis of the play of discourses in a relation of forces that hold signs in time-space and link them together. For instance, only a study of how the interplay of discursive formations associated with the sign, the *oriental girl*, and a strict control of work space, produces docile obedient work attitudes on work-floors in China's numerous factories in the coastal provinces can fruitfully map its effects on the female body. The woman's negotiation and identification with specific signs of womanhood and identity, in situations such as these, for their own benefits, are the topic of many studies. Salaff and Lee, in their respective studies on Chinese labour market,

have in fact acknowledged the mushrooming of conflicting version of discursive formations, both among different groups of female workers and the managements on the oriental woman, race, gender, sex and femininity (Salaff, 1981; Lee, 1995, pp. 529 – 47).

Here the sign, an effect of immanent effects, the very symptom of dynamic (un)conscious flows, itself is the very symptom of change.⁴ It, when detached both from the signified and the evident materiality of the signifier, liberates itself from traditional metaphysics (that is, a structural relation of binaries, between the signifier and the signified or between the subject and the object) and, as a result, becomes the mere effect of incorporeal transformations.⁵ Representation, consequently, is a stratagem of intervention, both shaped by and pointed against, an immanent field of power relations, a field essentially shaped by permutations and combinations. It becomes, in essence, articulation, an articulation, that is, nothing but a simulacra, the repetition without an original or, if one uses Deleuze, it is, actually, the repetition of difference itself.

At the very heart of the process of surfacing – the appearance of the sign as sign – rests the problem. It is the intensity of a problem that actually surfaces a sign as a symptom. The problem, in a moment of undecidability, not just brightens, for the subject, the shimmering exterior but also accelerates the process of *subjectification*. Everything, to the subject, essentially unfolds in a field of immanence, in life, in the mystery of the problems that life poses to

⁴ Saussure defines sign as the arbitrary coupling of the signifier and the signified in a synchronic unfolding in time, however, in Derrida, since signifiers are primarily detached from the transcendental signified, sign becomes the sign of a mere *substitution*, in time, in a play of an infinite signification (Derrida, 2001, pp. 353 – 54).

⁵ The incorporeal transformations, within subject, are in themselves the effect of (un)conscious flows (here one, primarily, has to acknowledge the fact that both, how the *Other* influences the faculties and the way one influence the *Other* are essentially outside thinking, that is, they are not given to knowledge, and therefore, they are by themselves mysterious), consequently, it cannot be reduced to thought; thought, on the contrary, is only an effect of effects, that is, it is only an effect of incorporeal transformation.

him. In the mystery of lovers, friends, enemies, words and matter, in a labyrinth of an infinitely straight line, in the interiority of an eternal time, life sprouts like tropical mushrooms.⁶ It sprouts out of a perpetual panopticon, in culture, in the exchange of gestures and gazes, in their immanent misreading, in a situation that is pregnant with the potential to activate language, the system of signs, in an infinitely circular movement (that is an *a priori* field of some sort of a system of signs is required to make sense of gestures and gazes as gestures and gazes, and yet language, in use, only activates itself within the play of gestures and gazes, that is, within a context). This actually means: “one learns the [language] game by *watching* [my italic] how others play” (Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 27e). It is only in the theatrical, in the immanent field of life, that the language will unfold itself. As Wittgenstein writes, “to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life” (Wittgenstein, 1958, p. ge).

Even a reading triggers a virtual opening, a ‘silent dialogue’ with the master; that is, a reading cannot be a monologue. Though the disciple admires and is grateful to the master, his very image, his gesture, his gaze, his deception, and his authority over him infiltrates, unsettles and decentres the soul and unlocks a sea of perplexities in the disciple, and he finds the master extremely offensive⁷ - “as a disciple, he is challenged by the master who speaks within him and before him, to reproach him for making this challenge and to reject it in advance, having elaborated it before him; and having interiorized the

⁶ Borges, for instance, has advocated the eternity of time, in his short-fiction, titled “Death and the Compos,” through a mysterious labyrinth, which is constituted by an infinitely straight and indivisible line. If eternal time, like the mysterious straight line, for him, is indivisible, every problem posed in time will also essentially be going to stay with time, that is, no problem is going to end itself with the finitude of beings. What Borges says is that, along the line; there will be yet another detectives and criminals playing the same game, even if, the detective, the hero of his story, is killed at the end of this game (story). The relevance of the story here is that it implicitly suggests that life leaves traces, as it unfolds itself in the mystery of an eternal time (Borges, 1998, pp. 147 - 56)

⁷ Soul here only means an intrinsic principle, the governing logic that organises one’s gestures, gazes and words. However, in a theatrical unfolding, because of the repeated infiltration, unsettling and decentring, the soul unfolds itself like a fugitive. Foucault, for instance, takes soul as soul-subject, and refuses to grant it any property of extension. Soul then is nothing but a point of view and it therefore, in itself, outlaws any quality of extension – that is, soul is not a substance (Foucault, 2005, pp. 54 – 60).

master, he is also challenged by the disciple that he himself is" (Derrida, 2001, p. 37). "'Caught in the act," like the "infant" who, by definition and as his name indicates, cannot speak and above all must not answer back," the disciple finds himself deceived and, begins to feel the pressure for standing for himself and is, at last, forced to strike back, with the untainted pleasure of purging the master of his position, with a force of deconstruction (Ibid, 2001, pp. 36 – 7).

Whatever maybe the reasons, his purging of the master, in a relationship, in an immanent field of forces, cannot be reduced to a mere act of writing, to a play of signifiers; it is nothing but an act of vengeance, a childish instinct. The master, on the other hand, when challenged and forced to reply to the call of the disciple, ignores altogether the disciple's attempt of purging and, purposefully avoids mentioning it in *writing*, and rather engages him in a philosophical dialogue, and thereby, reinforces his position – in their dialogue, the master has even cared to point out to the disciple his inability to think the exterior of philosophy (Direk and Lawlor, 1988. pp. 91 – 111).⁸ However, it has to be made clear here that what actually recuperates and gives voice to the disciple is nothing but the very language of the master itself – his deception.⁹ In a play of the theatrical, at the crossing of the threshold, the very line that divides interior from the exterior, variations are inherent to

⁸ Foucault's replies to Derrida's critique that appeared in *Writing and Difference* has opened a dialogue, between them, on the problem of Cartesian *cogito* and exterior. Derrida in this critique of Foucault has focused on the few pages that Foucault dedicated to Descartes in *Madness and Civilization*. In his critique, Derrida has suggested that in the *Meditations*, Descartes takes madness to its extreme, rather than excludes it. He asserts that out of a universal doubt, a hyperbolic movement of suspicion that everything around is an illusion, in a movement of madness that *cogito* actually emerges, and therefore, it is not exterior to, but resides at the very heart of philosophy. In his reply that has first appeared as an appendix of *Madness and Civilization* in 1972, through a careful reading of Descartes, Foucault insists that the illusion that madness creates is fundamentally different from sensory illusions and dreams. In a state of madness, one must lose one own reason and, therefore, madness cannot be included.

⁹ One finds a similar situation unfolding itself in Astra Taylor's documentary, *Zizek!*, performed by Taylor and Slavoj Zizek, when Zizek encounters Jacques Lacan, in a telecast lecture, on TV (Taylor, 2005, 00: 20: 27 – 00: 24: 38).

power. The theatrical essentially carries the gestures, the gazes and the words to their very limits, to a point where they cannot avoid the encounter with their own unconscious, that is, it is actually in relation to the master that the disciple gains a voice, a voice that is exactly the exterior of the master, *his* unthought.¹⁰ It is only in the theatrical, in the immanent field of life that the unthought will play out itself: it is through the disciple that the master encounters the voice of his own unthought.

The unthought never plays out itself according to a Hegelian law, according to an internal logic. It could not merely be the silenced (a silenced that is determined within an arbitrary relation between thought and language) in a play of signifiers, in an order that preserves the silence. The unthought rather is that which repetitively pollutes thought from *outside*, that which endlessly deterritorialises and reterritorialises thought, and therefore, it cannot be accessed from within. For that reason, Foucault totally rejects granting sovereignty to a self-deconstructive “text,” and rather sees texts transgressing themselves, their own limits. Text in itself can never be self-deconstructive, that is, the forces that set language into motion, that set the diachronic unfolding of language in time are external to language itself. Language here – since it cannot successfully block transgression – is nothing but an objective phenomenon. It is out there, in the void that separates the subject from the object, that which is between the subject and the reality (Foucault, 1990). This is the reason why, Foucault in one of the most difficult chapters of *The Order of Things* poses this question: “what is language, how can we find a way round it in order to make it appear in itself, in all its plenitude?” (Foucault, 1994, p. 306).

¹⁰ Foucault, in “A Preface to Transgression,” in a similar formulation, writes “we have not in the least liberated sexuality, though we have, to be exact, carried it to its limits: the limit of consciousness, because it ultimately dictates the only possible reading of our unconscious...” (Foucault, 1980, p. 30).

On the other hand, in Derrida's works, the dominant experience of language is from the inside, that is, the *objectivity* of language is either absent or very limited. The outside of language is merely the violent breaches, the gaps of silence that language carries within itself. Hence there is nothing as such to refer to as an absolute silence, a silence that falls strictly under the realm of unthinkable, and therefore, unspeakable. Silence rather is nothing but a strategy, since the order is an absolute order, that is, reason in itself is unlimited. Descombes cites Derrida: "it is only to itself that an appeal against it [reason] can be brought, only in itself that a protest against it can be made; on its own terrain, it leaves us no other recourse than to stratagem and strategy" (Descombes, 1980, p. 138). The only available strategy, Derrida suggests, is silence, the dissemblance of nothing but dissemblance. Derrida writes, "within the dimension of historicity in general, which is to be confused neither with some ahistorical eternity, nor with an empirically determined moment of the history of facts, silence plays the irreducible role of that which bears and haunts language, outside and *against* which alone language can emerge – "against" here simultaneously designating the content from which form takes off by force, and the adversary against whom I assure and reassure myself by force" (Derrida, 2001, pp. 65 – 66). When speaking to the Master *pretend* to speak the Master's language, that essentially means, embrace nothing but difference.

Nevertheless, silence is something never to be uttered, it should always be kept outside all language, that is, it will only fade itself away 'with the coming of day, [with] the dawn of language' and, with its fading the pure difference itself fades away (Descombes, 1980, p. 141); what finally triumphs is only the rule of reason.¹¹ The equivocity of utterance – the hypocrisy, the lies and the

¹¹ This is actually the criticism that Derrida has levelled against Foucault's archaeology of silence in *Madness and Civilization* and Levinasian dispute against Hegelian totality.

state of doubleness of philosophical language – in itself, according to Derrida, opens the theatrical possibilities – the theatrical here then is a possibility inherent to language that is *within* language itself.

II

The sign *I*, in a self-deconstructive text, is always constituted within the text, and is played out in a differential relation to other signs. It is fundamentally outside the vision, and in principle not a presence-at-hand; the *I* forever is an unsettled entity. To Derrida, a sign, in a differential relation, carries the mark of that difference, that is, it has to be deeply different from its original identity (if at all there is one), to constitute itself as a mark within a rule-governed system: Derrida for instance writes, ‘like the *stigme* of every mark’ [even the mark *I* is not an exceptional case here] ‘no matter how fine the point maybe,’ made on a paper, with a ballpoint-pen, is already divided within itself (Derrida, 1988, p. 49). This essentially means, the *I* is not unconcealment, it fundamentally escapes the logic of presence, and therefore, it cannot be grasped within the Heideggerian question, the question of Being; rather the *I* is a sheer coming, an arrival. The *I*, in a differential relation, is temporal by character (Derrida, 1988, p. 53). In its present, the *I* is not only differential within itself, but also in relation to other elements, within the system. Elsewhere, Derrida has argued that what is absent is always present; it is in fact presented ‘alongside’ with what is presently present; for that reason, Derrida claims, the Aristotelian notion of the ‘now’ is not (as Heidegger allows it to be) presence in itself (Derrida, 1982, pp. 53 – 7): that is, “what is past and what is to come also becomes present (*Anwesendes*) namely as outside the expanse of unconcealment” (Derrida, 1982, p. 34).

Though the *I* is split in itself, unsettled and in a permanent flux, Derrida places it firmly within the sovereignty of a self-deconstructive text. The

“limited Inc a b c,” a rhetoric directed against John R Searle’s “A Reply to Derrida,” for instance, has shown how words (even signatures, proper nouns and pronouns such as: JD, Searle, Derrida and I or you), in a play of differential relations, repeat themselves with difference. *Iterability*, Derrida suggests, is a necessary structure of language, that is; language, any human languages, for that matter, always repeats itself with differences; and it is the very iterability of language that creates effects, such as, the permanence of the text.¹² The human language, if at all iterable in *itself*, that is, if at all differentiating in *itself*, as Derrida would suggest, then every act of communication, both written and spoken, and above all every human *experience* would be reducible to, nothing but, iterable graphemes of experience.

What defines Derrida’s program of deconstructing the metaphysic of presence, in general, and the deconstruction of the Husserlian notion of intentionality, in particular, is that even though he categorically denies human mind the quality of intentionality, his project does not actually reject intentionality altogether, rather intentionality, in his scheme, is anchored in language. It is nothing but a quality of language itself, that is communication is not totally anchored in human intent to-be-in-contact-with, to communicate, it is rather only an effect of the iterability of language itself. Derrida writes: “What holds for the receiver [of a letter] holds also, for the same reasons, for the sender or the producer. To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a sort of *machine* [my italic] which is productive in turn, and which my future disappearance will not, in principle, hinder in its

¹² One of the major objections that Prof. John R Searle levels, in “Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida,” against Derrida’s text titled “Signature Event Context,” on the theory of speech acts, developed mainly by J L Austin, is on ‘a simple confusion’ (as he puts it) in Derrida’s text between iterability and permanence (Searle, 1977, p. 200). Searle here claims that, besides being essentially visual, written word, by and large, is permanent, when compared to spoken word, and therefore, it is the permanence of the written word that actually produces iterability.

functioning, offering things and itself to be read and to be rewritten” (Derrida, 1988, p. 8). In the same page, Derrida continues, “for a writing to be a writing it must continue to “act” and to be readable even when what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written, for what he seems to have signed, be it because of a temporary absence, because he is dead or, more generally, because he has not employed his absolutely actual and present intention or attention, the plenitude of his desire to say what he means, in order to sustain what seems to be written “on his name”” (Ibid, p. 8). Therefore, for Derrida, “it is iterability [the condition of the emergence of the mark] itself, that which is remarkable in the mark, passing *between* [my italic] the *re-* of the repeated and the *re-* of the repeating, traversing and transforming repetition” (Derrida, 1988, p. 53).

Here if the written words, the totality of the graphematic experience, in *itself* is iterable, then the intention or the attention directed towards the written words cannot be selfsame, that is, it cannot be a stable presence; an intention directed towards an iterable, in no case, will be ‘fulfilled, actualised,’ and therefore, will never be totally present to itself and to its object; “it is divided and deported in advance, by its iterability, towards others, removed [*ecartee*] in advance from itself” (Derrida, 1988, p. 56); this is the reason why, Derrida suggests, the sender and the receiver, of the shopping-list, are meant to be different, even if they are the same ego, even if they are the same person (Derrida, 1988, p. 49). Intention, according to Derrida, is in itself differing and deferring, from its very inception, in other words, human consciousness is implanted in language, and for that reason, they cannot be examined separately.

If human consciousness is embedded in language, so is the *context* within which both language confronts/constitutes consciousness and consciousness articulates language itself; this is to say: the iterability of language suggests,

for Derrida, that language carries with *itself* an infinity of new contexts.¹³ It, therefore, can undermine any given context, and transform itself to go well with any possible context. With its iterative structure, human language can ‘cut off from all absolute responsibility, from *consciousness* as the ultimate authority;’ being an *orphan*, it is in fact ‘separated at birth even from the assistance of its father’ – the writer, who wrote it (Derrida, 1988, p. 8). Thus, one may conclude that what Derrida imagines and suggests in his writings is a play *within* a grand system – a system that is, in itself iterable, and therefore, unlimited and all inclusive. Such a system actually denies direct encounter, since a direct encounter can sustain itself only if there is a visible crack in the system, an opening to a possible *outside*.

In such a system, since every mark is structurally bound to every other mark, in a differential relation, the iterative structure within every single mark – to cite from Derrida’s own words, the *already* of the already-split from his sentence: ‘the *stigme* [point, in Greek language] of every mark, already split,’ signals the nature of the split itself (Derrida, 1988, p. 49) – generates and carries within them a reducible *shame*; that is, to put differently, since the iterability of every single mark, the differential structure implanted within each of them, is always *already-there*, that is, (even before they themselves recognize their own structure), there is nothing to be *proud* of their iterability.

¹³ For instance, from a Derridean point of view, Philippe Delerm’s story of knife, that we have cited and analysed at the beginning, would only communicate itself to me, the present writer, only if language from its very inception, carries with it an infinite number of new context (though I have to make it clear that that story has a different function in the totality of this chapter, here it is actually used to show, the play of the (un)conscious flows, upon which the entire system of signs rests on; the point I am actually trying to develop here is: the real drama (the theatrical) is in fact played out outside the ‘text,’ and for that reason, what the text carries with it is only the ramifications; we have already seen while reading Delerm that a sign is only an effect of effects. To put differently, the context, in which a reader encounters the text, is not given in it: in order to set the text into motion, the context ought to be outside it. We will come back to it when we deal, in Foucault, the play between self, context and language).

Iterability of a mark is not something that it earned; rather it is only an outcome of the very differential relation that it has with other similar marks within the system. Iterability is something (like the cancerous cell in a body) that the system *implants* in the mark for nothing but, the uninterrupted functioning of the system itself; and precisely for that reason, even with its iterable structure, the mark can never be an outsider, or even an outcast. This is exactly the reason why even Derrida himself always insists on secrets that are never to be disclosed, that must always be kept outside of all languages. If his project against reason has any limitation, it is actually because of his reluctance to consider anything exterior to reason itself, and more precisely to language itself; he is unwilling to consider anything unthinkable, anything outside thought itself; to him, “there is nothing outside the text,” meaning human experiences, on the whole, are graphemes of experience (Derrida, 2002, p. 163).¹⁴

If Derrida stresses on the continuity of tradition, Foucault develops his critique of reason based on discontinuities. He may look less sophisticated and traditional at first glance, his critique because of its very complexity demands thought. When Derrida declares his war from within, Foucault takes the battle to the very limits of Western reason, the very line that divides the Western ratio from its Other. If Derrida is cunning enough to educate himself, to enable him to stand up face-to-face and speak to the Master in his language, repeat the Master, but with a *difference*, Foucault’s is an attack of a nomadic *outcast*, devoted to a guerrilla tactic against the Master, directed from the abandoned suburbs of the philosophers’ city.¹⁵ If Derrida hides himself,

¹⁴ Without temporality and difference, the present (and presence in present) are inassessable. The text and the trace are not mere human language; rather they are inscribed in matter, as the very condition of its materiality. *Of Grammatology*, for instance, mentions about arche-speech, the divine inscription in the heart and the soul (Derrida, 2002, p. 17).

¹⁵ If Derrida (Algerian migrant) is an outsider, who pretends to be an insider, then Foucault (French citizen) is an outcast.

like a modern-day spy or a Trojan-horse, bluffs the Master and then aims at him, Foucault hastily declares himself as the enemy, a force to reckon with, and resorts to direct encounters. Juxtaposing them can only illuminate their tactics and strategies.

In Foucault's works, the *I*, on the other hand, transform itself *outside* but in relation to the text, that is, the *I* is exterior to the text itself. The man himself, Foucault the celebrated writer, is outside of his works, opening a space for scanty speculations. The man leaves no trace of himself in his works. Maurice Blanchot's choice of title for his celebrated work on Foucault, "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him," suggests such an absence – the very indication, in the title itself, of the faculty of imagination at play derives force from such an absence. Yet to know the man, who wrote those brilliant works, one has no other choice but to rely totally upon his writings (that is, one actually has to explore those very gaps that the absence of the writer has left open). After all, his works, their quality, their style and, in particular, the intensity with which they have been written, suggest the fact that the man himself has spent most of his life writing.

The very absence of the temporal subjectivity in the language marks the removal of death, from playing out itself, transforming the language essentially to a pure spatial objectivity. It then attains a transcendental being, affecting the self from outside, constituting and directing its desires towards their own limits, touching and transforming the soul itself. One thing that attracted Foucault to Raymond Roussel is his reluctance to disclose the *key* to enter into his own writing. Roussel fanatically excludes himself from his writing, leaving, before the reader, no clue of the experiences of both himself and his characters. His writings unfold itself according to some internal laws, some impersonal structures, through a stylish and elaborate description of objects and actions, ultimately neglecting his own thoughts and feelings.

However, it also unfolds itself without leaving any traces of a definite method, without suggesting the reader any common standards. Foucault quotes Roussel, "Once outside the realm of *billiard*, I continued to use the same method. I selected a word and linked it to another with the preposition *a* (to); and these two words, understood in some other way than their original meaning, provided me with a new creation.... I must say that at first this was difficult work" (Foucault, 1986, p. 31)

Foucault still suggests that what makes Roussel difficult is "not that Roussel's explanation is obscure or inadequate; for each of his words, it is absolutely efficient. Nor is it a question of there being something hidden; perhaps Roussel doesn't tell all, but neither is he hiding anything" (Foucault, 1986, p. 31), rather it is the language itself; since language, in Roussel, being completely entangled in its own difference, it "begins to weave its threads with a double motion of return and retreat" (Foucault, 1986, p. 20). The repetition, the doubling up of words and preposition, according to Foucault, frequently shapes language, constitutes it in such a way that it in *itself*, in Roussel's writing, forms an intricate labyrinth. In his writing, language makes itself "go through the most complicated course and simultaneously take the most direct path in such a way that the following paradox leaps out as evident: the most direct line [like Borges has to say, about *time*, in his short-fiction, "Death and the Compos"] is also the most perfect circle, which, in coming to a close, suddenly becomes straight, linear, and as economical as light" (Foucault, 1986, p. 31).

The face, in Foucault's case, is that exteriority that which essentially marks and locates identity in time-space; if it is that which fixes the identity, then writing, according to Foucault, is that labyrinth that repeatedly erases the face, leaving nothing but mere traces; writing in itself is actually the relentless

unsettling of identity.¹⁶ In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault writes, “I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their mortality when we write” (Foucault, 1972, p. 17). To unsettle face is to become someone else, that is, to become someone other than oneself, whenever a mark is made, with a ballpoint-pen, on the paper; the instant, when the ink, from that ballpoint-pen, stains and dries itself up on the paper, leaving a definite mark on it, a metamorphosis, in oneself, transforms the self to something other than itself.

Writing, for Foucault, is one case in which the encounter between the self and the language, in a certain context, attains a form of circularity that, in itself, is not the return to the same; rather, one could only say, it is the return of the difference. In a definite context, the moment when the writer lifts his hand that holds the ballpoint-pen and makes a definite mark, on a piece of paper, and differentiates it from the rest of its kind, within that same system of marks, he *himself* loses time (that is, the time that differentiates marks from each other; the time that is linear; the time that runs from past to present and from present to future has existence only in discourse, and therefore, it no *longer* is time).

Consequently, every intuition (even if it is not directly on time) implicitly involves an intuition on a lost time, an indivisible time;¹⁷ that means, an

¹⁶ In a society dominated by characters and perceptions on them, in a society that “tends to be arrested by the activities of faces that come and go, emerge and disappear,” Foucault writes, anonymity opens a ‘chance for being heard.’ With a book without an author, reading itself becomes theatrical, a kind of *staging* that gives force to different tendencies within a text, channels them towards their outside, towards the field of relations of power. In the interview, “The Masked Philosopher,” Foucault, for instance, has cited the story of the European psychologists, in a village in darkest Africa, doing a film test on the natives. When asked for their responses on the film, the natives reacted that all they have been seeing were ‘the movement of the light and shadow through the trees’ (Foucault, 1990, p. 323).

¹⁷ Kant teaches us that time is *a priori* and is only given in thinking; yet the moment when one starts to think about something (like time) that is essentially *characterless*, he is not only thinking about it, but also substituting characters. However, Kant’s proposition gains absolute weight, when we also take into consideration that, to hold the non-time, that is to hold the discourse on time, in space, there must be an *a priori* time, a time that is eternal and indivisible.

intention is split, in itself, from its very *birth*, as it is simultaneously an intention directed against an object or a system of objects and also an intention directed to make sense of the essence of an eternal time, a lost time.¹⁸ To put differently, a conscious intention is not totally given to itself (that is, it can never be totally present to itself) rather it carries with itself (and is driven by) an infinite number of unconscious drives. Writing, for that reason, is not a play within a system of marks; rather it is much more complex than it actually appears. Since writing unfolds *itself* at the very expense of time; as it unfolds itself in a non-time, any relationship unfolded between the self and the language innately lacks any form of objectivity, that is; since neither the language that constitutes the self nor the self that articulates language is steady, there can be no objective relation between them; for this very reason, the moment of articulating language is also the moment of constituting the self. The Greeks, Foucault has suggested, have identified it positively, and they linked writing the personal notebooks, the *hupomnemata*, with the care of the self (Foucault, 1997, p. 217).

In the Greek context, at least in their high culture, the act of writing is intricately linked not only with a concern for the other (for the time or for that particular present), but also equally with the concern of a concern for oneself.¹⁹ Alcibiades, in the Platonic dialogue titled *Alcibiades*, for that reason alone, can become an excellent king (a man ahead of his time), if only he concerns himself to take care of himself, if only he participates in the very culture of 'taking care of oneself' (Foucault, 2005, pp. 31 – 39). In the dialogue

¹⁸ We already have seen how intentionality functions in Derrida; there intentionality is essentially a quality of language itself, therefore, every mark, within a system of differential relations, is 'already' split.

¹⁹ The Other (the otherness of one's own body or, for that matter, even a fellow human), like the time, can only be imagined in discourse, since its transcendental existence demands intuition; this is the reason why, the Greeks developed an aesthetic relation to the body (*bios*); for them, it is much more attractive to consider the body as the material for an aesthetic piece of art, than, it is, to locate its essence.

that takes place between Socrates and the young Alcibiades, Alcibiades confirms before Socrates that his ultimate ambition is to rule the Greek city-state; however, as the dialogue unfolds itself, Socrates comes to the conclusion that the young Alcibiades is actually “unaware of the object itself, of the nature of the object he has to take care of...He does not know the object of good government, and that is why he must pay attention to himself” (Foucault, 2005, pp. 37 – 8). Here the *goodness* of the ‘good government’ can only be entirely appreciated, if one is able to locate oneself in (and to rise above) one’s own present; an excellent king, for that reason, is supposed to be the one who has the courage to constantly invent himself; who has the audacity to transform himself to a man ahead of his own time, to a man who has that decisive spiritual strength to imagine, for himself and for the others, a *different* time; so suggests Socrates: if Alcibiades still wants to govern others, it is time for him to take care of himself.

The Greeks, essentially, made the encounter between the self and the language very intricate; to them, the care of the self (or the taking care of oneself) is much more than any form of asceticism previously seen: the drive to engage with the body as the material for an *aesthetic* piece of art grows out of an unrest with the very *pedagogical* backdrop in which one previously located the body as the locus of a stable ego; however, Alcibiades, though has gained reasonably superior training, has an awfully weak pedagogical background, when compared to the Persian kings and yet he himself does not recognise it.²⁰

²⁰ Socrates, when engaging with Alcibiades, for instance, has compared Alcibiades with both, his possible internal and external enemies, especially, the Persian kings (Foucault, 1995, p. 34), and locates in him a *pedagogical* weakness. He convinces Alcibiades that, even if he has been privileged with a rich aristocratic ancestry, he has not been educated properly for the fulfilment of his own desires; therefore, to overcome his own weakness, Socrates has suggested Alcibiades that he must spend time and *effort* to educate and to transform himself.

This is the reason why, Socrates, unlike many other lovers of Alcibiades, at last decides to speak to this young man: Alcibiades is truly different from men of his age; he is not quite satisfied 'with his traditional status, with the privileges of his birth and heritage' (Foucault, 1997, p. 229); "during his adolescence, Alcibiades was desirable and had many admirers, but now that his beard is growing, his suitors are disappearing. Earlier, he had rejected them all in the bloom of his beauty because he wanted to be dominant, not dominated. He refused to let himself be dominated in youth, but now he wants to dominate others" (Foucault, 1997, p. 229); he starts desiring personal power over others and wishes 'to transform his statutory privilege and pre-eminence into political action,' through governing others (Foucault, 2005, p. 33). It is at this point that Socrates – as the voice of the gods, from above, inspires him to speak to the young Alcibiades (Foucault, 2005, p. 33) – appears before him, and succeeds where other lovers of Alcibiades have failed; and eventually, between them, they make a pact: thereby Alcibiades finally submits himself to Socrates' love, not physically, but spiritually (Foucault, 1997, p. 229).

But what demands Alcibiades and Socrates to listen to Socrates and to the call of the Gods, respectively? Why the Other, Socrates in the case of Alcibiades and the Gods in the case of Socrates, has to be taken into consideration while practicing the care of the self? One possible answer is: the experience of the care of the self, for the Greeks, one must understand, is never a psychological one, rather an ontological one; it unfolds itself in the specificity of a given context. What the Greeks discovered is: the outside can be folded. They, like Baudelaire's modern painter, are not actually interested in locating the essence of light, rather they are much more attracted to the *folding* of light itself (Baudelaire, 1964). With this the Greeks found out that, if the outside can actually be folded towards itself, then the self, which is essentially the inside

of that folded outside, requires regular care, as it is susceptible to an otherwise unstoppable muddling; the chaos of the phenomenal world can easily hold back the very sanity of the self from itself.

A reading of Socrates, Seneca, Pliny confirms the importance of techniques of life in ancient Greeks; the problems that bothered them the most were not those about afterlife or whether God exists or not, rather the problem of which techniques [*tekhne*] do I have to use in order to live well as I ought to live? For the Greek citizens of the fourth or fifth century and even according to Plato's *Alcibiades*, taking care of oneself is to enable oneself to take care of the city. Foucault, for instance, has quoted one of Epictetus's exercises to do while walking in every morning for the mastery of techniques of the self: one should look around and search for things one could master. "And if you meet a consular figure you say, "Is the consul something I can master?" No, so I have nothing to do. If I meet a beautiful girl or beautiful boy, is their beauty, their desirability, something that depends on me, and so on?" (Foucault, 1997, p. 270). The idea of freeing one from oneself through techniques of the self, aiming for the mastery of one's own desires and passions, is neither a hermeneutical relation, nor an attempt to fix a pre-given identity: it is rather an "art" of giving form. Foucault writes: "Self is a reflexive pronoun, and it has two meanings. *Auto* means "the same," but it also conveys the notion of identity. The latter meaning shifts the question from "What is this self?" to "Departing from what ground shall I find my identity?"" (Foucault, 1997, p. 230).

The young Alcibiades, nevertheless, had thought that he could find the self in a dialectical movement; he thought, by taking care of the body, he would be able to take care of the self, and this is exactly what compelled Socrates to talk to him. The self can never be a substance (your body), neither can it be your clothing nor the tools that you use, or even your possessions, rather it has to

be found in the very principle (the *soul*) that makes use of one's own tools and possessions; and therefore, the mere care of the body and the possessions will never lead to the taking care of the self. To put it differently, if self is the inside of the folded outside, if it is constituted through the folding of the outside towards itself, then the soul is that principle with which one folds the outside. It is that principle that uses the tools and possessions, at one's disposal. Taking care of the self, consequently, becomes nothing but the taking care of one's own activities. Yet soul (the principle that governs one's actions) is never given to itself, that is, to examine itself it has to look at itself in a similar element; that is, to examine itself, it has to depend on another soul of its kind.

This is the reason why, the pedagogical weakness that Alcibiades carries with him will never reveal itself before him; this is exactly the reason why, the Gods (in a Freudian sense, the unconscious) have to be there to inform Socrates his own duty. The other, for that reason, functions like a mirror, informing the soul its own limitations (Foucault, 1997, p. 231). We have already seen, while re-reading Derrida's narration of his encounter with his master (Foucault himself), which appears at the beginning of "Cogito and the History of Madness," how the soul's relation with its own kind functions: we already have seen, how the disciple gives voice to the Master's unconscious, and *vice versa* (Derrida, 2001, pp. 36 – 76). But then why it has to be so? The answer to this riddle has already been before us: we have already seen that every thought is, at the same time, a thought directed towards both an object (or a system of objects) and a lost time, and for that very reason, they are doomed to be incomplete.

It is within the context of the care of the self that writing *hupomnemata*, personal notebooks, in antiquity, attains a radically new turn. Writing, for more than one reason, has finally become intrinsically linked to the care of the

self. Writing, on the one hand, sets into motion a circular relationship between the self and the language; a circularity that is nothing but the very return of the difference. As the moment of accessing the realm of discourse is also, for the self, the moment of losing time, the self essentially loses here the very sense of stability. This sense of instability, within the self, essentially unhinges, infinitely doubles and alters both the *visible* and the *articulable*, stimulating an inexplicable flux of a Heraclitean kind.²¹ On the other hand, writing also helps writer, in this perpetual movement, by opening the self to the gaze of others, by letting others to decipher and locate one's own self. Thus the soul (the principle that governs one's actions) that is not given for one's own decipherment is eventually being objectified and examined in the gaze of others.

It is actually in a specific context, around a specific philosophical principle – a principle that is deeply different from that of our own age – that the entire culture of the care of the self flourished in antiquity. In a missive detailing the daily life to Lucilius, Seneca, for instance, has recalled the moral maxim that “we should live as if we lived in plain sight of all men,” (Foucault, 1997, p. 217). Through the missive, one not only surrenders oneself to the watchful gaze of the others, but also “put the correspondent in the place of an inner god (Foucault, 1997, p. 217); to correspond here then is nothing less than setting a face-to-face meeting.²² Foucault writes, “to write is thus to “show oneself,” to project oneself into view, to make one's own face appear in the

²¹ Deleuze, for instance, has written: “The Heraclitean element has always gone deeper in Foucault than in Heidegger” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 113). The fold of Being, in Foucault, will only come at the third stage (not in the first two stages, the ontology of knowledge and the ontology of power), it will come only when he encounters the Greek method of folding the forces so as to be self-active. Once forces are folded towards itself, the outside will constitute a coextensive inside (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 113 – 114).

²² Seneca, for instance, writes, “I thank you for writing to me so often; for you are revealing yourself to me [*te mihi ostendis*] in the only way you can. I never receive a letter from you without being in your company forthwith. If the pictures of our absent friends are pleasing to us...how much more pleasant is a letter, which brings us real traces, real evidence of an absent friend! For that which is sweetest when we meet face to face is afforded by the impress of a friend's hand upon his letter – recognition” (Foucault, 1997, p. 216).

other's presence" (Foucault, 1997, p. 216), thus the correspondence not just communicates but also establishes the *reciprocity* of gaze and examination.²³

Hence the missive, for the Greeks, not just moves the recipient, but it, through moving the recipient, also radically transforms the writer. Writing, for them, has thus been a particularly complex activity: writing *at once* sets the self in motion, and presents the self that is caught in the very flex before the other, for further introspection. For that reason, unlike Derrida's theory of iterability and graphemes of experience, for the Greeks, the self, in the specificity of a context, touches the language, from without, essentially, feeling, transforming each other. Foucault's journey to antiquity has actually developed an extremely useful conception of language. It systematically weakens the mechanical repetition of difference (iterability) and gives the subject some leverage. It allows him to believe that both the visible and the articulate can actually be folded, and advises him to encounter and change himself.

III

Well, my mother told my father
 Just before hmm, I was born
 "I got a boy child's comin'
 He's gonna be, he's gonna be a "Rollin' Stone"
 Sure 'nough, he's a "Rollin' Stone"

Muddy Waters, 1950

The old proverb, "A rolling stone gathers no moss," credited to Publius Syrus of the first century BC, has more than one interpretation. Yet I have used it here to examine more closely the state of thought in a state of homelessness, in a state of infinite possibilities, that is; in a state in which the movement of

²³ This mode of introspection is fundamentally different from both the Christian tradition and modern psychiatry, as it neither depends itself on self's own decipherment of its truth or on counselling and aid in a fundamentally hierarchical system. The missive rather summons the other within oneself, establishes reciprocity of gaze, and activates a mode of introspection.

language (Francoise Collin for instance has written about Blanchot) “directs us not towards what gathers together but rather towards what disperses, not towards what connects but rather towards what disjoins, not towards work but rather towards the absence of work [...], so that the central point towards which we seem to be pulled as we write is nothing but the absence of center, the lack of origin” (Pelbart, 2000, pp. 201 – 202). This passion for/of the dispersed space, the space without place (in a time that infinitely erases the very presence), runs against Heidegger, against Being and the security of home (of the commune); and this is the passion that, in Foucault, denies thinking both innate or of acquired qualities: though thinking, first of all, is seeing and speaking, it actually unfolds in that very space that separates them from each other, carrying both seeing and speaking to their own limits. It consequently is nothing but a chance that comes from the outside. It “in the field of power as problem...involves the transmission of particular features: [thinking] is a dice-throw. What the dice-throw represents is that thinking always comes from outside” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 117).

The contemporary claustrophobia,²⁴ however, has brought the outside (that was previously linked to the domain of madness, literature and revolution) closer to everyday life. Foucault, for instance, has never written a history of private life; rather what he has considered for his writings are: the conditions that govern the way in which one’s relation to oneself constitutes a private life (Deleuze, 1988, p. 116); the Greeks found out that without the outside folding towards itself creating a self within man, man, as a force among forces, is ill-equipped to fold forces that compose him (Deleuze, 1988, p. 114). The Greeks succeed in folding forces, and they discovered that forces can be folded only by deploying appropriate strategies, and with Baudelairian aesthetics,

²⁴ A situation of political and psychic strangulation, in which one finds oneself thoroughly disarmed. Pelbart, for instance, has suggested that the contemporary claustrophobia has become an index of thought without outside, a world without exteriority (Pelbart, 2000, p. 202).

Foucault has suggested in “What is Enlightenment?” that, modern man has become closer to the outside than ever before.²⁵ To lose oneself in ‘the eternal within the present’ also means to lose oneself in that which has no location (that which is dispersed); that is, when man develops, within him, an attitude to grasp the eternal and the “heroic” within the present, he himself will become an ascetic and is no more fascinated with the temporal of the time (fashion). He becomes intimately related to the dispersed and the interminable – the ceaseless outside.

One can actually pose a series of questions: if thinking lies at the very limit of both seeing and speaking, at the space that divides them from each other, then what unfolds it at that space and takes it to its own outside? Under what condition does thinking itself become an object of desire? If the self lies outside the language, at the very margin of the void that holds language, what actually moves them to touch each other? What is this eternal within the fleeting present? Is this flicker of eternal, within the very surge, within the fleeting present, time itself?²⁶

The 2 December 1970 lecture, “The Discourse on Language,” at the College de France, evidently hints, at its beginning, the negation of the very unity of an *instant* in time, when he states that he himself is standing at the very path of a ‘nameless voice,’ opening nothing but a ‘slender gap’ within itself: an instant, Foucault suggests, is that point in time where a matter cannot present itself in

²⁵ If fashion, to him, is nothing more than calling into question the course of time, modernity is that attitude that makes it possible to recapture the ‘eternal that is not beyond the present instant, nor behind it, but within it:’ it is that attitude that grasps the “heroic” aspect of the present (Foucault, 1997, p.310). What Foucault actually does with Baudelaire in “What is Enlightenment?” is, he not just juxtapose Baudelairean aesthetics with Kantian professionalism, but also reread Baudelaire in the light of Greek thought on the care of the self, transforming Baudelairean aesthetics into politics.

²⁶ If time and space are *a priori*, if they indeed lack predicates, as Kant would argue, then they themselves cannot be differentiated from each other. “Time is neither movement (*kinesis*) nor change (*metabole*),” but rather it is that which makes possible movement, change, their measurement, and the difference in speed (Derrida, 1982, p. 58).

its unity.²⁷ The passage, with a recognizable Kantian twist, goes on like this: “I would have preferred to be enveloped in words, borne way beyond all possible beginnings. At the moment of speaking, I would like to have perceived a nameless voice, long preceding me, leaving me merely to enmesh myself in it, taking up its cadence, and to lodge myself, when no one was looking, in its interstices as if it had paused an instant, in suspense, to beckon to me. There would have been no beginnings: instead, speech would proceed from me, while I stood in its path – a slender gap – the point of its possible *disappearance* [my italic]” (Foucault, 1972, p. 215). Though Foucault’s writings, time and again, place every discursive event, every production of discontinuity, within a totality, that is, within history; they, at the very same time, cancel and invalidate the unity of each and every single instant in time, through traversing and dispersing them. An event, by its very nature, Foucault suggests, cannot be corporeal, and for that reason, it can neither be a substance nor an accident, nor a quality or even a process. Yet it can also neither be immaterial, as it always takes effect (it itself becomes effects) always on the level of materiality. It, though, has its own place. It arises in, and as the very effect of, a material dispersion. It constitutes itself “in relation to, coexistence with, dispersion of, the cross-checking accumulation and the selection of material elements;” hence, Foucault suggests that the philosophy of event must advance itself in the direction of an incorporeal materialism and introducing the category of chance (Foucault, 1972, p. 231). The production of events and the eventual surfacing of the discontinuities do not, however, suggest either ‘a succession of instants in time’ or ‘the plurality of thinking subjects’ but rather “what is concerned are those caesurae breaking the instant

²⁷ Derrida, for instance, while reading Heidegger, has argued that Aristotle’s conception of *now* is much more than Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, allows it to be in: he writes, “what is past and what is to come also become present (*Anwesendes*) namely as outside the expanse of unconcealment” (Derrida, 1982, p. 34).

and dispersing the subject in a multiplicity of possible positions and functions" (Foucault, 1972, p. 231).²⁸

The author's name, Foucault insists, is not just like any other proper name. Much more than an indicative function; more than a suggestion or 'an indication, a gesture, a finger pointed at someone,' his name rather functions just like a description (Foucault, 1984, p. 105), and serves to characterize a certain mode of being of discourse; in our society, it even works as classifier of a (or a group of) discourse[s] from others. The proper noun, such as, Aristotle, Foucault suggests, is 'a word that is equivalent of one, or a series, of definite descriptions, such as "the author of the *Analytics*," "the founder of ontology," and so forth' (Foucault, 1984, pp. 105 – 106). Unlike many other proper name, the author's name 'does not pass from the interior of a discourse to the real and exterior individual who produced it;' rather, 'the name seems *always* [my italic] to be present, marking off the edges of the text, revealing, or at least characterizing, its mode of being' (Foucault, 1984, p. 107), therefore, to him, the empty affirmation, the death of the author, is actually not enough; it is even not enough, to keep repeating after Nietzsche that both God and man have succumbed themselves to a very ordinary death. But rather one must locate, Foucault insists, the very space 'left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings that this disappearance uncovers' (Foucault, 1984, p. 105). "What is an Author?" has brought into circulation the notion of author function.²⁹

²⁸ Against the four central notions (signification, originality, unity, and creation) that have shaped the traditional history of idea, "The Discourse on Language" places the notions of *chance*, *discontinuity* and *materiality*.

²⁹ "What is an Author?" presented before an assemblage of philosophers, scholars, and intellectuals, at the prestigious French Society of Philosophy, is part of a larger critical current that has taken over France after the appearance of Roland Barthes' much acclaimed and notorious work, "The Death of the Author." "What is an Author?," though in the first few paragraphs, has mentioned in passing that familiar theme, the writing's relationship with death, it has firmly proposed that the mutation in our culture that has metamorphosed the very idea of writing (with this 'the work, which once had the duty of providing immortality, now possesses the right to kill, to be its author's murderer') is only a recent stage in a long history.

The author's function is not something that will develop spontaneously, it cannot even be a mere attribute of discourse to an individual; but rather it constitutes itself within a complex operation that transforms a rational being, from within, to what we call an author. Yet, on the other hand, writing, in our culture, is not that simple enough to be reduced to a dimension of expression (which is one point on which both Barthes' and Foucault's texts agree upon).³⁰ Writing now refers only to itself (nevertheless Foucault maintains here that: 'but *without* [my italic] being restricted to the confines of its [own] interiority'), identifies itself largely with its own unfolded exteriority (Foucault, 1984, p. 102), what he means here is: since the relation of signs is totally detached from the transcendental system of signified (and is organised only according to the nature of signifiers), writing now unfolds itself like a game, transgressing its own rules and limits. In writing, Foucault argues, "the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is, rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject *constantly* [my italic] disappears" (Foucault, 1984, p. 102), that is, a sign will appear itself only at the expense of its creator.

At first, it might sound quite clear, yet it can develop, in an inquisitive observer, a new level of perplexities: under what conditions does the writing gain that power to take over the writer, transform him incorporeally to an author and bury him in the very depth of the play of the signs, which he himself has initiated? Rather than investigating the psychology behind why people still desire the author (Roland Barthes, in his work, *The Pleasure of the Text*, for instance, has stated that: "The author is dead but I desire the author"), we will actually explore the connection that links writing and death in relation to time and, will ask: under what condition the act of writing can turn itself into violence that swallows up both the self and the sign? Can

³⁰ The author here is neither struggling with the rigid structures of language to express in it his personal experience, nor is he relying upon language for recourse; he rather is becoming something other than himself along with the unfolding signs, along with language itself.

violence play itself out in a *non*-time? Under what conditions writing (that traverses and transforms both the self and the sign) becomes an Event?

The modern writer has a fundamentally different relation to his own text. Earlier, if the author has been always conceived as the past of his own text, if he and his text have been placed along the same line, in a successive time (as before and after), if he has been placed before his own text, as pre-existing it, feeding it, living, thinking, suffering for it, if his relation with the text had been conceived within a patrilineal value system; then now, the modern author is 'born *simultaneously* with his text' (Barthes, 1977), that is, the writer and his work cannot occupy the same line: means, he cannot be the subject of which his book is the predicate. The modern writer does not 'transcend his writing' and neither is he supplied with a being that precedes his work, Barthes continues, "there is no *other* [my italic] time than that of the utterance and every text is eternally written here and now" (Barthes, 1977). Now, what is the status of this "here and now" of writing, if it hasn't already been coloured by its own past and future – a pure now? How is (modern) writing different from, say, surrealism?³¹

Before we go further with our reading on the act of writing, we must here make some sense of the specific context in which philosophy has developed in Europe, particularly in France, after World War II. Europe's entire experience with Nazism and Fascism, on the one hand, has set the general mood (reflected largely in the deep distress against totalitarianism); on the other hand, a recent surge of phenomenology and structuralism in academic circles, particularly in France, has built a new wave of restlessness over metaphysics of presence. The result has been a convergence of interests, among a new generation of thinkers, on some specific problems and themes. The question

³¹ Barthes, in "The Death of the Author," even talks about Surrealism entrusting, what the head itself has ignored, to the hand, transferring the responsibility of writing as far as possible to the hand, and making it, in his own words "automatic writing."

of difference, consequently, has become a major theme in the writings of thinkers such as, Levinas, Derrida, Deleuze and Nancy (Foucault, however, is an exception here); the repetition has become a problem to reckon with; there has been a revival of Nietzsche as a major figure in continental philosophy; and most importantly, in the writings of at least some of the above-mentioned thinkers, language and the act of writing themselves have been elevated to such a point that they themselves fall into the realm of theoretical reflection. Such convergence of interests must have played a decisive role, by putting pressure on thinkers to read tradition differently (gain resource from it) and to develop systems of thought that are mutually exclusive. It, therefore, suits our interest here quite well, that we repeat the same strategy that has been deployed, more than once, in the course of this chapter (that is to locate a particular thinker – in our case Foucault – within the specificity of his present to understand better how his strategies and tactics work both in relation to the common tradition [the continental philosophy] and in relation to the strategies and tactics of other major thinkers of his time). The following section will explore Foucault's take on the act of writing and time, by juxtaposing his against Derrida and Deleuze.

“time could be a (in) being only in not being what it is...”

Jacques Derrida, 1982, p. 52

“Repetition is a condition of action before it is a concept of reflection. We produce something new only on condition that we repeat...”

Gilles Deleuze, 1994, p. 90

[Criticism] “will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge [*connaissance*] or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the *instances* [my italic] of discourse that articulates what we think, say, and do as so many historical events”

Michel Foucault, 1997, p. 315

Well, three significantly different propositions on time, evolved primarily from very *different* readings of Western philosophy; they are from the arsenals of three extremely difficult thinkers of post World War II Continental philosophy, who differ from one another not just in their reading of Western thought, but also in their very style of writing.³² Nevertheless, the question actually is not where they differ from each other in relation to their respective understanding of time, but rather, can we, in relation to these writers, make a difference here, in the understanding of time; the question consequently is: can we repeat/affirm them (here) with a difference? This in itself is a challenge (and yet not a mere challenge, but an attempt to intuit time itself), and we will only see, where this very challenge – this problem – can lead us from here on. Let us say, as a starting point that Deleuze is right, when he stated: questions and problems belong to the unconscious, and the unconscious in itself is iterable by its very nature (Deleuze, 1997, p. 108).

Well *repetition*, for both Derrida and Deleuze, plays a decisive role. A writing that is not structurally iterable (Derrida's word for repetition), he suggests, can never actually be considered writing at all (Derrida, 1988, p. 7), on the other hand, repetition, Deleuze argues, can never be an historical fact, but rather it is that historical condition under which anything new can appear (Deleuze, 1994, p. 90). Yes, one actually will see this word (repetition)

³² In Derrida, writing unfolds itself; the above-cited work is a classical example, where one finds Derrida labouring with Aristotle's text on time and eventually unfolding, within his writing, circles of iteration. One finds Derrida coming back to the same themes, that he left at the beginning, more than once in the process of writing to understand their intricacies, both for himself and for his potential readers. The "Ousia and Gramme," while engaging itself with Heidegger's reading of Aristotle, in *Being and Time*, shows us that if metaphysics 'signified the determination of the meaning of Being as presence in both senses and simultaneously,' then time undoubtedly will exceed metaphysics (Derrida, 1982, p. 64). Every single mark, in his system, lacks presence in itself (that is, they essentially lack Being), and therefore, will only shy away from turning themselves to the order of concepts – even *différance* and iterability, according to Derrida, are not exceptions (maybe, there rather are the most exceptional ones). Deleuze, on the other hand, is dry, abstract and awfully difficult to penetrate; his work are directed with a more traditional approach to philosophy, *Difference and Repetition*, for instance, will only attempt to do metaphysics once more, and to him the work of philosophy is nothing but creating concept. Well when considering all these intricacies, it is important that one should not come to any direct conclusions, before even looking at those difficult pages in their works that deals with time.

reappearing, more than once, and determining the very style and content of their writings, still any comparison, without a proper investigation of the specific roles that it plays within their respective writings, can only be thoroughly deceptive. Iterability is nothing but the power of the written marks to function (that is, to be readable) in the absence of the receiver and the sender; it is that which allows a written mark to repeat itself, through *grafting* itself onto to a very different chain of marks. Derrida writes, “by virtue of its essential iterability, a written syntagma can always be detached from the chain in which it is inserted or given without causing it to lose all possibilities of functioning, if not all possibility of “communicating,” precisely (Derrida, 1988, p. 9).³³ Let us develop a closer diagnosis, so that the problem itself gains enough force to surface itself adequately.

Of those three above-mentioned thinkers, Derrida is the most enthusiastic critic of metaphysics of presence. To begin with Derrida, therefore, is to begin already at the very limit. Let us rather begin ourselves from the limit of the limit, from the very limit of Derrida’s own criticism of Western metaphysics,

³³ The very source of this force of rupture, he suggests, is nothing but spacing – the spacing that constitutes the written sign (that which separates it both from other elements of the internal contextual chain and the all forms of present reference). It is actually the spacing, Derrida suggests, that opens the possibility of any written mark’s disengagement from the chain in which it is inserted and its eventual grafting onto a totally different syntagma. Derrida here quickly extends his conclusion on the written mark to include any spoken mark and suggests that the spoken signs actually share some of the defining characteristics of written signs (Derrida, 1988, p. 10). The 1966 lecture at Johns Hopkins University, (“Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”), for instance, has located a rupture, a very significant incidence in the history of the concept of structure, that Derrida would, with confidence, call an event: the disappearance of the governing center and the opening up of the very possibility of a play. It is the very absence of a privileged (transcendental or central) signified, he argues, outside a system of differences that has opened the possibility of an extended domain and the infinite play of signification (Derrida, 2001, p. 354). As a consequence of the decentering of the center (with the absence of the transcendental signified) the radical difference between the signifier and the signified gets erased and, the signifier itself will be reduced to itself or, ‘amounting to the same thing, simply expelling its signifier outside itself’ (Derrida, 2001, p. 355). For there are, Derrida writes, “two heterogeneous ways of erasing the difference between the signifier and the signified: one, the classic way, consists in reducing or deriving the signifier, that is to say, ultimately in submitting the sign to thought; the other, the one we are using here against the first one, consists in putting into question the system in which the preceding reduction functioned...” (Derrida, 2001, p. 355), here then what actually measures the ‘quality and fecundity’ of a discourse is the critical rigor with which it has thought about its relation to the history of metaphysics and the concepts it have inherited from that metaphysical tradition.

so that we can skip a lot of unnecessary explanations and securely place ourselves, from the very beginning itself, at the frontiers of (his) criticism.

Presence is the very *sign* of 'outward evidence,' and for that reason alone, it, for traditional ontology, is a point of reference, (Derrida, 1982, p. 31), it is in the very light of this reference that the meaning of Being itself has been grasped: *being qua being*. And this general form (that is, only as their Being as presence that beings are actually be grasped), merged with *phonocentrism*, demarcates and gives form to a range of dependent varieties, such as, 'the *eidōs* (the thing presented to the sight); *ousia* (presence as substance/ essence/existence), *stigma* (temporal presence as point of the now or of the moment [*nun*]), the self-presence of the cogito, consciousness, subjectivity, the co-presence of the other and of the self, intersubjectivity as the intentional phenomenon of the ego, and so on' (Derrida, 2002, p. 12). Presence (or the entity as it is given, in the present, to the senses), throughout the great epoch that covers the history of metaphysics, shaped and sustained a range of uneven relation – the relation between speech and writing, between the sensible and the intelligible, etc. If voice is close to the soul, if it emanates directly from the interiorising memory, writing is exteriorising, it is nothing but the very forgetting of self itself. It is against the self-presence of the speaking subject that the Western metaphysic has degraded writing (the written sign) to a status of 'mediation of mediation,' of a sign of sign, therefore, it should be in relation to this epoch that one must, after all, consider the crucial *bifurcation* of every (possible) sign along the line of sensible and intelligible. If language, according to modern structural thought, is a system of signs, then linguistics is nothing but part and parcel of that very system. Here what constitutes a sign (a sign, in general, and any linguistic sign, in particular) is its 'twofold character,' that is, every linguistic unit (sign) is bipartite, involving both the sensible – signifier – and the intelligible – signified (Derrida, 2002, p. 13)

Sign (usually said to be) in its very form, Derrida writes elsewhere, is nothing but a divergence, a necessary detour, when the present itself cannot be presented. In its very absence, the sign takes the place of the 'thing.' The sign, in the course of its circulation, infinitely defers the very moment of our encounter with the thing, presenting itself as ours, allowing itself to be seemed, touched, consumed, and even intuited. Sign, consequently, is nothing but deferred presence (to put differently, signification, Derrida writes, is *différance* of temporality). It takes over the present when the present itself cannot be presented, it, therefore, represents the present in its absence.³⁴ This substitution (sign as the sign of present in its absence) is both secondary and provisional. It is secondary, as the sign derives itself from an original and a lost presence (the thing as the resource of meaning and referent),³⁵ and it is provisional, as every sign is a movement of mediation, a movement towards this final and missing presence (Derrida, 1982, p. 9).

The "Différance," Derrida's 1968 lecture, promises to speak about the *unspeakable*, and signals the arrival³⁶ of a play, a play that exceeds every structure, a play that, through the very unsettling of every presence, infinitely repeats the domain of signification. "Différance" playfully plays with the two meanings of the word difference, which Derrida spells as *différance*.³⁷ Différance, according to Derrida, belongs neither to the sensible (signifier) nor to the intelligible (signified). The difference marked in the "differ()nce"

³⁴ Derrida, in *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money* – "The Time of the King" – and in "Ousia and Gramme," has shown us that time in itself is absolute absence, a gap in the order of reason; that is, it transcends all circularity (his arguments on Being, gift and *différance* elsewhere should also be considered here to make sense of its ramifications on his other claims).

³⁵ Deleuze, in "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy" that appeared in the appendix of *The Logic of Sense*, replies (to the question: what does it mean "to reverse Platonism"?) that "the formula seems to mean the abolition of the world of essences and of the world of appearances" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 254).

³⁶ Derrida also briefly examines here the crucial role difference plays for thinkers such as Nietzsche, Freud, Levinas and most importantly Heidegger.

³⁷ Derrida replaces the *e* of difference with an *a* to show actually the very absence of the differential elements that constitutes the sign, *différance*.

between the *e* and the *a* resists the order of sensibility (Derrida, 1982, p. 5), it, at the same time, also eludes the intelligible, the order of ideas, as *différance* does not affiliate itself with the objectivity of understanding (Derrida, 1982, p. 5). It, Derrida suggests, even eludes hearing (as the 'a' of the *différance*, when it is spelled, in French, cannot be heard). *Différance* here is conceived as nothing but pure play, as absolute essenceless difference (Deleuze also conceives difference - *Difference and Repetition* - in a quite similar fashion).³⁸ Derrida writes, "If *différance* is... [is actually is crossed out here, to signal the absolute absence of *différance*] what makes possible the presentation of the being-present, it is never [actually] presented as such" (Derrida, 1982, p. 6).

If *différance* eludes signification and meaning, it must be prior to everything. Yet Derrida denies *différance a priori* status, as it is non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences (since it is non-full and non-simple it just cannot be presence in itself and for that reason, it cannot be the origin). However, what produces differences (differences in a Saussurean sense – mediation as an effect of an arbitrary relation of signs) is only an effect of an absolute difference (*différance* as an absolute absence).³⁹ *Différance* (unlike difference) is absolute absence and, therefore, (logically) untraceable. Derrida, for instance, writes: "One can expose only that which at a certain moment can become *present*, manifest, that which can be shown, presented as something present, a being-present in its truth, in the truth of a present or the presence of the present" (Derrida, 1982, pp. 5 – 6). *Différance* rather is a mysterious being,

³⁸ At the end of the lecture, Derrida, in a few sentences, tries to compare *différance* from Heidegger's reading of ontological difference (the difference between Being and beings) in "The Anaximander Fragment." It is clearly impossible to locate the essence of Being (and of *différance*), to find a suitable word, a single word to name the essence of Being (Derrida, 1982, p. 24).

³⁹ It is actually here that Deleuzian conception of difference differs from *différance*, if *différance*, for Derrida, is absolute absence, the negation of negation, for Deleuze, it is energy, a swarm of non-representational differences. He writes, every time we encounter an inadequate (incomplete) concept "we should ask what such a situation presupposes. It presupposes a swarm of differences, a pluralism of free, wild or untamed differences, a properly differential and original space and time; all of which persist along-side the simplifications of limitations and opposition (Deleuze, 1997, p 50)

as it resists itself from succumbing itself to the order of truth, as it reserves itself to itself. It never offers itself to the present. “Or to anyone,” for that matter (Derrida, 1982, p. 6). Yet, Derrida seems to have an apparently cunning strategy to trace the untraceable; he, therefore, promises to speak the unspeakable; he promises, at the very beginning of the lecture, that: “I will speak, therefore, of a letter;” he promises to speak about the *a* of the ‘differ()nce’ (Derrida, 1982, p. 3).

The question one should pose is: what presents Derrida such confidence to carry out a parody of the *différance* itself, when the *différance* in itself is not presenting itself to him? What actually allows Derrida to be this certain that he still has at his disposal a strategy, “a strategy without finality” (Derrida, 1982, p. 7) that will allow him to speak nothing but the unspeakable?⁴⁰ The question is: is the ‘*a*’ of the *différance* absolutely traceless? Is it actually an absolute absence, differ()nce? If it is absolute absence, how then this strategy of Derrida works?⁴¹

Différance, (though is neither a word nor a concept in Derrida’s conception), still compensates – economically – a loss of meaning, since *différence* (with an ‘*e*’) can “never refer either to *différer* as temporization or to *différends* as *polemos* (Derrida, 1982, p. 8), that is, even though the *a* of the differ()nce, at the very same instance of its affirmation, negates itself, denying itself to the present, it leaves behind a trace of its trace – a supplement. The supplement, as the trace of the trace, is in fact the trace of the *a* of the differ()nce. It is precisely the supplement that the ‘*a*’ added to *différance* that differentiates the

⁴⁰ At this point, Derrida even cares to differentiate his thought (though it is indistinguishable) from negative theology. Negative theology, to him, refuses to grant all predicates of existence to almighty, the God, only to acknowledge his ‘superior, inconceivable, and ineffable mode of being’ (Derrida, 1982, p. 6); but since *différance* in itself is absolute absence, that is, since it neither belongs to existence and essence, his thought on such an absence is radically different from negative theology.

⁴¹ The problem here is: is it actually possible to synthesis time, without being grounded in the certainty of the presence of the present?

différance (with an ‘a’) from the *différence* (with an ‘e’); and as a result, *différance* and *différence* can no longer be the same; and still, this temporisation (the differing together with the deferring) is only a trace of time,⁴² and cannot be categorised as either presence or the presence of the present, since ‘it is temporal only in becoming temporal, that is, in ceasing to be, in passing over to no-thingness in the form of being-past or being-future’ (Derrida, 1982, p. 40),⁴³ that is, even though the supplements are inscribed, like sediments upon sediments, on the structure⁴⁴ (that is, inscribed on its walls from *within* and without destroying the structure from outside), they themselves are actually in temporal becoming.

Derrida, for instance, writes at one point in *Of Grammatology*: “The moments of deconstruction do not destroy [*sollicitent*] structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures. Inhabiting them *in a certain way*, because one always inhabits, and all the more when one does not suspect it. Operating necessary from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally, that is to say without being able to isolate their elements and atoms, the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work” (Derrida,

⁴² Derrida conceives trace as the “originary constitution” of time and space (Derrida, 1982, p. 8), it is nothing but the spontaneous [and together or *hama*] becoming of space and time, ‘the becoming-time of space and the becoming-space of time’ (Derrida, 1982, p. 8). Derrida, while reading Aristotle’s *Physics IV* in “Ousia and Gramme,” has suggested that: “it is *together* [my italic] that we have the sensation of movement and time” (Derrida, 1982, 49).

⁴³ “Ousia and Gramme” proves that the now (*nun*) as it is presented in *Physics IV* is not in itself temporal, that is, if time is ‘temporal only in becoming temporal’ or if it is always oscillating, like a pendulum, between the being-past and being-future, then now [*nun*] can never be part of time itself. If now is not part of time, then it cannot compose time (Derrida, 1982, p. 40).

⁴⁴ In “Structure, Sign and Play,” Derrida writes: “as soon as one seeks to demonstrate in this way that there is no transcendental or privileged signified and that the domain or play of signification henceforth has no limit, one must reject even the concept and the word “sign” itself – which is precisely what cannot be done. For the signification “sign” has always been understood and determined, in its meaning, as sign-of, a signifier referring to a signified, a signifier different from its signified” (Derrida, 2001, pp. 354 – 55).

2002, p. 24). The moment of deconstruction, therefore, establishes a parasitic relation with its hosts, like the nesting cuckoo, it inhabits and structurally exploits all the strategic and economic resources of hosts. It, therefore, is not destructive; it creates only through using and managing that which is already there.

Our discovery so far is that: a) the supplements, in themselves, are not presence or even presence of present, rather can only be inscribed within the materiality of sign; b) they are only trace of trace and, therefore, they cannot be *différance*. Hence to retrace the trace of the trace, the supplement itself, (tracing *différance* at least from this point of view seems impossible) one actually has to relay upon the deferred presence, the sign.⁴⁵

Our earlier question remains unanswered and, therefore, it demands repetition: what presents Derrida such confidence to carry out a parody of the “originary causality,” the *différance* itself, (Derrida, 1982, p. 9), when *différance* in itself is not presenting itself to him? What sets into motion the deconstructive forces within a text? Why is this (hostile) distortion of text, this parody, this very retracing of the trace left behind by traces, of the supplement (in Derrida’s own language *deconstruction*) so dangerous? What is the source of this hostility? What is the politics of this parody? Can deconstruction be this dangerous, if its hostile readings of texts are not also directed against our most cherished values? On the other hand, one can also ask the question: can the Foucauldian ontology of present be so effective, if it

⁴⁵ Up to here, Derrida’s approach is strictly Heideggerian; the quest for the meaning of Being, for Heidegger, becomes important as there occurred ‘a rupture between the original meaning of being and the word, between meaning and the voice, between “the voice of being” and the “*phone*,” between “the call of being,” and articulated sound...(Derrida, 2002, p. 22), “it is thus that, after evoking the “voice of being,” Heidegger recalls that it is silent, mute, insonorous, wordless, originarily *a-phonic* (*die Gewähr der lautlosen Stimme verborgener Quellen...*). The voice of the sources is not heard” (Derrida, 2002, p. 22). However, Heidegger does not take difference (the ontological difference between Being and being) to its very limit, to absolute difference, to *différance*, consequently, unlike recollection; deconstruction is only a possibility within language.

were not critical (or a parodic doubling of) on the text that it has engaged itself with? How Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, negotiates the force of both Derrida's deconstruction and Foucault's ontology of present, is a case to study.

One thing that is clear so far is that: deconstruction, as it is conceived by Derrida and his followers, does not actually *destroy* structures, and rather, it sustains itself only through *borrowing* the recourses from the old structures. Hence, with all good logic, one can conclude that to move itself deconstruction demands not just a self-deconstructing text, that is, not just the deferred presence, the sign (Derrida, 1982, p. 9), but also a larger shared (and therefore, structured) context (a shared totality, like the present of Foucault's 'ontology of present') that it can inhabit "*in a certain way*," and borrows from it, structurally, all its 'strategic and economic resources of subversion' (Derrida, 2002, p.24). Derrida's reading of most texts, especially, Levi-Strauss's and Rousseau's, confirms such inhabitation, and yet Derrida doesn't mind granting the text (alone) the deconstructive power (that is, to him, the text in itself is self-deconstructive; he for instance in *Of Grammatology* famously stated: "there is nothing outside the text" (Derrida, 2002, p. 163)), taking most responsibilities from the larger context in setting deconstruction into motion). Derrida, for instance, has written: "Différance, the disappearance of any originary presence, is *at once* the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of truth" (Derrida, 1981, p. 168).

Any parodic retracing, the tracing of the trace left behind by the trace of time (in Derrida's language: deconstruction) automatically demands a relation between the *straight* (deferred presence of the sign, in Derrida, however, suggests that the straight is already crooked) and the *crooked*; it demands consciousness (Vattimo, 1993), a synthesis of time, and yet, neither the absolute difference (the *différance*), nor the trace (of time), or the trace of trace

(the supplement), in Derrida, succumb themselves to the order of presence, and therefore, they cannot enact a synthesis (of time) and, for that reason alone, they will never constitute a consciousness. In “Ousia and Gramme,” Derrida, for instance, has argued that: time as nonbeing (as “no longer” or as “not yet”) could be *in-being* only in not being what it is (Derrida, 1982, p. 52). Consequently, one could conclude that to become conscious of itself and the world, the consciousness itself must become what it is not. In Derrida, the *différance* (with an ‘a’) or else the absolute difference, the trace and the simulacrum (the play of deferred presence, of signs) all signal a central absence, which is the absolute alterity of the non-time (time as in-being). What is then lacking in the very order of time (as in-being) is time itself. Hence, for the consciousness to be itself, that is, to be consciousness, it not just must spread itself from within a system of self-differentiating signs, but also must hold itself at the very threshold of (and directed towards) an unapproachable outside, its absolute alterity.

In Foucault, the “outside,” on the other hand, like the modern city-streets, is a neutral field, a field of undifferentiated forces (for further references, see how Foucault, following Baudelaire, portrayed Guys in “What is Enlightenment.” Constantin Guys, to him, was a different genius of painter, because of the fact that he was not just into capturing a fleeting moment; but rather while doing it, he will (*at once*) “transfigure,” transform and create that very moment in a radically new way), a field of possibilities (Foucault, 1984, p. 41). It is that field that repeatedly draws and redraws the margins that divides Derrida’s absolute difference, the *différance*, and the simulacrum, the play of signs. It is the very sky above the nesting cuckoo (the sky that engulfs everything and, thereby, gives form to everything from without). The sense in itself, from a Foucauldian point of view, is folding – that means, the self can only be created, if only the outside is folded towards itself (Foucault, 1997).

What differentiates Foucault from Derrida here is the influence of the Heideggerian dictum, on him: 'thrown into the world.' The outside is non-representational, and therefore, it is undifferentiated space.⁴⁶ Quite like Kant's claim that time and space are *a priori*, for Foucault, the sensible and the articulable, besides being *a priori* and deeply different from each other, also have their own histories. Thinking, Deleuze, for instance, has confirmed in *Foucault*, "is neither innate nor acquired" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 117), it rather comes from the outside; to think is nothing but to experience and problematise. Thinking, therefore, unfolds in that narrow space that differentiates the sensible and the articulable. "Knowledge, power and the self are the triple root of a problematisation of thought" (Deleuze, 1988, p.116). On the other hand, we, in fact, find Derrida progressing in resolving the problem of inside and outside in "Linguistics and Grammatology" (Derrida, 2002, pp. 27 – 73). What Derrida quite successfully introduced is the notion of temporality. To him, it is the text and the trace (and, since the trace is always already in becoming temporal, it is not presence) that are *the fundamental situation* within which human being can make sense of both himself and his world, and this iterable graphemes of experience effectively withholds all experience of outside.

Conclusion

The present chapter, through an intense meditation, has aimed to make sense of the condition (not the possibility of any, but rather) of the materialisation of the sign. This, an extension of the first chapter, is crucial to the next (and final) chapter that deals with two questions that have surfaced at different stages of Foucault's writings – "What is Man?" and "How should I live my life?." It

⁴⁶ The "outside" is a field of non-representational forces (since it is non-representational, one can only presume [or rather deduce from the conclusion that one arrive from the analysis of the simulacrum, the order of deferred presence] that they are in a differential relationship).

unfolds itself through a playful juxtaposing (repeating and, therefore, altering – Hume’s famous thesis (Deleuze, 1997, p. 70), for instance, which suggests that: *repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it*) of two mutually excluding theories of language: (a) Derrida’s claim that language carries within itself an infinite number of contexts (that is, the possibility within language that allows to read and reread the shared tradition always altogether differently) against (b) Foucault’s ontology of a shared present, the certainty of a totality (and therefore, it can’t be the fleeting instances) within which thought unfolds itself (to be specific, the singularity of the post World War II circumstance within which philosophy unfolded itself in France). Holland, for instance, has shown how Blanchot, during his life time itself, has divided an entire epoch in such a way that it can, under no circumstances, be a polarisation, but a struggle for the present in which thought itself takes place (Holland, 2007, pp. 46 – 66). The present chapter opens a close reading of Foucault’s thought to the idea of other major contemporary figures of French thought (in particular, of Derrida’s and Deleuze’s).

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Part II

The Theatrics: Body, Self and the Play of the Outside

I

CLAUDIUS

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness rage. Therefore prepare you.
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you.
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.

Shakespeare, 2002, p. 102

The madman's voyage is at once a rigorous division and an absolute Passage. In one sense; it simply develops, across a half-real, half-imaginary geography, the madman's *liminal* position on the horizon of medieval concern – a position symbolized and made real at the same time by the madman's privilege of being confined within the city gates: his exclusion must enclose him: if he cannot and must not have another *prison* than the *threshold* itself, he is kept at the point of passage. He is put in the interior of the exterior, and inversely.

Foucault, 2009, pp. 8 – 9.

Hamlet, Language and Life

In *On Poetics*, says Aristotle, “without action, tragedy could not come to be, but without characters it could come to be” (Aristotle, 2002, p. 21), one example he has cited as proof is the paintings of Zeuxis, which, according to Aristotle, are characterless and yet poetic by their very nature. It is only through action,¹ he argues, that characters gain their character; if put differently, what Aristotle suggests is that: it is nothing but the choice immanent in one’s actions that finally shape one’s happiness or the opposite. If Aristotle is right, then the question that can easily materialize itself and fill one’s thought is: why is Hamlet so reluctant to act. Why is he different from, say, Achilles and Hector or Oedipus and Othello?² Well, anyone could easily find an effortless answer, and reply directly that if in Aristotelian tragedy lies, at its very core, human *arete* (an

¹ *Peri Poietikes* (trans., “on poetics”), one of Aristotle’s most frequently read works, aims at elaborating the broader meanings of the verb *poiein*, which means “to do” in the sense of “to make.” If, to him, actors, to create characters, imitate action, so do we all humans; we all human being are actors, as it is natural to us to take pleasure in imitating. As it involves not just repeating somebody else, but also learning and figuring out; from childhood itself, human beings imitate what others *do* (Aristotle, 2002, p. 8 – 9). *Peri Poietikes*, then, would mean *On the Art of Action* (though, there is a narrower, secondary meaning as well, that is “to make poetry.” Even if the narrower, secondary meaning is true, Aristotle’s claim that tragedy – the imitation of an act ‘of stature and complete, with magnitude’ by means of ‘sweetened speech’ (Aristotle, 2002, p. 17) – is paradigmatic for poetry would only stress the importance of action in the sense of *making* (something) through imitation; however, the stress seems to be on “to make” and, that too, on to make “beautifully” (Aristotle, 2002, p. 36), rather than on the final result of an action. Aristotle, for instance, stresses that, there will be characters, when the *speech* and the *action* apparently open up some choice (Aristotle, 2002, p. 37) and it is only with the possibility of exercising choice that *courage* can surface itself and play its role. *On Poetics* here offers a point of view very different from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, which gives only an account of courage as a virtue, using mostly fictional characters, such as, Achilles, Hector and Diomedes (Aristotle, 2002, p. xv). If the great Japanese master, Katsushika Hokusai, in his much celebrated masterpiece *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, managed to reflect upon life itself (life as an immanent field of rhythm and chaos) then Aristotle’s *On Poetics* would only shows Hokusai’s heroes, those fishermen from Kanagawa, devotion to the *kalon*. *On Poetics* celebrates those men, our heroes, and their devotion to the *kalon* – the physical or moral beauty – so that we can see them closer than before and appreciate their beauty. In his introduction to *On Poetics*, suggests Michael Davis, if ‘all courage is metaphorical,’ then, like every courageous men, Achilles would also have been fighting *to die like Achilles* (Aristotle, 2002, p. xv), and this logic would only make poetry, or the art of making poetry the core of human life. However, how important is one’s relation to a myth (that suggests *what one should be*), its building and feeding through organizing one’s own life and action, for Foucault, is something to look at. How is ‘aesthetics of existence’ that anchors itself around the reciprocity of gaze (or the relation to oneself and others), differs from Aristotelian poetics?

² Achilles wouldn’t hesitate to revenge and he accepted full responsibility of the death of Patroklos; Oedipus too had a similar character, he was courageous enough to take full responsibility of his actions, and pursued in search of truth, even when the Queen Jocasta (his mother) disapproved his plan.

excellence of any kind); Hamlet lacks in him any such inherent quality. However, this easy answer would not then enrich the plot-structure of the current chapter, and therefore, we must abandon the surface, tunnel deeper into, and examine the very ground that supports and holds together this particular enterprise of Shakespeare's. 'Making sense of' does not mean here understanding the character Hamlet himself or even Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a literary success, but rather it is to intuit upon, identify with and appreciate the very [human] *condition* (that the writer, Shakespeare himself, tries to elaborate) within which imitation of an act, the play itself, or within the play can in fact be actualised. To value *Hamlet*, in this case, involves reversal (through dissecting) and analysing the very parts that constitute this demanding play; it is also to intuit upon the condition that shapes itself alone with the putting together of events to tell a story, in other words, the plot-structure, and the very tango of light and darkness (the lightness of knowledge and the darkness of ignorance) that it produces alone with itself, within which characters act not just upon themselves but upon others too.

Hamlet (since he is far from the purity of the Gods, who are the source of light, the ever victorious gaze that looks down on everything, and also from all our Heroes) at first instance, he is us or close to us; *passive* and *pathetic* like us, and yet a closer examination will only reveal that he is ahead of us. One finds Hamlet saying things that one would never hear from Homer's Achilles or Sophocles' Oedipus: "Why, what an ass am I! This is the most brave, that I, the son of a dear father murdered, prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words and fall a-cursing like a very drab, a stallion! Fie upon't, foh! About, my brains" (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 84) A closer examination of how Hamlet deals with himself in relation to that very tango of light and darkness, to that very contrast that grows out of Shakespeare's plot-structure itself, that is the contrast between lightness of

knowledge and the darkness of ignorance would only enlighten our intellectual and ethical interest to know about the nature of human condition. The following reading will try to explicate how Hamlet's fascination with words has kept him suspended at the threshold that divided the renaissance society (*that assigned definite relation between the word and the thing*) from the time of the revenge. It follows *the disconnectedness of his thoughts in relation to the world (the field of relations) he is into* that is reflected in his occasional misjudgement of situations, and tries to examine why the prince has actually failed to take revenge, and keep the word that he has given to his Father's spirit.

He couldn't just believe it, could he? Dazed, confused and caught in the middle of an act, the young prince has pronounced to himself these words: "My father's spirit in arms! all is not well; I doubt some foul play" (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 51). It seems that though the young prince of Denmark is removed, without his prior knowledge, from his own native land, through a cunning *plot*³ and presented before Shakespeare's medieval English audience to show himself, and to his English peers, his character. The frequent appearance of the apparition and its revelations, at the very beginning of the play itself, (that set the stage for rest of all the actions) shake the prince to the core and divide himself from within – "in my heart there was a kind of fighting, that would not let me sleep" (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 140); the resulting uncertainties and doubts that arise within him reach their pinnacle with his revelation that the times now (the times that he himself is living) are unhinged from their pedestal; that the young prince realises for himself that, "th[is] time is out of joint" (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 64). The time unhinged, the time out of joint, for anyone, is a time when thought may carry with itself only fear and fury, a shadow of sorrow and melancholy. It was a difficult time even for the young Danish prince, "the expectancy and rose of the fair state,

³ The plot is the way one puts together events to tell a story.

the glass of fashion and the mould of form, the observed of all observers” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 89). Evidently transformed, his mother, even she, after the conversation with Hamlet, at her closet, suggests he is but mad and “mad as the sea and wind” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 112). Recalling it, at one of the scenes in the castle, with such pain and sorrow, Ophelia has remarked: “O, what a noble mind is here o’erthrown!” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 89).

This quick shift in *opinion* and the attitude towards the young prince, among these other characters of the play, however, only reflect their finding in Hamlet an unexpected closure of the Cartesian ego or the sense of confidence of an *I* (an *I* that reason and act with certainty). This closure of the ego, this very *deferring* and *suspending* of the consolidation of the *I* in the Danish prince’s rhetoric might have tempted other characters to conclude that he lacks perspective and this very lack might only have let the young prince’s soul to fill itself with rhetoric, with words and a lot of them. This conclusion would only let a man like Lord Polonius to decipher some sort of lunacy at play at the very heart of Hamlet’s replies to him: “words, words, words.” This very lack (at least from the point of view of other actors) of perspective, in a social order that is obsessed, both in life and in art, with perspective might have suggested other actors to consider situating Hamlet and his rhetoric at the very edge of their own time, at the edge of Renaissance humanism. It, therefore, is not strange to hear from Lord Polonius that: “your noble son is mad: mad call I it; for, to define true madness, what is’t but to be nothing else but mad? But let that go....That he is mad, ‘tis true: ‘tis true ‘tis pity; and pity ‘tis ‘tis true: a foolish figure” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 71).

However, the deferring of the act of revenge – from the very beginning of the play itself and till its end, when a carnal, bloody and unnatural act unfolds itself from (what says Horatio, at the very end of the play) an unrestrained play of “accidental judgements” and “causal slaughters” (Shakespeare, 2002,

p. 151) – should be viewed from a totally different theoretical light. The struggle for the young Hamlet is not just a struggle against the King and his political apparatus; but it is also a struggle within; he is in fact divided within, allowing the rhetoric to thrive within him. The revelations of the apparition, even though, open a glimmer of the exterior, allowing the prince to encounter the truth of reality that the time he is in itself is [in fact] out of joint (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 64). This privileged view, however, is not open for all; it is not granted to all. Queen Gertrude's reply, in the scene at her closet, "This is the very coinage of your brain" (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 109), suggests such a situation. And still this privileged view, this view from the very edge, would only suspend Hamlet at the very threshold that has divided the interior (the prevailing state of order) from the exterior (the another possibility: if followed, for a moment, the point of view of other characters, one may say – insanity). Trapped, thus, at the very point of passage, perplexed by the complex labyrinth of words, Hamlet finds himself constantly dragged between the interior of the exterior and inversely. His inability to overcome the lure of words only drags him back to the order of linear time, the order of the present king. The young prince's struggles to get rid of the linear time, to *intuit* upon the exterior – "to be or not to be" – however, only take him into the more intricate corners of the labyrinth of words. The lure of words opens in the young prince a flood of anxiety, he then finds himself withheld at the threshold, unable to cross to the exterior, unable, therefore, to act.

Hence Hamlet can neither act (madness) nor can he actually be considered mad in a medical sense. His madness is not his disguise, but rather he is disguised from *himself* by the utter mystery of the time (it can even be "a damned ghost that we have seen"), the time into which he finds himself thrown into. Hamlet, since the revelations of the apparition granted him a glimmer of the truth of the reality that the time [indeed] is out of joint, views

reality from its very edge. As he (unlike other characters, especially the queen, Gertrude) does not actually believe King Claudius, it is only his anxiety for the exterior – exterior of *time* itself, the exterior of the socio-political order maintained by the figure of the king – that is reflected in his seemingly cunning rhetoric. It is the prevailing order that sustains itself through maintaining a definite relationship between words and things that makes others in the play to believe that the young prince is mad. It is in fact they, the other characters, who thought that he is mad. However, what actually throws the young Danish prince indefinitely into his present state, into this endless probing of the darkness of the prison, Denmark itself, with the aid of nothing but the flickering light of a slice of truth, granted to him by the apparition (the Father's spirit), is words.⁴ Words defer action and suspend

⁴ Derrida's interpretation of *Hamlet*, however, seems to have been shaped by his reading of Aristotle's *Physics*, and Heidegger's take on Aristotelian notion of time. The "Ousia and Gramme," for instance, has famously stated that "time could be a (in) being only in not being what it is... (Derrida, 1982, p. 52); that is, since time itself has to undergo metamorphoses (that is, it has to become that which it essentially is not) for to be a (in) being, for to be in discourse, it is not what we actually perceive as being (as linear progression); Derrida suggests that time, for that matter, can only be an inaccessible other series. The reading of *Hamlet*, in *Specters of Marx*, it seems, only develops his argument further, when he argues that apparition (since it is only an apparition) is not totally part of (anyone's) past [he, for instance, writes: "nor does one see in flesh and blood this Thing that is not a thing, this thing that is invisible between its apparitions, when it reappears. This Thing meanwhile looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there. A spectral asymmetry interrupts here all specularity" (Derrida, 2012, p. 6)]; for this reason, he draws a line, a line actually along the other series, between the spirit-world and the future, and declares that it is actually the nocturnal (haunting) calling – Ghost: "Mark me...I am thy Fathers Spirit" (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 59) – that is the true source of ethics (it seems, temporality, at least from Derrida's viewpoint, is an inherent property of time itself; that is, time, even at the level of the other series, is always in becoming temporal, moving from uncertainty to uncertainty, moving from the uncertainty of the spirit-world to the uncertainty of the future). However, does ethics have its roots in our nocturnal haunting? Is our desire to *speak to* and *speak with* the spirit truly the source of (our) ethics? And then – why this desire for apparition? Does the spirit also *share* a similar desire? Does it desire to speak to us? Why the spectre presence itself. Does it presence itself as absence? Is there a spectral asymmetry when it actually presence itself? The conversation between Hamlet and his friends, however, suggests; *no*, there is no such asymmetry, when it actually presence itself; since it itself desires to present itself, presence its corpse, "making night hideous." Horatio encounters in the spirit exactly the king of the best of his memory; armed, prideful and victorious from battle, the image in itself has the stature of a metaphor for a desirable king (yet he noticed, in the apparition, an inconsistency, it wears a shadow of sorrow): "Hamlet: arm'd say you? Marcellus and Bernardo: Arm's my lord. Hamlet: From top to toe? Marcellus and Bernardo: My lord, from head to foot. Hamlet: then saw you not his face? Horatio: O, yes my lord, he wore his beaver up. Hamlet: What, look'd he frowningly? Horatio: A countenance more in sorrow than in anger" (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 50). It is then true that when it appears, the apparition appears in material body that is, the desire to talk is nothing but a shared one – that the exchange is definitely not one sided.

the young prince to the very center of a regal theatre of thought, a grand tango of light and darkness, as he himself recollects: “for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” The challenge then, for Hamlet, is words.

Words yet again triumph over the young prince of Denmark, even after all his attempts to get rid of them, they, like those sworn guards, who watch the prison of rhetoric, have always watched and followed him (their prisoner). Hear! Hamlet swearing: “Remember thee! Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat in this distracted globe. Remember thee! Yea, from the table of my memory I’ll wipe away all trivial fond records, all saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, that youth and observation copied there” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 61).⁵ And yet! Words, through their regular interferences, have only succeeded in deferring the young prince’s action.⁶ If Denmark is “one o’ the worst” prisons (‘a goodly one,’ with many ‘confines, wards and dungeons’), then language, for the young prince, is one of its confines or wards.

The combination of levels of pessimism and scepticism actually makes Hamlet different from many other heroes. Hamlet seems mad, not because he has gone totally insane. He seems mad (to other characters in the play) because he is incomprehensible; because he does not give himself to other’s intellect. He is insane, as he, in a (renaissance) society preoccupied with analysing the relationship between words and things, is anxious of exploring all possible relations words can have with themselves in the very absence of any transcendental signified or of things. He seems insane because he is

⁵ A recognisable scepticism, quite similar to Pyrrhonian scepticism, can be dictated in Hamlet’s rhetoric, especially when he suggests to Rosencrantz that “there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 75), and yet he seems struggling throughout the play to achieve some level of tranquillity and composure. Pyrrhonians prefer calmness, as they thought, like Hamlet, that it is actually thinking that would make either good or bad.

⁶ See Appendix 1

playing with rhetoric. He is rhetorical, most of the time.⁷ It is quite evident that, through Hamlet's soliloquies, Shakespeare has invented human subjectivity.

Hamlet, Ronald Knowles, for instance, has argued that, has *masked* himself with nothing but rhetoric. He has refused to communicate meaningfully, as he refused to give up his private grief to the public with "debased values" (Knowles, 1999, p. 1061). Knowles has suggested, the unintelligibility of the young Danish prince's rhetoric is rather due to its *intensity*. Hamlet's "understanding is intense that he is not understood" (Knowles, 1999, p. 1061); his conversation with Lord Polonius, for Knowles, is an example.

Hamlet:

For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a
Good kissing carrion – have you a daughter?

Lord Polonius:

I have, my lord.

Hamlet:

Let her not walk i' th' sun. Conception is a
Blessing, but as your daughter may conceive – friend,
Look to't.

Though the language seems not communicating enough to Lord Polonius, Knowles, however, doubts whether it is actually true about us, who, unlike Lord Polonius, have accessed all Lord Hamlet's soliloquies. He expressed his doubts on whether or not these remarks of Hamlet are communicating perfectly to us, the audience, by putting a question mark after the *us* – '(and

⁷ Since being both pessimistic and rhetorical, *Hamlet* seems, at least from the point of view of *On Poetics*, not quite qualified either to be a true Aristotelian tragedy, the imitation of an act "of stature and complete, with magnitude" by means of "sweetened speech" (Aristotle, 2002, p, 17). The stress here on 'imitation' and 'sweetened speech' that is constituted upon an understanding of time, as the ceaseless flow from past to the future, elevates courage (and, for that matter, *all* courage) to the stature of *metaphor*; this is one reason why Michael Davis, in his introduction to Aristotle's *On Poetics*, has written that Achilles: (since "he [already] knows his fate"); "like all brave men, he [also] wants "to die like Achilles" (Aristotle, 2002, p. xv). Still this metaphoric *I* is not a transcendental incorporeal form of a Platonic nature, it rather is constituted within the matrix of the sense-perceptions.

us?).' Lord Polonius does not understand, and he is not supposed to understand Hamlet either, since the young Danish prince is baffling with him and seems absolutely in control of the situation and still 'he cannot be said to baffle Polonius completely since Polonius thinks that he is mad anyway' (Knowles, 1999, p. 1062); but then can't we really understand the person, Hamlet himself? Even after all his soliloquies! After re-examining the above-mentioned passage, suggests Knowles, even though the sun is the source of *decay*, as it decomposes the corpse, by breeding maggots; it is also the source of life, as it also breeds (maggots). The vulgar association of the physiological with the moral, in the very process of fleshly corruption, tends Hamlet to think about Ophelia ("have you a daughter?") and 'of the human conception and birth' (Knowles, 1999, p. 1062). Since sun, as we have already seen, is the source of procreative life; Knowles suggests, he must have puns *sun* as *son* (suggesting Hamlet as possible procreator) and recommends Lord Polonius, "Let her not walk i' th' sun." Here sun is considered as the very symbol of kingship. In sum what this afore-mentioned exchange suggests, for Knowles, is that "keep her out of the court where the procreative act, sex, is corrupt, "but as your daughter may conceive, friend look to't"" (Knowles, 1999, p. 1062).

Why then this obscurity, this conscious masking of words with words. Why is Hamlet hiding himself behind the shadow of words? What is the source of all his pessimism? Does the cause of his pessimism, this obsession with rhetoric, this very desire for word play suggest to us, the audience, anything? Are Hamlet's wordplays actually faithful to their desired outcomes (their effects on other characters of the play)? It is very clear that the Wittenberg educated young prince, through rhetoric, has actually been able to have (more than once) a decisive influence on situations – situations into which he has been thrown into. Hamlet's success in baffling, at different stages of the play, Lord

Polonius and his old childhood friends, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, are signs of success; still while inspecting the skull of the king's jester, in the scene at the churchyard, Horatio, on the other hand, immediately succeeds in reading young Hamlet's mind and anticipates an imminent wordplay; his query, "What's that, my lord?," as a result, opens the very possibility of a conversation on Alexander the Great.

The nature of Hamlet's relationship with Horatio is reflected in his monologue with him – "give me that man that is not *passion's slave* [my italic], and I will wear him in my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart" (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 93) – in the castle-scene, before the players start staging the drama. Their relationship actually echoes the ancient Greek concern of the self that Shakespeare takes up seriously to reflect upon in *Julius Caesar* through a dialogue between Brutus and Cassius.⁸ The young prince's growing concern for himself, for his disturbed soul – "since my dear soul was mistress of her choice" – here compels him to elevate Horatio, his good old childhood-friend, to the level of an inner god (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 92).⁹ Their relationship, therefore, develops, not from any form of compassion or even pity that the prince shows towards his poor friend; rather it evolves out of Hamlet's educated reflection on himself and the situation into which he is thrown into by forces alien to his knowledge. The young Danish prince finds himself at perpetual danger, shadowed by fear – "To be or not to be" – he finds himself passive and pathetic "like a whore, unpack my heart with words and fall a-cursing like a very drab, a stallion!;" his soul, shadowed with fear cultivated at its 'heart of heart' by a play of difference, shamelessly yields before her

⁸ "Cassius: ...Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face? Brutus: No, Cassius, for the eye sees not itself but by reflection, by some other thing" (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 11); and therefore, "Cassius: ...good Brutus, be prepared to hear, and since you know you cannot see yourself so well as by reflection, I, your glass, will modestly discover to yourself that of yourself which you yet know not of" (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 12).

⁹ Foucault, while studying Greek *missive* for instance has located, between the correspondences, the unfolding of a similar reciprocity of gaze, which is essentially non-hierarchical (Foucault, 1997, p. 217).

own desires. He is the *sun* that is the very source of both life and decay and, therefore, a strong companion-guide like Horatio, the young Danish prince would, at last, have concluded that, be a very desirable partner, a partner, whom he can wear in his heart's troubled 'core, ay, in [his] heart of heart.'

Hamlet despises himself; he finds himself crippled (as he is fully taken in its trap) by his rationales (his own thoughts) and ignoring the act of revenge; in most cases, the thought for the young Danish prince is for its own sake; in other words, thought, in his case, is devoid of any significant contribution from the sense-perception; his intuitions are not always backed by any careful studies of the reports from sense-perception, rather they are pure intellectual endeavours. At the very heart of Hamlet, therefore, is rationalism, the form of it that continues from Plato to Descartes and then to Leibniz.¹⁰ That is, a certain aversion, in Hamlet, towards considering the reports of own sense-perceptions, the signs of the present (as elements constituting knowledge) turns the seeking of truth purely a rational activity. He speaks words, like a man with fine innate qualities, than a very studious observer. He is a man of intellect, a man of sheer genius. This aversion for the inputs of the sense-perceptions, for the world of sensible, at times, has guided him to misreading of time the present in itself – “Now might I do it pat, now he is praying; and now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 104): these misreading of time, at different stages of the play, this particular inability of the young Danish prince to see the present without prejudice and justification, to see it in itself, insert fear in his soul. Hamlet's thought,

¹⁰ It is no wonder that the Cartesian cogito (the certainty of an I confirmed by “I think,” the rational activity of a mind that combines concepts to develop conceptions) and the Leibnizian monad (the mind folded towards itself) have their lineage in Greek thought, especially in Plato. With Plato all true forms of knowledge are actually nothing but reason's comprehension of intelligible forms. The transcendence and the priority of the incorporeal forms link seeking knowledge with *recollection* and, for that reason, all forms of true knowledge are justifiably independent of sense-perception. Besides, in all these thinkers, it is actually noticeable that, a priori knowledge is always grounded in innate ideas.

consequently, is a thought fuelled, at his soul, by an ever intensifying pessimism, rooted in nothing but fear and fury. However, Hamlet, with such fine innate intellect, cannot be a man unaware of his own weakness; his exchange, particularly with Horatio – the god whom he wears in his heart of heart – before the players start playing their drama, at the castle, in front of the king and the queen, quite clearly implies some form of his earlier educated evaluation of himself, his qualities and his ill-fates in analysing sense-perceptions; he solicits Horatio, therefore, to help him in *observing* his uncle, the king Claudius himself, and his occulted guilt: “when thou seest that act afoot, even with the very comment of thy soul observe mine uncle” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 93).

Considering Hamlet’s stature of high degree, as the person “most immediate to [the] throne” of Denmark (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 47), the king, for instance, has indicated that ‘Madness in *great ones* [my italic] must not unwatched go;’ that the lunacy, in the young Danish prince, must in no case be left unwatched that it may rage (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 90). His judgement of Hamlet, however, is a conditioned one; it is deeply structured by the plot (the way Shakespeare organised events to tell the story, the way he wanted it to be). With the guilt of the culprit and the sole bearer of the truth of the reality, the king must have, in him, a lot to hide. Like most of his remarks,¹¹ this particular remark of the king is nothing but a mere deceitful (and it, therefore, from his point of view is trivial) one, since he himself doubts Hamlet. The king, it seems, is reasonably convinced that Hamlet’s insane act “was not like madness. [And rather] There’s something in his soul o’er which his melancholy sits on brood, and I do doubt the hatch and the disclose will be some danger” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 89); hence the question actually is: can

¹¹ The only sincere words he might have uttered are in the soliloquy that follows his failed attempt to pray: “My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. Words without thoughts never to heaven go” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 105).

one of us, the audience, the viewer, who has got the privilege to place himself at the very threshold that sets apart his *life* and Shakespeare's *plot*, take, any of the king's trivial remarks on the young prince, for granted, without proper criticism and declare Hamlet (by merely considering the circumstances that lead to the withholding of his privileges of birth) a tragic hero? The young prince, as the immediate heir to the crown, is obviously important. But then, is Hamlet really a person of any greatness? What kind of effect can his lack of control on himself at a time of total decay inflict on our feeble souls? Does his troubled soul suggest anything to ours?

The lure of words defeats Hamlet altogether, engulfs his soul and corrupts it with fear and fury; he is a man totally immersed in and driven by words. This, to a large extent, cripples his abilities to detach the spirit effectively from all kinds of external influence and to observe, without prejudice or justification, both himself and the framework of his own thoughts. He is a man who lacks the spiritual strength to rise above the thick fold of words and its very lure and organise a sensibility that is *exterior* to and yet in *relation* to the linear time (time as (in) being) – a sensibility that, we should all live under the illuminating light of ethics; as if we were living under the plain sight of both oneself and all other men (Foucault, 1997, p. 217). Hamlet, consequently, has failed to organise a vision without an image. His desire for revenge, therefore, cannot come out of any ethical drive or a demand for justice; rather it is a very clear act of vengeance: “The point envenomed too! Then, *venom*, [my italic] to thy work” (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 149). With mind folded towards itself, Hamlet rather is a true monad, and yet is also a man neglected by himself; even at this time of decay he is reluctant to take care of himself.¹²

¹² Foucault's journey to the Greek antiquity and his encounter with the Socratic rationality, for instance, suggest that no observation (or a search for the truth) is complete without also considering seriously the observer, who undertakes that very observation. The aim of the man of the antiquity is to master oneself by mastering over one's own passions and desires through techniques of self; here mastering oneself directly involves detaching one from oneself (Foucault, 1997, p. 270).

Driven by words and the thought that carries them, he rather lets himself involve in a cat and mouse act with other characters. "Polonius: My lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently. Hamlet: Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel? Polonius: By th'Mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed. Hamlet: Methinks it is like a weasel. Polonius: It is backed like a weasel. Hamlet: Or like a whale? Polonius: Very like a whale. Hamlet: Then I will come to my mother by and by (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 101). The cunningness and the deception that Hamlet displays only stop *the playing out of the force of pure play*, and therefore, he fails to initiate new beginnings.

Hamlet has that innate quality to pick the very pulse of a situation and reacts adequately; he is a born actor and for that reason, a very demanding character for any accomplished stage actor; like a chameleon, he is able to switch colours to suit the situation. He is a man moulded by reactive forces. Quite often he, ignoring his responsibilities, engages in wordplays, both with himself and others, and explores the immanent moves within them. It is evident that Hamlet practices what he believes, and what he believes, he teaches others: he, for instance, advises the players to "be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure" (Shakespeare, 2002, p. 91). Here is a man, in Hamlet, who plays tricks with his own time, than concern himself to change himself and his time.

Immanent to any mode of existence is a certain mode of relationship to time, a certain mode of mapping time, time as (in) being. With a peculiar combination of fear and fury, Hamlet's relation to his own time however

flux, to a *field of undifferentiated forces*. It is within the play of *this morphogenetic field of forces* that both *the self* and the topography of *the world* that it perceives take form. Since the center is an unapproachable absence, and it is the repetition of this central absence that unfolds this very immanent field of movement, Deleuze, in his work on Foucault, argues that self is constituted by folding the outside towards itself, in other words, the self is constituted by folding the forces of desires and pleasures towards themselves. It, then, is a recession into future. The following reading aims to outline broadly the actual topography of this immanent field within which the whole action unfolds itself. It opens with a reading of Foucault's reading of Bataille. There, what one finds is: being that is nothing but pure movement (and, therefore, has no existence outside movement) repeatedly transgressing the limit in the very presence of a central absence, an empty skull, that is, forces organising coups from beneath the consolidated masks of previous forces.

Transgression, here, is conceived as an act of profanation without an object, that is, it is not against anything, and therefore, does not negate anything. It is a profanation that is essentially, "empty and turned inward upon itself and whose instruments are brought to bear on nothing but each other" (Foucault, 1980, p. 30). Foucault writes, what transgression prescribes is not just the sole "manner of discovering the sacred in its unmediated substance, but also a way of recomposing its empty form, its absence, through which it becomes all the more scintillating" (Ibid, 1980, p. 30). The following reading tries to highlight the very nature of transgression that Foucault portrayed, and that in short is: being (that is nothing but movement) repeatedly transgresses (an act of profanation without an object, that is, this act essentially an empty act) the limit in a relationship that takes the form of a spiral, around a central absence, an empty skull. Here the emptiness of the act itself suggests the recession into future.

In "A Preface to Transgression," Foucault, through an examination of the play of limit (finitude) and transgression (being), presents a theory of the affirmation of division, and a possibility inherent to it, that is, the very possibility of a non-dialectical language. Obstnacy, Foucault suggests, is the governing law of the play of limits and transgression. Foucault writes, "transgression is an action which involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line where it displays the flash of its passage, but perhaps also its entire trajectory, even its origin; it is like that transgression has its entire space in the line it crosses" (Foucault, 1980, p. 34). It 'incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration.' Hence it is made to return again and again right to the horizon of the uncrossable taking its relation with the limit to the form of a spiral. With each transgression, 'the limit opens violently onto the limitless, finds itself suddenly carried away by the content it had rejected and fulfilled by this alien plenitude which invades it to the core of its being. It, therefore, only serves as the glorification of the nature it excludes' (Foucault, 1980, p. 34).

Transgression, Foucault writes, is violence in its purest form. But it does not relate to the limit like the relation between black and white or that between the outside and the inside. Since it contains nothing negative, it does not even transform the other side of the mirror (the limit). Rather it only 'affirms the limited being – affirms the limitlessness into which it leaps as it opens this zone to existence for the first time' (Ibid, 35). Foucault writes, "Perhaps it is like a flash of lightning in the night which, from the beginning of time, gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies, which lights up the night from the inside, from top to bottom, and yet owes to the dark the stark clarity of its manifestation, its harrowing and poised singularity; the flash loses itself in this space it marks with its sovereignty and becomes silent now that it has given a name to obscurity" (Ibid, p. 35).

Transgression carries thought to its very limits and, 'from there, to the Limit where an ontological decision achieves its end.' To contest (in the sense that Blanchot gives to the word), according to Foucault, 'is to proceed until one reaches the empty core where being achieves its limit and where the limit defines being' (Ibid, 1980, p. 36). Still this motion, one finds Foucault insisting, must not be understood 'as the promised return to a homeland or the recovery of an original soil which produced and which will naturally resolve every opposition (this is a very important difference that Foucault draws against metaphysics – one can deploy even against the Hindu metaphysics which we have examined at the beginning – where the morphological field of intensities that produces both names and extensions are essentially unfolding within an ultimate reality, *a univocal one*, but for Foucault such a reality is inaccessible to human experience). On the contrary, transgression aims to liberate our language – by carrying it to its very limit and, finally folding it towards itself to liberating it from its speaking subject. Transgression is an act of affirmation that affirms nothing; it is essentially with an empty core. Foucault suggests, "[a]t the very transgressed limit, the "yes" of contestation reverberates, leaving without echo the hee-haw of Nietzsche's braying ass" (Ibid, 1980, p. 36): Deleuze, on the contrary, writes in *Pure Immanence* that "affirmation is itself essentially multiple and pluralist, whereas negation is always one, or heavily monist" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 74). Power as a *will to power*, according to Deleuze, does not suggest that which the will wants, but rather that which wants in the will. To him, Dionysus himself is the will to power (Deleuze, 2001, p. 73).

Foucault writes, "[a]nd perhaps to all those who strive above all to maintain the unity of the philosopher's grammatical function – at the price of the coherence, even of the existence of philosophical language – we could oppose Bataille's exemplary enterprise: his desperate and relentless attack on the

preeminence of the philosophical subject as it confronted him in his own work, in his experience and his language which became his private torment, in the first reflected torture of that which speaks in philosophical language – in the dispersion of stars that encircle a median night, allowing voiceless words to be born. “Like a flock chased by an infinite shepherd, we, the bleating wave, would flee, endlessly flee from horror of reducing being to totality” (Ibid, 1980, pp. 42 – 3). In Bataille’s work, Foucault suggests, it is *the eye* that has kept its value as the figure of inner experience: “When at the height of anguish, I gently solicit a strange absurdity, an eye opens at the summit, in the middle of my skull” (Ibid, 1980, p. 44). If the eye, within a philosophy of reflection, ‘derives from its capacity to observe the power of becoming always more interior to itself,’ in Bataille its function is reversed entirely in an opposite direction.

The eye, in a violent move, is forced from its ordinary position. It is made to turn itself upwards to face it towards the nocturnal, towards the interior of the skull, thereby allowing us to see only its usually concealed surface, white and unseeing. It ‘shuts out the day in a movement that manifests its own whiteness (whiteness being undoubtedly the image of clarity, its surface reflection, but for this very reason, it cannot communicate with it, nor communicate it)’ (Ibid, 1980, p. 46). Hence ‘the circular night of the iris is made to address the central absence which it illuminates with a flash, revealing it as night’ (Ibid, 1980, p. 46). Even though this violent upward turning of the eye denies any possibility of seeing, the eye (as white and unseeing) is open to sight, evicting the philosophical subject totally and followed to its limit, allowing now the sovereignty of the philosophical language to be heard ‘from the distance, in the measureless void left behind by the exorbitated subject.’ When the great eyelid closes upon the world, in that very moment of meditation, what it discovers is that *the interior is nothing*

but an empty skull, a central absence (Ibid, 1980, p. 49). Hence the play of limit and transgression is played out, according to Foucault, in the presence of a central absence – he suggests that the inside, in relation to the outside, is an empty skull.

The play of transgression and limit that Foucault shows in “A Preface to Transgression” is entirely different from Aristotle’s definition of action in *On Poetics*, since an action for Aristotle is related essentially to imitation. Transgression is not an act of courage (organised around a myth). It is neither violence in a divided world nor a victory over the limit. It is rather an empty act and, therefore, without an object, and is essentially folded towards itself, and what it affirms is the existence of pure difference. It is rather governed by obstinacy (which is an essential characteristic of forces). Foucault writes: ‘at the very transgressed limit, the “yes” of contestation reverberates, leaving without echo the hee-haw of Nietzsche’s braying ass.’ Is transgression, then, a tension internal to a discourse driven by (affirmative) forces? – to ‘a discourse whose tension would keep separate the empirical and the transcendental, while being directed at both; a discourse that would make it possible to analyse man as a subject, that is, as a locus of knowledge which has been empirically acquired but referred back as closely as possible to what makes it possible’ (Foucault, 1994, p. 320). In Foucault’s work, thought that is conceived as a confused form of discursive formations, is, actually, the very form of action, and for that reason, it has both Apollonian (logic, reason and individuation) and Dionysian (intuitive, impulsive or emotions) aspects within it. Since the interior is an empty skull, a central absence, thought must always come from outside, and addresses nothing other than itself.

Through an act of transgression, thought then is carried to its limits and from there to the Limit where an ontological decision achieves its final end. Thought, then, involves both constraint and freedom, and this is built upon

Foucault discovery that power is not external to freedom. What Foucault presupposes, Sybylla writes, is 'a complicated process, an 'agonism,' as it is not consciousness, but also the 'unknown sage,' 'the body's active, unconscious and mutable forces' that rule human beings (Sybylla, 2004, p. 318). Foucault writes: "thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning; rather, it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem" (Foucault, 2003, p. 23). Foucault builds problematisation around Kantian notion of critique. Yet the empirical and the transcendental are coupled in Foucault in the confused form of discourse on the human (Djaballah, 2008, p.7). Foucauldian problematisation, for that reason, is not formal, as is the case with Kantian criticism. Like Kantian criticism, Foucauldian problematisation, driven by scepticism to power – that is, organised forces – is naturally a problem concerning power. Problematisation, Foucault writes, "does not mean the representation of a pre-existent object nor the creation through discourse of an object that did not exist. It is the ensemble of discursive and non-discursive practices that make something enter into the play of true and false and constitute it as an object of thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc.)" (Rabinow and Rose, 2003, p. xviii).

It is actually the problem concerning power that must have held back Foucault from developing a theory of relation of words and things out of his archaeological method. Unlike hermeneutics, his archaeology does not claim to explore the deeper meaning within layers of historically developed discursive formations. Archaeology rather aims to treat human sciences

merely as discourse-objects, without involving in the debates around their truth, that is, it is inclined, at the very level of method, to treat its materials (the discourse-objects) deprived of its contents: that means, without taking into consideration their meanings or truth claims. Foucault writes, “statements do not attempt to evade verbal performance in order to discover behind them or below their apparent surface a hidden element, a secret meaning that lies buried within them, or which emerges through them without saying so...” (Foucault, 1972, p. 109). Archaeology rather treats discourses only as *rule-governed systems*, with their “accepted concepts, legitimized subjects, taken-for-granted objects, and preferred strategies, which yield justified truth claims” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. xxiv).

Unintelligibility is the defining characteristics of this casual power attributed to the rules governing discursive formations, and this incomprehensibility of the relationship between the discursive and institutional formations, and the ways with which they shape meaning and truth of life, it seems, to have always concerned Foucault’s thinking, and for that reason, his later Nietzschean turn, that is his shift towards genealogical approaches, is only a possibility opened within his archaeology (that is, even though archaeology deals primarily with knowledge, it also tempt one to imagine an outside). Dreyfus and Rabinow quote Foucault: “I believed that I spoke from the same place as that discourse, and that in defining its space I was situating my remarks: but I must now acknowledge that I can no longer speak from the space from which I showed they spoke” (Ibid, 1982, p. xxiv). Problematization is an experience unfolded within a system of relations of power.

Through a microphysics of relations of forces, Deleuze, for instance, suggests that in its becoming, before the force coup and overcome the pre-existing force and its masks, it *must appear concealed by the mask of pre-existing force*; that is, according to him, “life must first imitate matter” (Deleuze, 2001, p. 67).

Philosophical force, at the time of its birth in Greece, for instance, has to disguise itself by the mask of a pre-existing force, the priest. 'The young Greek philosopher has something of the old Oriental priest' (Deleuze, 2001, p. 67). The peculiar solitude and the sensibility, an excess to the mask of the pre-existing force, the form of thought of a priest, are actually beyond the guess of that mask, *it is in fact beyond any form of guess*. The finer microphysics of forces that *constitutes and presences the logics and sensibilities of the force of philosophy that would eventually overthrow the mask of the priest is also in the becoming*. Like all forces, the force of philosophy also *recreates* itself. Whenever it overcomes the mask of pre-existing force, it always comes with new masks. Without masks, *force is only a much fainted sense of change* – a ceaseless self-becoming not given to either intelligence or intuition. Force, from the point of view of the senses, is essentially *movement*.

Can we assume that *all forces gain their force in relation to a system*; that is it is only when force transgresses its own limit that is *the limit built within itself*, in accordance with its relations and functions within a system that it becomes a force? To become a force, does it actually have to ceaselessly coup itself (like the heart, with each beat, *drives blood, stimulates the faculties of sensation and gives voice to silence*)? Are these ceaseless coups, from within itself that maintain the force as force? Is it through overthrowing itself that a force overflows the *virtual order, the mobile arrangements of relations*? Becoming of force involves ceaseless coups – coups that involve not just overthrowing of the mask of the pre-existing force, but also self-overthrowing. To put differently, to affirm itself force has to negate *at once* both its interior and exterior. In other words, it affirms the whole. Deleuze, for instance, suggests in *Pure Immanence* that the secret of philosophy lost at its very origin 'remains to be discovered in the future' (Deleuze, 2001, p. 68). Does this defining nature of all affirmative forces have anything to do with this lose? It is within the free

play of form and force that the theatrics unfolds itself. The force of philosophy had to transgress the form (limit) of the priest with a peculiar solitude and sensibility, that is, it has to organise a coup from beneath the mask of the priest to affirm itself.

Derrida in his take of the two drives, the Apollonian and the Dionysian that Nietzsche has identified in Greek culture, writes in "Force and Signification" that "*Form fascinates when one no longer has the force to understand [my italic] force from within force*" (Derrida, 2007, p. 3). The demand for a certain force in oneself, evoked here when Derrida writes *when-one-not-longer-has-the-force-to-understand-force-from-within-force* seems to refer to a force gained through forms of pain, that is, through disciplines and training. Deconstruction, one must say, is Dionysian in its very heart; it is a play of excess. In Derrida's reading – that is, '[o]ne not longer has the force to understand force from within force' – one only senses within it the temporal nature of the unfolding relations between form and force. The question, it seems, is much more than whether *one has within himself, a fascination towards form or a force to understand force from within force*. It rather demands proficiency in using techniques to understand force from within force.

The Dionysian and Apollonian spirits that Nietzsche identified in ancient Greek culture have quite significantly influenced French philosophical scene during the Post II World War, and Foucault is in fact not an exception. The forms of life that they celebrate, even though contradict each other, are still to be seen evolving from one morphogenetic field. This becomes evident in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, when Nietzsche writes that "There is always some madness in love. But there is always, also, some method in madness" (Nietzsche, 2012, p. 36). Love here – beauty, Derrida for instance writes, is value and force (Derrida, 2007, p. 21) – is a play of form and force. He continues, "It is true we love life; not because we want to live, but because *we are wont to love* [my

italic]" (Nietzsche, 2012, p. 36), besides any wont to live only lose life, as life, in any rate, an excess that is at once an excess to itself and an excess to senses, indeed exceed all concepts. If 'we are wont to love' that always has in it some madness, an excess, then we are also wont to excess. Yet we are wont to love rather through a discreet melancholy (a form of pain).

Derrida's critique that appeared in *Writing and Difference*, for instance, claiming that in *Madness and Civilisation* Foucault's reflections on Descartes' *Meditations* conceived madness as exterior (madness as exterior to philosophy) has opened a dialogue between them. Derrida, by pointing out the spatial dimension of Foucault's argument, implies that Descartes, in his *Meditations*, rather has taken madness only to its extreme, and has not excluded it altogether. The stress on the temporal aspect suggests that cogito rather emerges from within the movement of madness, that is, it actually emerges from within a hyperbolic movement of suspicion. However, the temporal dimension of Foucault's thinking is much more evident, when he writes in *The Order of Things*: "was it not also on the basis of error, illusions, dreams and madness, all the experiences of unaccounted-for thought, that Descartes discovered *the impossibility of there not being thoughts* [my italics] – to such effect that the thought of the ill-thought, of the non-true, of the chimerical, of the purely imaginary, emerged as the possible locus and the primary, irrefutable proof of all those experiences?" (Foucault, 1994, pp. 323 - 24). Descartes, to Foucault, was actually concerned to reveal thought in its most general form in all thoughts, that is, even at the level of error or illusion, and therefore, he rendered them as harmless, so that he would be free, even after retreating from his meditation on error or madness, to return again to them and explains them, and to develop a method to guard against them.

With the modern cogito, on the other hand, the distance that, at the same time, separates and links thought-conscious-of-itself and whatever contains

within it is given greater value within the immanent field of non-thought. Consequently, it is not as such a discovery of an evident truth, rather it “must traverse, duplicate, and reactivate in an explicit form the articulation of thought on everything within it, around it, and beneath it which is not thought, *yet, which is nevertheless not foreign to thought* [my italics], in the sense of an irreducible, an insuperable exteriority” (Foucault, 1994, p. 324). Consequently, cogito in its modern form, according to Foucault, is not a sudden and illuminating discovery that all thoughts are thought, as is the case with Cartesian cogito. It is rather a ceaseless interrogation “as to how thought can reside elsewhere than here, and *yet so very close to itself* [my italics]; how it can *be* in the forms of non-thinking” (Foucault, 1994, p. 324). The modern notion of transcendence, Foucault writes, is remote from Kantian analysis. If the Cartesian cogito aims to fix the very definite truth of its own presence even in the midst of a field of turbulence, even in madness, then, modern cogito gains movement from within a disturbance, and starts to interpret and evaluate both itself and the World in relation to its own unthought. Here it is not at all Truth, but rather change itself is its immediate objective. It is interesting here to examine how Foucault integrated Kant into his thinking, so that one will be more equipped to pursue the question of becoming, which is more explicit in this late writings on the care of the self and use of technique. The following reading of Foucault’s work tries to elaborate the status of man, and the relation between oneself and oneself, and oneself and the others.

Foucault, Kant and Pragmatism

In *Kant, Foucault and Forms of Experience*, Marc Djaballah writes “By contrast with previous projects of criticism – as undertaken by Descartes, Locke, or Hume, for example – that integrate a method to delimit the use of reason so that mistakes can be avoided by ensuring certainty in knowledge, Kant develops a method to delimit a sphere outside of which empirical knowledge

is impossible. Outside this space of real objects, *thought has no empirical content* [my italic]" (Djaballah, 2008, p. 26). In the "Introduction to Kant's Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View,"¹⁴ Foucault, for instance, notices a shift in Kant's focus from both *a concern with the human animal* and with the *self-consciousness*. Kant's *Anthropology*, according to him, preoccupies with *Menschenwesen* that is the questioning of man's limits in Knowledge and the concrete existence. The *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, for instance, stresses the empirical dimension of Kant's Anthropology, and for that reason, Foucault argues there that it has no "contact" with a reflection on the conditions of experience. However, this essential difference cannot be seen of the kind/order of a non-relation, as 'a certain analogy lets one half-see in the Anthropology like a (photo) negative of the Critique' (Foucault, 2013).

Foucault's reading of *Anthropology*, to shift focus from the search for 'origins' in a distant time and truth to the context of man's finitude, has in fact taken shape against the danger of *formalising epistemological activity*. Through careful reflection he tries to show 'the point where philosophical reflection comes to culminate into an interrogation of the interrogations themselves.' Here the source is thoroughly dried out without leaving any trace – and, for that reason, it is nothing but an unapproachable absence. Therefore, there cannot be an origin, a spring, rather everything including the contemplating *I* unfolds from within a temporal field – from the very density of becoming. Foucault through his reflections on *Anthropology* integrates the three questions of the Critiques – what can I know?; what must I do?; and what can one hope for? Respectively – by adding a fourth one, what is man? He writes: "[t]hese three questions that hang over and, to a certain extent, command the organisation of critical thought, can be found at the beginning of the Logic,

¹⁴ Online source: Michael Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (trans. Arianne Bove), <http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpfoucault1.htm> (12/6/2013).

but affected by a decisive modification. A fourth question appears: what is man? – which only follows on from the first three in order to take hold of them again in a reference that wraps them all: because they all have to relate themselves to that one” (Foucault, 2013). Hence because of this very fact, to him, the largely empirical status that the first Critique assigns to the Anthropology is seriously challenged here.

Still the *Anthropology*, as we know it, does not lend itself at any moment to answer this fourth question. According to Foucault, it does not lend even a broad empirical exploration of the question. The question, rather, is posed much later in the *Logic* and in the *Opus postumum*. In *Opus postumum*, the question of man appears in the context of the relation between God, the world and the man (Ibid, 2013). Foucault continues by asking: ‘What is the correct meaning of this unification of God and the world in man and for man?’ If God and the world attain unity in man, it is because he exercises his sovereignty as a thinking-subject – thinking God and thinking the world.¹⁵ Foucault here compares the structure of the judgement with the traditional logic: the trilogy Subjekt, Praedikat, Copula. Man, consequently, is that ‘which is then the copula, the link – like the verb ‘to be’ of the judgement of the universe. It is in him (in man) that a universal synthesis establishes, or else, he ‘appears as the

¹⁵ It is interesting here to compare how Levinas deals the problem. He hesitates to integrate the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ with an immanent field. This very rejection of a shared-present between them highlights the very collapse of all phenomenality. The other hence is always immune to all imminent acts of representation, and, for that very reason, the self, according to him, is always responding to the call of the other. Since the self is always responding to, Levinas suggests, it is incapable of taking the discursive initiative that is, it can never be the origin of a speech act. In other words, since proximity is prior to all initiatives of the ego, that is, since the very call of the Other is prior to freedom, *language is already scepticism*. Like a disturbing prophecy, the absolute alterity declares its approaching (Levinas, 2006, p. xxv); and it is, actually, like the proximity of the apparition in Derrida’s reading of *Hamlet*. We, however, have seen in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* what kind of harm responsibility as an irreducible *a priori*, a presence (of an absolute absence) that unsettles all other presence through their internal scission can inflict on the subject. We have seen in *Hamlet* a troubled mind, under a haunted sky, hesitating, like a frightened kid, to be still, hesitating, even for a while, to *wait* and watch; a man consumed in fear and fury. Does Hamlet do justice to his father’s spirit? No! Is the suggested answer we get from Horatio at the end of the play. Does Hamlet do justice to himself? Again no! The point I am trying to arrive at here is: any conception of justice that does not *care* to summon, within it, the one who conceives it, for serious reflection, is not just at all.

universal synthesis,' unifying the personality of the God (sensible) and the objectivity of the world (supra-sensible principle). The absolute, by starting from him, can be thought. These texts of Kant, Foucault admits, should not be considered as enough, as they are neither *answers* nor *solutions* to the fourth question, rather they only suggest the possible paths and tests that Kant's thought has taken while advancing on the ground of finally attained transcendental philosophy (Ibid, 2013). The topography of Kant's thought as it evolves yet to be scanned each time – the interrogation on man cannot be separated from the problematic of the world and God.

The answer to the fourth question is not resolved yet, as one confronts a new sequence of problems – problems rooted primarily in language, as the world is not simply given to language. It is actually not easy to talk about this world. The world, as a system of real relations, is folded towards itself, and is kept outside of the system of signs and the chain of signification. Here establishes a closure, as the world as ceaselessly folding itself towards itself excluding the language. Foucault writes in the *Introduction*: the 'accomplishment of the closure of this folding seems to entail the exclusion of language, and of its primary form that is predication. The text of *Opus postumum* suggests that *personality* is the predicate of God, but then it only 'makes illegible what the predicate of the world ought to be by way of symmetry,' and remains 'unfilled on the side of language, as the world as a whole is beyond all the predications and maybe at the root of all the predicates. Still the world remains not without structure or signification; it is rather its opposition to the universe allows one to fix its meaning' (Ibid, 2013).

The universe against the world (as the system of real relations) is the unity of possible. The world, in contrast, is given within a system of actuality; it envelops existence, as it is at once the concept of its totality and the true place of its realisation. There can only be one universe, but world unfolds itself in

numerous ways, and is given in numerous examples. Foucault writes: still 'the world is not the open space of necessary, but rather a domain where a system of necessary is possible,' as the possible can only be thought 'starting from a system given by actualite; and the plurality of worlds can only be delineated starting from an existing world and from what can be offered to experience' (Ibid, 2013). The world consequently appears according to a triple structure that of source, of domain, and limit. According to Foucault, the fourth question cannot be fundamentally different from the three questions that the *Critique* poses. In fact, through determining the source of human knowledge, one gives meaning to the question: what can I know? Whereas, through determining the domain of the possible and natural usage of knowledge one comes up with the reply to the question: what shall I do? And through determining the limits of reason, one gives meaning to what is possible to hope?

The repetition of the three questions posed in the *Critique* does not still come back with the same. *Anthropology*, according to Foucault, neither claims universality of meaning nor takes the interrogation of man at a much radical level. Against the *Critique*, which is an investigation of what is conditioning in foundational activity, the *Anthropology*, on the other hand, is an investigation of the unconditioned within the conditioned. Foucault writes, "Kant's *Anthropology* offers us another lesson: to repeat the a priori of the *Critique* in the originary, i.e. in a true temporal dimension" (Ibid, 2013). Thus anthropology becomes at once *a popular knowledge* and *knowledge of the popular*, that is, it is at once *popular* and *systematic*. Still Kant's *Anthropology* is systematic not because it enunciates all that can be known of man, rather because it forms, as a knowledge, a coherent whole. The principle of this totality is not man himself, as a coherent object; rather he is always already part of the world. It is popular, because the reader easily finds examples from

it, as both the author and the reader is united by 'the undivided basis of daily language that continues to speak, without transition and without changes, the page that once was blank' (Ibid, 2013). It is still systematic only to that extent that it borrows its coherence from all of the thought of the *Critique*.

Foucault writes:

[There is] one example to determine how exactly this repetition occurs: the text entitled 'Apology of sensitivity' refers to the relation between intuition and understanding. This repetition is not a going back to the same. The relation described by the Anthropology has its own dimension within the slow, precarious and always doubtful labour of the succession: the manifold as it offers itself to the senses is not yet (noch nicht) ordered; the understanding must come to add itself (hinzukonsmen) and insert an order that it supplies itself (hineinbringen). A judgement that is produced before this ordering activity [putting into order (zuvor)] risks being false. On the other hand, this relation of succession does not put up with/withstand being extended with impunity; if, in the order of time, the retrospective reassessment of reasoning (Nachgrubeln) and the indefinite folding (repli) of reflection (Uberlegung) intervened, the error could equally slip. The given is therefore never deceptive, not because it judges well, but because it doesn't judge at all, and what judgement inserts within time, forms truth according to the measure of this time itself. The time of the *Critique*, form of the intuition and of the inner sense, only provides the multiplicity of the given through an activity already constructive at the outset; it only offers the diverse already dominated within the unity of the I think. On the other hand, the time of the Anthropology is guarantor of an insurmountable dispersion; because here the dispersion is no longer that of the given and sensible passivity; it is the dispersion of synthetic activity in relation to itself – dispersion that offers itself as a 'jeu'. Its (dispersion) is not contemporaneous to itself in the organisation of the manifold; it inevitably succeeds/follows itself, thus giving rise to error (donnant ainsi prise á l'erreur), and to all the slippings that have been made (Ver Kunstein, Verdichten, Ver ruchen). Given that the time of the *Critique* had reassured the unity of the originary (from the originally given until the originary synthesis), thus deploying itself at the level of the Ur..., the Time of the Anthropology remains doomed to the domain of the Ver..., because it maintains the dispersion of the syntheses and the always renewed possibility of seeing them escaping from one another. Time is not that in which, and through which, and because of which the synthesis is made. It is that which gnaws at the synthetic activity itself (Ibid, 2013).

Foucault directs us to consider for reflection the question of subjectivity to examine how 'the relations of the synthesis and of the given are presented in the *Anthropology* alongside the universal image of what they are within the *Critique*. On the question of subjectivity, of the I that always appears as the bottom or the foundation of the thought, Foucault argues, is not taken up by *Anthropology* for finer analysis. The texts that appeared between 1770 and 1780 only link it to the possibility of being an object for itself, or to the objectifying it allows. According to Foucault, it is the *Critique* that takes up this issue: 'The 'I' can never be the object, but only form of the synthesis' (Ibid, 2013). The I that appears in the *Critique* as an *apriori* in the order of knowledge, is considered in the *Anthropology* as the passage of feeling to thought, from *Fuhlen* (feeling) to *Denken* (thinking). The spoken "I," however, marks this passage, without being either the real agent or the simple coming to consciousness of this passage. What Foucault suggests is that the synthetic activity of the 'I,' in the anthropological analysis, appears as a figure already synthesised (as the structure inextricably primary and secondary) only within the empirical and manifest form (Ibid, 2013).

As a species of a prior of existence, the I denies access to man, rather when it presence itself, it presence itself within *a multiplicity of a temporal sensibility*. It always presences itself as already there, as the irreducible foundation of the thought. Foucault, therefore, claims that 'it is within this 'I' that the subject will come to recognize its own passage and the synthesis of its identity'(Ibid, 2013). What appears as the a priori of knowledge, from the point of view of the *Critique*, is not yet transformed right away, in the anthropological reflection, as an a priori of existence. But rather, when it suddenly presences itself it presences itself within the density of a becoming. It is within the density of becoming that the I takes infallibility, in retrospect, *the very meaning of the already-there*. Hence the anthropological perspective in fact does not

actually offer the given according to *an inert multiplicity* indicative in an absolute fashion of an originary passivity. The dispersion of the I rather is always already reduced in the anthropology, and is 'secretly dominated by a whole series of synthesis carried out apart from the visible workings of conscience' (Ibid, 2013). What is fascinating then in Foucault's reflections on Kant's *Anthropology* is that he tries to evoke in it a complex formation involving a numerous passive and active syntheses of the elements of the perception involved in the constitution of the I as infallibility, within the density of a becoming. The original is really not something always already given; rather it can only be given within and therefore lightened within the density of a becoming.

In anthropological research each faculty traces a line that is also the path of all possible deviations. Self-consciousness, consequently, appears rather 'as the always re-emerging temptation of a polymorphous egoism,' than as a form of experience and the condition of limited but founded knowledge. The possibility of asserting 'I,' as a result, also takes form, in the consciousness, the prestige of a 'me good-soul,' or else a self, that 'fascinates it, to the extent that, in a paradoxical return, consciousness will renounce the language of this first person,' and declines itself in the fiction of a 'We.' Here use then is reduced each time to an abuse. Hence the study of the sensibility that reworks through the critical opposition of appearance and phenomenon abandons the further exploration of what can be held as well-founded in the phenomenon, and aims to explore what is at once fascinating and precarious within the fragment of appearance, 'since the latter veils what it makes shimmer (dangle), and also comes to transmit what she steals' (Ibid, 2013).

The question of man as such cannot be then contained within an originary authority, the 'I,' since all reflection on man attains circularity (a movement either from the inside to the outside and *vice versa*) that means, since man is

defined as the inhabitant of the world, *all reflection on man inevitably leads to a reflection on the world*. Foucault writes: 'the world is discovered in the implications of the 'I am,' as a figure of this movement for which the me, in becoming object, takes place in the field of experience and finds there a concrete system of belonging (Ibid, 2013). Then this world thus disclosed is neither the Physis, nor the universe of validity of the law,' rather this world unfolds within the virtual relation (that is not based on any principle, plan or a system) that diagonally passes through, (and at the same time maintains) the interior and the exterior, which means, any dealing with the interior immediately announces the exterior and *vice versa*.

It is then here that what the *Critique* discerns as the very possible within the order of conditions (that is *the order of faculty*) and the real within the order of the constituted (that is *the phenomenon*) is given by the *Anthropology* in one inextricable...continuity(Ibid, 2013). This field of continuity is built around the play of imagination, which is actually *the power of original 'invention,'* imagination 'in the fantastic shipwreck of dreaming, imagination in the poetry tied to the sign. Or again: the power to desire with one's emotions; the false truth of passions; the place of the supreme good.' The secret of power is, for that very reason, revealed in the luminosity of the Phenomenon, where it finds at once its truth and the truth of its perversion (since the use becomes abuse, as in the language in the first person), and is denounced in its perversion by the Phenomenon, power is imperially recalled to this radical truth that binds it to itself in the mode of obligation...Power at the root of its possibility, power found and lost, made possible and betrayed in its phenomenon, power imperatively tied to itself.' Foucault then continues, 'from *Vermogen (faculty as ability, wealth, or as potential)* to *Erscheinung (phenomenon)*, the relation is at once of the order of manifestation, of the adventure of perdition, and of the ethical connection.' It is precisely where the

articulation of *Können* [be able to] and *Sollen* [ought to] resides, and for that reason, where what is essential to anthropological thought is established (Ibid, 2013).

The Order of Things, through an intricate analysis of the mutations at the archaeological level and its ramifications on *episteme*, further elaborates this fourth question in a much finer analysis. The mutations at these levels that lead to the reconfiguration of thought in its modern times, according to Foucault, have established four theoretical segments, fundamentally different from its Classical equivalents. The connection of the positivities with finitude, the reduplication of the empirical and the transcendental, the perpetual relation of the *cogito* to the unthought, the repeat and return of the origin, consequently, define the mode of being of man in modern thought. If the Classical thought sticks to an analysis of representation, the modern thought, according to him, organises its gaze at a deeper level. It ceaselessly investigates, beneath the fold of life, labour, and language, a fold of being, which is not given to man in his nature, in his exchange or in his discourse. The most distant and still the closest of all, the *mode of being* still opens up and animates, within man, all these three folds. The above-stated problem, nonetheless, demands our attention, as it also reveals Foucault's take on a series of thinkers, such as Nietzsche, Mallarmé, Holderlin and Heidegger. This extremely dense and difficult chapter in *The Order of Things* actually opens itself by juxtaposing Nietzsche's famous question, "Who is speaking?" against Mallarmé's reply, "what is speaking is, in its solitude, in its fragile vibration, in its nothingness, the word itself – not the meaning of the word, but its enigmatic and precarious being" (Foucault, 1994, p. 305).

Within a certain mutation at the archaeological level, the thought on man's finitude has advanced itself from the Classical to a modern formulation. If the Classical thought determined finitude, on the basis of the infinite, as

positively constituted. It allowed only an account of body, needs and language as negative forms – and therefore, the possibility of knowledge on them was not wholly given in its totality. For the Classical thought, the possibility of knowledge was always limited, and still it was only through the chain of representation that this limited being of things could actually surface. In the “Classical age, [Foucault writes] the function of general grammar was to show how a language could be introduced into the sequential chain of representations, a language that, while manifesting itself in the simple and absolutely tenuous line of discourse, *presupposed forms of simultaneity* (affirmation of existences and coexistences; patterning of things represented and formation of generalities; original and inerasable relation between words and things; displacement of words within their rhetorical space)” [italics added] (Foucault, 1994, p. 337).

But in modern thought, with life, production and language, unfolding within their own existence, historicity and laws, they all are positivities in their own rights. Their positivity, therefore, provides, as a negative correlation, a foundation for the limited character of knowledge, and still the limits of knowledge provide, inversely, a positive foundation for the possibility of knowing, in an experience that is always limited, what life, labour, and language really are. This shaky ground has abandoned human being, in relation to life, labour and language, in a very precarious position. Human being, “with his own being, with his power to present himself with representation [now] arises in a space hallowed out by living beings, objects of exchange, and words, when, abandoning representation, which had been their natural site hitherto, they withdraw into the depths of things and roll up upon themselves in accordance with the laws of life, production, and language” (Foucault, 1994, p. 313).

With life, labour and language begin to unfold themselves within their own existence, historicity and laws, representation closes down on itself, and is left without having any validity as the locus of origin of living beings, needs and words. It ceases to be the primitive seat of their truth. With wrinkles surfacing (as representation is folded towards itself, in a ceaseless meditation on life, labour and language); it only indicates an immanent sphere in which their (life, labour and language) reflection on themselves – that is, with its inability to carry truth within its folds, modern thought has left representation to the stature of a lady meditating on truth in her old-age. The chain that linked the words and things into an inerasable relation in the Classical age, that is, the chain of representation, has ceased this function perpetually. The things, consequently, have ceased to manifest their identity in the chain of representation; their identity rather belongs to themselves, in their interior laws. What is then revealed in representation is the external relation they establish with human being. Foucault writes: “Cuvier and his contemporaries [hence] had required of life that it should itself define, in the depths of its being, the conditions of possibility of the living being; in the same way, Ricardo had required labour to provide the conditions of possibility of exchange, profit, and production; the first philologists, too had searched in the historical depths of languages for the possibility of discourse and grammar” (Ibid, 1994, p. 312).

Man, consequently, is compressed and withheld in a hollowed out space formed at the middle of the folds of life, labour and language that ceaselessly multiply in themselves, and still it is within him, within his fundamental finitude that the folds of life, labour and language unfold and animate themselves. This indeed is an ambiguous position. Since, on the one hand, he is governed by the folds of life, labour, and language that are anterior to the time of his birth, and for that reason, are multiplying in themselves even in

his absence. His concrete existence, consequently, can only find its determinations in them. The very possibility of accessing him lies only through his spoken words, in his organism, and the objects he makes. And still, on the other hand, he is kept outside of his own truth – that is, it is actually not him, but they (his life, labour and words) harbour his truth. It is actually in them, that is, in his life, labour and word, that man also experiences his alienation and, it is in his finite act of knowing the life, labour and language that his finitude is ultimately heralded. As the historically formed systems of life, labour, and language (that is, they have been unfolding themselves even before his birth, even in his very absence) hide from him both their truth and the truth of himself, man, consequently, is informed, at every instant of his short lifetime, of his finitude.

Still within the positivities of life, labour, and language (within the infinite possibilities assured by them), man's finitude, however, is not outlined in the rigour of a limitation, rather is fixed in the paradoxical form of the endless. It is within their positivity that the very positivity of a finite act of knowing is materialised, then he is not conceived here as an end, but rather as always in becoming (an in that very becoming he is ceaselessly alienated from himself, in an already unfolding circularity of life, labour and language). Here, he is given a body, a body which is his own – “a fragment of ambiguous space, whose peculiar and irreducible spatiality is nevertheless articulated upon the space of things; to the same experience, desire is given as a primordial appetite on the basis of which all things assume value, and relative value; to this same experience, a language is given in the thread of which all the discourses of all times, all successions and all simultaneities may be given” (Ibid, 1994, p. 314). Here, my body prescribes for me not just the mode of being of my life, but also that which determines the fact that life cannot indeed exist without also prescribing its form to me. Here, both ‘the mode of

being of production and the weight of its determinations upon my experience' are always already given to me in my desire. And here, the mode of being of language, the whole historically built discursive formations 'to which words lend their glow are also given to me in the slender chain of my speaking thought.' In this whole experience, that is, the independent spirals of life, labour and language, the body, which is conceived as the locus of desire and unconscious drives, reduces all the play of difference to the order of identity, and to an act of knowing that is constituted as *positive*, against man's finitude, which is conceived, in relation to the *positivity* of life, labour and language, as *negativity*. Foucault, however, suggests that even though man's finitude is 'marked [here] by the spatiality of the body, the yawning of desire, and the time of language,' it is still a *radical other*, that is, it is a fundamental finitude, as it is not actually a determination imposed upon man from outside. Man rather is radically finite.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth century thought, man's finitude is a reactive force driving him to live an animal existence, drawing him ceaselessly into the expanding spirals of life, labour, and language, in his search for articulating their meaning, means and words. In modern thought, it only prevents him arriving at any absolute knowledge of the mechanism 'of the body, the means of satisfying his needs, the methods of thinking without the perilous aid of a language woven wholly of habits and imagination' (Ibid, 1994, p. 316). Man's finitude only forced him there "to work [further] by the sweat of his brow, to think with opaque words" (Ibid, 1994, p. 316). His knowledge is doomed to be finite, as he is trapped, and unable to liberate himself, from within the positivity of life, labour and language, and inversely, life, labour and language would always affirm themselves in their positivity only because knowledge in itself is always finite. If put differently, it is his (man's) absolute absence that is, his radical finitude, that endlessly spines the

spirals of life, labour and languages. Here Foucault suggests, with nineteenth century, a new form of analysis of finitude surfaces itself, revealing man's finitude in its radical positivity.

If Classical thought positively constituted finitude as a determination on the basis of infinity, the modern thought (Foucault suggests) still constituted man's finitude as negativity against the positivity of life, labour and language. If in Classical thought, beings in its finite forms, surface themselves within an inerasable relation between the thing and the word, in a chain of representation, in modern thought, even though things denied their beings to appear in the chain of representation, the external relation they establish with human being surfaces in that chain. Since the empirical contents are situated within the chain of representation, a metaphysics of infinity is not only possible here, but also necessary. It is then against the metaphysics of infinity that finitude gained form within the space of representation. Man's finitude necessarily manifests itself; in modern thought, it is then marked 'by the spatiality of the body, the yawning of desire, and the time of language.' Foucault writes: "but when these empirical contents were detached from representation and contained the principle of their existence within themselves, then the metaphysic of infinity became useless; from that point on, finitude never ceased to refer back to itself (from the positivity of the contents to the limitations of knowledge, and from the limited positivity of knowledge to the limited knowledge of the contents). Whereupon the entire field of Western thought was inverted" (Ibid, 1994, p. 316).

The very correlation between a metaphysics of representation and of the infinite and an analysis of living beings, of man's desire and of the word's of his language hitherto prevailed have been withheld, and an analytic of finitude and human experience rather has been initiated along with, or in opposition to it (that is in a correlative opposition to it), one actually finds is a

perpetual tendency to constitute a metaphysics of life, labour and language. Since these new tendencies undermine themselves from within, Foucault suggests, they are never anything more than tendencies, “for there can be no question of anything but metaphysics reduced to the scale of human finitude: the metaphysics of life that converges upon man even if it does not stop with him; the metaphysics of a labour that frees man so that man, in turn, can free himself from it; the metaphysics of a language that man can reappropriate in the consciousness of his own culture” (Ibid, 1994, p. 317). Insofar as the metaphysics of life, labour and language shows how life, by prescribing a form to itself, denies itself; how human labour is indeed alienated within the system of production; and that of language that man can only reappropriate in the consciousness of his own culture, respectively, metaphysics has value only within the analytics of human finitude. Foucault writes: “modern thought, then, will contest even its own metaphysical impulses, and show that reflections upon life, labour, and language, in so far as they have value as analytics of finitude, express the end of metaphysics: the philosophy of life denounces metaphysics as veil of illusion, that of labour denounces it as an alienated form of thought and an ideology, that of language as a cultural episode” (Ibid, 1994, p. 317).

Of the four theoretical segments (of the analysis of finitude, of empirico-transcendental repetition, of the unthought, and of origin) that we have pointed out at the beginning of this reading, the following three are, in fact, only ramifications of this radical mutation in Western thought – in the analytic of finitude. With a radical shift in the site of analysis, as it is no longer representation but man himself in his radical finitude that is taken for analysis, the spark that triggers analysis in modern thought is rather the revealing of the conditions of knowledge on the basis of the empirical contents given to it. Foucault writes: “for the threshold of our modernity is

situated not by the attempt to apply objective methods to the study of man, but rather by the constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet which was called *man*" (Ibid, 1994, p. 319).

Our modernity, Foucault suggests, is really situated by the constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet, that is, how man constitutes himself as an ethical subject. While the eighteenth century empiricist concerned more with general theories of knowledge, and focused on analysis of properties and forms of representation that make knowledge in general possible, and a metaphysics of representation. This shift has then introduced further mutation in both the nature and the substance of analysis. The divides that separated the analysis that operate within the space of the body and function as a sort of transcendental aesthetic, by studying its mechanisms and forces (such as, perception, sensorial mechanism and neuro-motor diagrams) from the sort of analysis that functioned as transcendental dialectic (that illuminates historical, social and economic determinants of knowledge) ultimately, in modern thought becomes a very grey tension within a form of discourse – the very source of power, in general, and the power of imagination, in particular. What is indicated here is a birth of a new form of discourse, a new form that is neither of the order of reduction nor of the order of promise – “a discourse whose tension would keep separate the empirical and the transcendental, while being directed at both; a discourse that would make it possible to analyse man as a subject, that is, as a locus of knowledge which has been empirically acquired but referred back as closely as possible to what makes it possible, and as a pure form immediately present to those contents; a discourse, in short, which in relation to quasi-aesthetics and quasi-dialectics would play the role of an analytic which would at the same time give them a foundation in a theory of the subject and perhaps enable them to articulate themselves in that third and intermediary term in which both the

experience of the body and that of culture would be rooted" (Ibid, 1994, pp. 320 – 21). In fact, a reflection on how Foucault has integrated Kant's transcendental analysis in the *Critiques* within an anthropological perspective illuminates us, in this context, on the theoretical backing of this reading of modern thought.

In modern thought, the analysis of actual experience takes shape. The actual experience is here at once the space in which all empirical contents are given to experience and the original form that makes them possible in general and designates their primary roots. Here, the movement that opens up the space of the body and the time of culture to each other also opens up the determinations of nature to the weight of history, and *vice versa*. But it is only "on the condition that the body, and, through it, nature, should first be posited in the experience of an irreducible spatiality, and that culture, the carrier of history, should be experienced first of all in the immediacy of its sedimented significations" (Ibid, 1994, p. 321), that means as time. This model of motion that works in the becoming space of time and the becoming time of space, it seems is a more originary violence that sets the nature-culture divide unstable, or else nature is always given to life in rhythm and, *vice versa*.¹⁶

The auto-affection, the mark of all living beings, the very force that divides the self and introduces differentiation in it, also functions in same rhythm. It is always in rhythm that any form can be given to life – and still, this can be true, only if rhythm is seen as pure movement that is, only when seen without moral values (without reducing rhythm into binary), in the very absence of guilt. The *pure movement that informs the very spatiality of the space* is evaluated

¹⁶ It is in rhythm (that is the movement of time becoming space and space becoming time) that nature is given to man. Nature otherwise is not given to man. Heraclitus, for instance, in *The Fragment* says: "nature loves to hide." Kahn in his commentary on Heraclitus's *The Fragment* interprets it as "The true character of a thing likes to be in hiding" (Kahn, 2001, p. 33). In the fragment L Heraclitus writes: "As they step into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow upon them" (Kahn, 2001, p. 53). The World given to us in the form of relations, according to Heraclitus, is always in a state of flux.

at once in *an immanent succession of sediments deposited in time*, that is, from within a chain of interpretation of interpretation. Here the question that immediately pops up and troubles mind is: why movement? What causes movement (in mind). We have, actually, seen the model working in “A Preface to Transgression” – when being transgresses limits in the presence of a central absence. Being is actually set into motion around a central absence that ceaselessly repeats itself, unfolding in man the spirals of life, labour and language – virtuality of life, yearning of desire, seduction of production, and the emptiness of words. This movement is inevitable since none of these sedimented interpretations in time actually carry with them the truth of one’s being – they actually are mere interpretations. In “A Preface to Transgression,” Foucault shows how *being* (that is not given to consciousness – the pure affirmation, the ‘yes’ of Nietzsche’s Zarathustra and, therefore, is) in the form of transgression (or else, pure force) transgresses the limits built around the circularities of life, labour and language and pushes those limits to confront their exterior.

Foucault writes:

The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess: a limit could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows. But can the limit have a life of its own outside of the act that gloriously passes through it and negates it? What becomes of it after this act and what might it have been before? For its part, does transgression not exhaust its nature when it crosses the limit, knowing no other life beyond this point in time? And this point, the curious intersection of beings that have no other life beyond this movement where they totally exchange their beings, is it not also everything which overflows from it on all sides? It serves as a glorification of the nature it excludes (Foucault, 1980, p 34).

If it is guilt (the very trace of culture itself) that informs us on the moral order of the time, and our always shifting relation with it, then, rhythm belongs to nature. What the trace of culture initiates in man’s being could, then, be the

very possibility of deviation – it might have triggered waves of uncertainty at the very heart of man's being. The metamorphosis of spirit into camel, lion and child, in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, suggests such a model in play. The spirit, suggests Nietzsche, in its search for truth, should transform itself to "a camel, the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child." Hence the child because of his innocence and forgetfulness is actually placed close to nature and, a change of the very status of an event can only be possible through pure movement that is the rhythm of nature. Child, thus, is conceived as 'a new beginning, a game, a self-rolling wheel, a first movement, a holy Yea' (Nietzsche, 2012, pp. 19 – 20). Deleuze, for instance, shows that the three metamorphoses actually *designate different moments in Nietzsche's work, as well as the stages of his life and health*. And therefore their relations by nature are arbitrary. He senses that the camel that carries 'the weight of established values, the burdens of education, morality, and the culture' into the desert has already in it a lion, the destroyer of statues and a critique of all established values; and in lion, it has already within itself a child, 'he who represents play and a new beginning – the creator of new values and new principles of evaluation.' And yet, the child has already in him a tragic outcome (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 53 – 54).

The child's closeness to nature returns again for theoretical reflection in Baudelaire's work on modern painter, when he considers Guys as a "man-child." Baudelaire writes: "imagine an artist who was always, spiritually, in the condition of [a] convalescent..." (Baudelaire, 1964, p.13); and if "the convalescence is like a return towards childhood" (Baudelaire, 1964), he always will confront things in a state of newness. Foucault's reading of Baudelaire, in "What is Enlightenment?," for instance, studies the kind of mode of existence (that is the form of relation with or to time) that would enable one to access truth (Foucault, 2003, pp. 43 – 57). Here truth has one very important quality, it is in itself an eternal bliss, and only the truth can unwind man's agony.

In Foucault, the univocal one, the ultimate truth of reality, however, is given only as a certain absence. The being (that is in the form of transgression has *no life beyond its movement*) becomes movement in the very presence of this certain absence – that is, only when the present denying us its truth and presences itself as virtual. If we are not what are given to us as ourselves in the very circularity of our life, labour and language, then, who are we? Since the modern production is ultimately linked to profit, it tempts to hide as much as it reveals, opening *a field of seduction*, therein, the very being of man is consumed with consumption – he, then, tempts to see things in terms of their utility and profit.¹⁷ This larger spiral of production hides at once its own truth and the truth of the things it produces, man's appetite hence is not driven by needs but by the yearnings of his desire. The Capitalist mode of production actually has nothing to do with the real. It functions, rather, through the 'codification of a higher order, a hyper-reality that made the real obsolete,' and for that reason, it is, essentially, self-referential. Life, hence, is 'being exchanged for nothing, for a handful of glittering toys, work absorbed time like a sponge and left no traces' (Lotringer, 2007, pp. 12 - 3). The tension that surfaces between life and work, essentially, deprives labour its dignity. Though the labour is deeply decentralised and nullified to an informal status and, though it is pushed to the very fringes of World Capitalism, the decentralised production and the thorough dispersion of the Third World (as both the First and the Third Worlds have already lost all its geographical determination) have only multiplied the fringes. In this larger spiral of production of commodities, ideas, images and the entire virtual field of desires, though man is destined to be a consumer, in him, the very tension between life and labour does not die away, but rather it is only going to deepen, unfolding sudden deviation at all levels of production.

¹⁷ See Appendix 2

The truth is not given, that is why it is worth searching. Searching involves movement – and that indeed involves *the at once becoming of time and space* – and here we already lost nature and man is, thus, kept suspended at the very threshold that differentiates nature from culture. Therefore, the modern cogito gains movement from within a field of disturbance, whose meaning is neither given to culture nor, it truly belongs to nature. The tendency to ceaselessly interpret and evaluate itself in relation to a field of forces, that is, external to it, then, is immanent to knowledge itself, but it gains a form of circularity within a discourse only in the certainty of an absence. Foucault, for instance, indicates the birth of a new form of discourse that ‘would make it possible to analyse man as a subject that is, as a locus of knowledge that has been acquired empirically, and still referred back *as closely as possible* [my italic] to what makes it possible’ (Foucault, 1994, p. 320). Deleuze writes, it is Nietzsche, who has “replaced the Ideal of knowledge, the discovery of the truth, with interpretation and evaluation” – interpretation here establishes the meaning of a phenomenon, which essentially is fragmentary and incomplete, and it is, therefore, evaluation that “determines the hierarchical “value” of the meanings and totalizes the fragments without diminishing or eliminating their plurality” (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 65 -6). Nietzsche introduces to philosophy two forms of expressions: aphorism and poetry – with aphorism both the art of interpretation and what must be interpreted, and poetry both the art of evaluation and what must be evaluated. What links Deleuze and Foucault is an empiricism of “multiplicities,” which says “the abstract doesn’t explain, but must itself be explained” (Ibid, 2001, p. 7).

Deleuze, however, invokes a pre-Socratic unity of life and thought in Nietzsche – “it is a complex unity: one step for life, one step for thought. Modes of life inspire ways of thinking; modes of thinking create ways of living. Life *activates* thought, and thought in turn affirms life” (Ibid, 2001, p.

66). But he indicates, however, that this pre-Socratic unity is already lost, as 'we no longer have even the slightest idea' of it and what, then, we have are 'instances where thought [rather] bridles and mutilates life, making it sensible, and where life takes revenge and drives thought mad, losing itself along the way' (Ibid, 2001, pp. 66 – 7). The only choice that we have now is the choice between mediocre lives and mad thinkers that is, 'lives that are docile for thinkers, and thoughts too mad for the living.' The choice left, according to Deleuze, is between Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Holderlin, therefore, the fine unity of life and thinking (in which the hyperbolic doubt – or else, madness – would cease to be such) is yet to be rediscovered – "a unity that turns an anecdote of life into an aphorism of thought, and an evaluation of thought into a new perspective on life" (Ibid, 2001, p. 67).

As a paradoxical figure, it is, however, in man that 'the empirical contents of knowledge necessarily release, of themselves, the conditions that have made them possible.' It is in him that the empirical (sensory) and the transcendental (thought) that repeat eternally in themselves intersect and establish an antagonistic relationship. Since this field of action has an ontological existence independent of man, and yet it could only be unfolded in him, he is inevitably the locus of misunderstanding. This radically restrains man from positing himself in the immediate and sovereign transparency of *a cogito*. Consequently, man, Foucault suggests, is an empirico-transcendental doublet. He writes, "man is a mode of being which accommodates that dimension – always open, never finally delimited, yet constantly traversed – which extends from a part of himself not reflected in a *cogito* to the act of thought by which he apprehends that part; and which, in the inverse direction, extends from that pure apprehension to the empirical clutter, the chaotic accumulation of contents, the weight of experiences constantly eluding themselves, the whole silent horizon of what is posited in the sandy stretches of non-thought" (Foucault, 1994, pp. 322 – 23).

Man, as an empirico-transcendental doublet, is also the locus of misunderstanding. Relentlessly exposing his thought to the very risk of being swamped by his own being, the misunderstanding 'also enables him to recover his integrity on the basis of what eludes him.' Hence, Foucault suggests, the question no longer is: "how can experience of nature give rise to necessary judgement? It is rather to ask:

"how can man think what he does not think, inhabit as though by a mute occupation something that eludes him, animate with a kind of frozen movement that figure of himself that takes the form of a stubborn exteriority? How can man be that life whose web, pulsations, and buried energy constantly exceed the experience that he is immediately given of them? How can he be that labour whose laws and demands are imposed upon him like some alien system? How can he be the subject of a language that for thousands of years has been formed without him, a language whose organisation escapes him, whose meaning sleeps an almost invincible sleep in the words he momentarily activates by means of discourse, and within which he is obliged, from the very outset, to lodge his speech and thought, as though they were doing no more than animate, for a brief period, one segment of that web of innumerable possibilities?" (Foucault, 1994, p. 323).

Against the Kantian position, Foucault suggests that there then has been a fourfold displacement: the question no longer is of truth, but of being. It is not of nature, but of man. It is no longer of the possibility of understanding, but of the possibility of misunderstanding. It is then no longer of the unaccountable nature of philosophical theories against science, but of *beginnings* in a clear philosophical awareness of that whole realm of unaccounted-for experiences in which man does not recognise himself (Ibid, 1994, p. 323). The shift from the question of truth and of nature to that of being and of man is unavoidable, since with the modern *cogito*, the whole being of things has not been really reduced to thought 'without ramifying the being of thought right down to the inert network of what does not think.'

Modern *cogito*, for that reason, unfolds itself within a double movement – within a double movement that at once fabricates the web of thought and the

inert network of non-thought. This double movement, Foucault claims, only explains why the 'I think' in no ways leads to the evident truth of 'I am.' The 'I think' in its modern form always shows itself to be embedded in an always already unfolded density throughout which it is 'quasi-present,' and which it animates, though in an equivocal 'semi-dormant,' 'semi-wakeful' mode, it is incapable of making it lead on to the affirmation 'I am.' This very moment in which the cogito in its modern form shows itself, essentially, denies itself the very immediacy and the sovereign transparency of its own truth, and ceaselessly relates itself to that which is not of its kind – the unthought. Foucault writes: "for can I, in fact, say that I am this language I speak, into which my thought insinuates itself to the point of finding in it the system of all its own possibilities, yet, which exists only in the weight of sedimentations my thought will never be capable of actualizing altogether? Can I say that I am this labour I perform with my hands, yet which eludes me not only when I have finished it, but even before I have begun it? Can I say that I am this life I sense deep within me, but which envelops me both in the irresistible time that grows side by side with it and pose me for a moment on its crest, and in the imminent time that prescribes my death?" (Ibid, 1994, pp. 324 – 25). The answer could well be that I am and that I am not all these.

This precisely is the effect of the double movement within which modern cogito shows itself. Rather than leading to the affirmation of being, the cogito in its modern form leads to a whole series of question concerning being. This, however, has more than one consequences: on the one hand, by showing how thought eludes itself, it takes man at once to the always expanding labyrinth of thought and its negativity the unthought, and on the other hand, as a positive side, it also enables him to confront his own unthought in relation to which he can constitute himself as a thinking subject. Thus with modern cogito, the search of the origin or the original (that hidden absolute and

sovereign truth) is essentially unfeasible, as with the cogito in its modern form, there is a fundamental difference in the nature and purpose of interpretation. With the birth of modern cogito, interpretation no longer is directed towards the exposure of *the meaning hidden in a very puzzling origin*, it is rather “the violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules, which in itself has no essential meaning, in order to impose a direction, to bend it to a new will, to force its participation in a different game, and to subject it to secondary rules, then *the development of humanity is a series of interpretations* [my italic]” (Foucault, 1984, p. 86). Here rather than searching for the distant origin (than hidden absolute and sovereign truth), thought in its modern form is oriented towards opening new beginnings – events of thought.

This is exactly what Foucault has found in Nietzsche’s genealogy, and that which brings his ‘ontology of the present’ closer to Deleuze. What these thinkers, then, share between them is actually an empiricism of ‘multiplicities.’ Both “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” and “Theatrum Philosophicum” intend to explain it in detail – besides them, this theme surfaces in his other texts too. For instance, in “What is Enlightenment” and in “The Art of Telling the Truth,” Foucault points out that the Kant’s text on *Aufklärung* is a rather different one. Though “in other texts on history, Kant occasionally raises questions of origin or defines the internal teleology of a historical process” (Foucault, 1984, p. 34). The text on *Aufklärung* rather deals openly with the question of contemporary reality. It “does not pose any of these questions directly, neither that of origin, nor, despite appearance to the contrary, that of fulfilment, and it poses to itself in a relatively discreet, almost sidelong way, the question of the teleology immanent in the very process of history” (Foucault, 1988, p. 87). Kant, according to Foucault, rather is looking for a difference here: ‘What difference does today introduce with respect to

yesterday?' (Foucault, 1984, p. 34). The trouble Kant has undertaken, according to Foucault, is not to locate the essence of an origin, but rather to open up the play of difference.

Addressing difference in its unadulterated form opens a deviation from philosophies of Descartes, Kant and Hegel and the subjective activities. Difference, as it manifests itself as an absolute alterity to the self, that is, as something beyond the control and, therefore, surpass the categories of recognition that brace the authority of the self, it ceaselessly displaces the self within a swarming phantasm - and compels the self to think both about and with it. Phantasms swarms with the presence of difference, as the self is forced to contemplate the other that is presented as difference – as it engages with the other, it is forced to contemplate *about* the very meaning of its discourses, its emotional qualities and what it shows in it. This drags the self into a certain relation with the other, as it becomes more and more entangled in a shared mood. 'An attuned mingling of feelings might occur, a sense of trust, of undefined and mutual presence as our awareness of the other clarifies and undergoes a focus *in* the presence and impact of the other' (Scott, 2011, p. 205). Such experiences of *thinking with* (the other) unfold in time, and it is not alien to dialogues that are 'intensely hostile or belligerent when you experience directly from another far more than you think about.' It opens up a field of theatre, and the "Theatrum Philosophicum," actually, reveals the theatrical aspect of Foucault's thinking.

Difference, Foucault stresses, hitherto has been assumed to be – and is posed from within the unity of a *concept* – the difference *from* or *within* something. It is hitherto seen as that, which must necessarily be specified 'within a concept, without overstepping its bounds,' and the swarming diversity that ceaselessly gluts the bounds of a concept is assumed as repetition. Beneath 'the ovine species, we are reduced to counting sheep' (Foucault, 1980, p. 182). Difference,

consequently, is reduced to specification within the concept, and repetition 'as the indifference of individuals outside the concept.' Thus what then reduces the singularity of difference is the common sense – it “extracts the generality of an object while it simultaneously establishes the universality of the knowing subject through a pact of goodwill” (Ibid, 1980, p. 182). Foucault subsequently asks: what if this subjection to common sense that reduces the anarchism intrinsic to the difference is overthrown. Difference then would cease to be 'a general feature that leads to the generality of the concept, and it would become – a different thought, the thought of difference – a pure event,' and repetition, in this case, 'would cease to function as the dreary succession of the identical, and would become displaced difference' (Ibid, 1980, p. 182). Thought would then only produce a meaning-event, by repeating a phantasm – it will then reaffirm its genital singularity. Consequently, it is good sense that reigns in the philosophy of representation, and for that reason, Foucault instructs: “let us pervert good sense and allow thought to play outside the ordered table of resemblances; then it will appear as the vertical dimension of intensities, because intensity, well before its gradation by representation, is in itself pure difference: difference that displaces and repeats itself, that contracts and expands; a singular point that constricts and slackens the indefinite repetitions in an acute event. One must give rise to thought as intensive irregularity – disintegration of the subject” (Ibid, 1980, p. 183). Later in the text Foucault sites Warhol.

Warhol's work forces the spectator to consider what happens beneath the surface of cultural objects and images that have attained certain dubious iconic status in the capitalist system of production. Unlike the late medieval and the Renaissance iconography that stressed the humanity of Christ, the divine (if put differently, by reversing the Renaissance iconography), Warhol's art treats the mundane as the divine (or else, his art tries to inform

the spectator how the mundane attains a status of the divine in a society that is obsessed with commodity fetishism. It explores the repetitive structure, the mechanical production (he often describes his studio as a factory and calls himself a machine) that maintains the modern icons divine. Warhol's art actually forces the spectator to contemplate upon the non-conceptual difference - *the repetition of pure difference* - that very ungrounding and differentiating activity that define everything what they exactly are.¹⁸ It is this secret repetition, the very repetition of the difference within the production of sameness that is for Deleuze the activity of differentiation, the very force that destabilises and decenters everything that is stable. The sense of stability itself is actually materialised from within the play of this differentiating activity, this repetition of pure and non-conceptual difference, the difference without a concept.

To free difference, thought must essentially free itself from the grip of contradiction, dialectics and negation. It demands a thought without contradiction, without dialectics, without negation. It rather must accept divergence. It must be an affirmative thought that is capable of, and skilled in, *disjunction*, a thought of the multiple – 'of the nomadic and the dispersed multiplicity that is *not limited or confined by the constraints of similarity* [my

¹⁸ Unlike the abstract expressionism in art, Warhol's art (even though he shares with abstract expressionists a concern for the real) does not try to reveal the unrepresentable structure of the real, rather for him the order of the mundane does not conceal any hidden mystery. Rather, the differentiating activity itself is what makes the production of the same essentially mundane. In his work, the playful use of colour, (media-oriented) theatrical use of lighting, random brush strokes, the flat surface on which the images are linearly organised into series (that cuts all perspective) all are aimed to introduce the spectator into a temporal field, by blocking him from decipher any hidden truth beneath what is presented within the space of the canvas. Foucault writes: "'It's the same either way," stupidity says, while sinking into itself and infinitely extending its nature with the things it says of itself; "Here or there, it's always the same thing; what difference if the colors vary, if they're darker or lighter. It's all so senseless – life, women, death! How ridiculous this stupidity!" but in concentrating on this boundless monotony, we find the sudden illumination of multiplicity itself – with nothing at its center, at its highest point, or beyond it – a flickering of light that travels even faster than the eyes and successively lights up the moving labels and the captive snapshots that refer to each other to eternity, without ever saying anything: suddenly, arising from the background of the old inertia the darkness, and the eternal phantasm informs that soup can, that singular and depthless face" (Foucault, 1980, p. 189).

italic];' thought that ceaselessly exceeds pedagogical model (the fakery of prepared answers); but then it must attack insoluble problems – 'that is, a thought that addresses a multiplicity of exceptional points, which are displaced as we distinguish their conditions and which insist and subsist in the play of repetitions' (Ibid, 1980, p. 185). Hence the problem itself cannot be displaced by an answer, as it in itself is a dispersed multiplicity. It 'cannot be resolved by the clear distinctions of a Cartesian idea, because it is an idea it is obscure-distinct; it does not respond to the seriousness of the Hegelian negation, because it is a multiple affirmation; it is not subjected to the contradiction of being and non-being, since it is being' (Ibid, 1980, p. 185) – in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, Foucault, for instance, argues that the "we" should not be prior to the problem. He writes: "Laing, Cooper, Basaglia, and I had no community, nor any relationship; but the problem posed itself to those who had read us, as it also posed itself to some of us, of seeing if it were possible to establish a "we" on the basis of the work that had been done, a "we" that would also be likely to form a community of action" (Foucault, 1997, p. 115). Difference, according to Foucault, can only be liberated through the affirmation of an acategorical thought, and with a clear and unprejudiced vision.

In Foucault's work, a clear, objective eye repeatedly lingers (both at the theoretical and methodological levels). It illuminates the subject, as he constitutes himself as a knowing subject, who speaks and acts. In the preface to *The History of Sexuality, Volume II*, Foucault, for instance, through a studied objectivity (that is actually intrinsic to thought itself) examines, in retrospect, the emergence of three axis (the types of understanding [*savoir*] that is of the domain of knowledge, forms of normality that is of the system of rules, and modes of relation to oneself and others that is of ethical practices, and the play between them that constitutes the forms of experience) in his work, since the

publication of *Madness and Civilization*, and aims to elaborate how thought strives to transform itself through a work of thought upon itself – through an investigation upon its own singularity and historicity, that is, through an awareness that critical activity (the work of thought upon itself) will only bring to light transformable singularities. He writes: “by “thought,” I mean what establishes, in a variety of possible forms, the play of true and false, and consequently constitutes the human being as a knowing subject [*sujet de connaissance*]; in other words, it is the basis for accepting or refusing rules, and constitutes human being as social and juridical subjects; it is what establishes the relation with oneself and with others, and constitutes the human being as ethical subject ...In this sense, thought is understood as the very form of action” (Foucault, 1997, pp. 200 – 01).

Later in *Sexuality, Volume II*, while differentiating *enkrateia* against *sophrosyne* and the interiority of Christian morality; he locates its meaning and practice as self-mastery. If the pagan morality is shaped around exteriority, in acts in their concrete realisation, “in their visible and manifest form, in their degree of conformity with rules, and in the light of opinion or with a view to the memory they leave behind them,” then the Christian interiority “is a particular mode of relationship with oneself, comprising precise forms of attention, concern, decipherment, verbalisation, confession, self-accusation, struggle against temptation, renunciation, spiritual combat, and so on” (Foucault, 1988, p. 63).

While the virtue of *sophrosyne* is described “as a very general state that one will do “what is fitting as regards both gods and men” – that is one will be not only moderate but righteous and just, and courageous” (Ibid, 1988, p. 64). In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle, Foucault suggests, has characterised *sophrosyne* “by the fact that the subject deliberately chooses reasonable principles of action, that he is capable of following and applying them, that he holds to the

“right mean” between insensitivity and excess (a middle course that is not equidistant between the two, because moderation is actually farther away from excess than from insensitivity), and that he derives pleasure from the moderation he displays. The opposite of *sophrosyne* is immoderation (*akolasia*) that means deliberately choosing bad principles (Ibid, 1988, pp. 64 – 5). *Enkrateia*, in contrast, is located on the axis of struggle, resistance, and combat, and its opposite is *akrasia*. It rules over pleasures and desires, and is self control, tension, “continence.” As the form of effort and control that the individual must apply to himself in order to become moderate (*sophron*), *enkrateia* can well be considered as the prerequisite of *sophrosyne*.

Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth places the struggle of self-mastery, *enkrateia*, within a culture of silence and listening, within a culture of writing *hupomnemata*, that is personal notebooks, and exchanging missive between friends. What correspondence establishes is an unprejudiced, tolerant and non-hierarchical reciprocity of gaze and examination. *Enkrateia*, as a struggle for self-mastery, becomes studied observation of both oneself and the other in a field of pure difference. Foucault writes: “it is noteworthy that Seneca, commencing a letter in which he must lay out his daily life to Lucilius, recalls the moral maxim that “we should live as if we lived in plain sight of all men,” [footnote omitted] and the philosophical principle that nothing of ourselves is concealed from god who is always present to our souls. Through the missive, one opens oneself to the gaze of others and puts the correspondent in the place of the inner god” (Foucault, 1997, p. 217) – a pure difference. Thought unfolds and organises itself at the presence of this singular mask that conceals nothing, it is set into motion with the constant repetition of this pure difference – the objective gaze of the ‘other’ that is put in the place of the ‘inner god.’

It is the pure difference that sets the entire field into movement, and opens up the self to the order of intangible objects, the swarming phantasms, and ceaselessly displaces itself within that field. Foucault writes: “We must be alert to the surface effects in which the Epicurians take such pleasure: emissions proceeding from deep within bodies and rising like the wisps of a fog – interior phantoms that are quickly reabsorbed into other depths by the sense of smell, by the mouth, by the appetites; extremely thin membranes, which detach themselves from the surfaces of objects and proceed in impose colors and contours deep within our eyes (floating epiderm, visual idols); phantasms created by fear or desire (cloud gods, the adorable face of the beloved, “miserable hope transported by the wind”)” (Foucault, 1980, p. 169). This always expanding domain of intangible objects, Foucault insists, must be integrated into thought, and articulate a philosophy of phantasm, which ‘cannot be reduced to a primordial fact through the intermediary of perception or an image, but that arises between surfaces, where it assumes meaning, and in the reversal that causes every interior to pass to the outside and every exterior to the inside, in a temporal oscillation,’ [in the becoming time of space and the becoming space of time] ‘that always makes it precede and follow itself – in short, in what Deleuze would perhaps not allow us to call its “incorporeal materiality”’ (Ibid, 1980, p. 169).

There is neither a substantial truth behind the phantasm, nor it is useful ‘to contain it within stable figures and to construct solid cores of convergence where we might include, on the basis of their identical properties, all its angles, flashes, membranes, and vapors,’ rather phantasms are to be allowed to function at the very limit of bodies, and against bodies. It is because they actually stick to bodies ‘and protrude from them, but also because they touch them, cut them, break them into sections, regionalize them, and multiply their surfaces; and equally, outside of bodies, because they function between

bodies according to laws of proximity, torsion, and variable distance – laws of which they remain ignorant’ (Ibid, 1980, p. 169 – 70), and yet they do not ever enlarge bodies into imagery domain, but rather only topologize the materiality of the bodies. Freed from the dilemmas of truth and falsehood and freed of being and non-being, Foucault insists that ‘they must rather be allowed to conduct their dance, to act out their mime, as “extra-beings.”’

What gives rhythm to their dance is pure difference, and what unfolds from it is a pure event. Still one requires a metaphysical basis to consider this pure event, and yet neither the metaphysics of substance nor the metaphysics of coherence is capable of conceiving it. If the metaphysics of substance serves as a foundation for accidents, then, the metaphysics of coherence situates these accidents within the entangled nexus of causes and effects. Though an event, such as, a wound or death, actually is an effect produced entirely by bodies colliding, mingling or separating, it is not of a corporeal nature, Foucault suggests, it is rather ‘the intangible, inaccessible battle that turns and repeats itself a thousand times around Fabricius [the Roman general and statesman], above the wounded Prince Andrew [the main character in Tolstoi’s *War and Peace*]’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 173). Event thus does not belong to corporeal order. It is physics that concerns causes, but event (the very effect of bodies colliding, mingling or separating amongst one other) does not belong to the order of physics. Events rather are without thickness, mixture, or passion – that is, they are pure.

The Logic of the Sense, Foucault argues, should be considered as the boldest and most insolent of metaphysical treatises. Illusion haunts metaphysics with all kinds of difficulties, not because metaphysics, by its very nature, is doomed to illusion, but it is because it has always been haunted by illusion, and also because of its own fear of the simulacrum, it is always directed to hunt down illusion. Metaphysics, however, is not illusion; illusion, rather, is a

form of metaphysics. It steams out of a particular form of metaphysics that aims to filter, and separate, the simulacrum from the original copy. It is Deleuze who assigned to himself the very task of unearthing metaphysical illusions, and established its necessity. If physics is a discourse that deals with the ideal structure of bodies, mixtures, reactions, internal and external mechanisms, then the metaphysics deals with the materiality of incorporeal things – phantasms, idols, and simulacra. What then Deleuze initiates through metaphysics, according to Foucault, is a critique capable of the disillusioning of the phantasms, and elevating them to the status of an ‘extra-beings,’ and by doing this, he develops a thought that is ‘capable of comprehending the event *and* the concept, their severed and double affirmation, their affirmation of disjunction.’

The incorporeal nature of event, however, suggests that it does not actually belong to the physical order, it, therefore, can never be the state of thing, and it does not even belong to the swarming phantasms. Event is altogether a different series.¹⁹ The fact of death, for instance, is a state of thing, and as it is, one can verify an assertion as true or false in relation to it. Dying, however, is a pure event, and therefore, it is incapable of verifying anything. Death then stands as a perfect example to a meaning-event, as it being the event of events

¹⁹ Deleuze’s attempt to conceptualise the event, Foucault suggests, stands apart from all the previous attempts. The neopositivism failed as it confused the event with a state of things, and lodged the event within the density of bodies, and transformed it into an attribute. With ‘a pretext that nothing can be said about those things which lie “outside” the world,’ it ‘rejects the pure surface of the event and attempts to enclose it forcibly – as a referent – in the spherical plenitude of the world. Phenomenology, with a ‘pretext that signification only exists for consciousness, placed the event outside and beforehand, or inside and after, and always situates it with respect to the circle of self. The philosophy of history, on the other hand, closed the event in a cyclical pattern of time. Foucault writes: “its error is grammatical; it treats the present as framed by the past and future: the present is a former future where its form was prepared and the past, which will occur in the future, preserves the identity of its content” (Foucault, 1980, pp. 175 – 76). The world, the self, and God, or else a sphere, a circle, and a center, these conditions, according to Foucault, always obscure the event, and have always constrained the successful formation of thought and Deleuze, on the other hand, through a metaphysics of the incorporeal event (that is the irreducibility to the physics), a logic of neutral meaning (without a phenomenological signification based on the subject) and the thought of the present infinitive (that is, without the circularity of time) has lifted the event from its subjugation to the world, the self and God.

and the meaning in its pure state – it then is an unadulterated state. Foucault writes: a meaning-event is as neutral as death: “not the end, but the unending; not a particular death, but any death; not true death, but as Kafka said, the snicker of its devastating error [from Blanchot’s *L’Espace Litteraire* cited in *Difference and Repetition* that Foucault cited to defend his argument]” (Foucault, 1980, p. 174). Still this meaning-event demand a grammar attuned to fasten it rather with a *verb* (to die, to live) than situating it in a proposition as an attribute (to be *dead*, to be *alive*). It demands a grammar with a different form of organisation. The verb, ‘conceived in this fashion, has two principle forms around which the others are distributed: the present tense, which posits an event, and the infinitive, which introduces meaning into language and allows it to circulate as the neutral element to which we refer in discourse.’ Neither seeking the grammar of events in temporal inflections, nor seeking the grammar of meaning in the fictitious analyses of the type ‘to live = to be alive,’ according to Foucault, is sensible, rather around two asymmetrical and insecure poles that the grammar of the meaning-event revolves, and they are the infinitive mode and the present tense, and for that reason, the meaning-event is at once the ceaseless displacement of the present and the eternal repetition of the infinitive. “To die,” as a pure state, always elude the density of a given movement, it is, essentially, not given in it, ‘but rather as a pure and universal state it infinitely divides the shortest moment. It belongs to the eternal present. What the ceaselessly displaced present, the eternal, lacks is unity, as it lacks plenitude, hence it is the (multiple) eternity of the (displaced) present (that is, if what the mask hides is nothing but another mask, there is more than one mask, and therefore, more than one truth – that also means, more than one destiny). To die is even smaller that the moment it takes to think of it, and yet dying lingers and indefinitely repeats on either side of this width-less crack – the eternal present.

In relation to physical body, or at its very limit, an event is incorporeal. It is truly the metaphysical surface of body. It shapes the topography of words and things. It is the meaning of a proposition (its logical dimension), that means, objectivity and neutrality of meaning. Meaning in its pure form (in the very absence of the subject, who gives its phenomenological signification), and 'in the thread of discourse, an incorporeal meaning-event is fastened to the verb (the infinitive point of the present),' that is without raising the conceptual future in a past essence. At this point, the two separate series, the event and the phantasm, are essentially brought into resonance. The incorporeal and the intangible are brought into resonance. It is "the resonance of battles, of death that subsists and insists, of the fluttering and desirable idol: it subsists not in the heart of man but above his head, beyond the clash of weapons, in fate and desire. It is not that they converge in a common point, in some phantasmatic event, or in the primary origin of the simulacrum. The event is that which is invariably lacking in the series of the phantasm – its absence indicates its repetition devoid of any grounding in an original, outside of all forms of imitation, and freed from the constraints of similitude. Consequently, it is disguise of repetition, the always singular mask that conceals nothing, simulacra without dissimulation, incongruous finery covering a nonexistent nudity, pure difference" (Ibid, 1980, p. 177).

Against the singularity of the event, the phantasm essentially is *excessive*, yet this excess does not imply an excess of imagination as a supplementary force added to the bare reality of facts. Neither, it is an embryonic generality from which the organisation of the concept gradually emerges. To conceive the death as an empty mask, repeating itself ceaselessly and thereby converting the swarming phantasms into a field of battle, does not mean it is the very 'old image of death suspended over a senseless accident or with the future concept of a battle secretly organising the present disordered tumult; the

battle rages [rather] from one blow to the next and the process of death indefinitely repeats the blow, always in its possession, which it inflicts once and for all' (Foucault, 1980, p. 177). The phantasm as the play of the missing event and its repetition, then, can neither be reduced to or given the form of individuality, nor must be measured against the reality. It rather presents itself as universal singularity – to die, to fight, to vanquish, to be vanquished.

Foucault in "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History" writes: "Genealogy is history in the form of a concerted carnival" (Foucault, 1980, p. 161). It is systematic dissociation of identity, and is necessary as the weak identity that we tempt to support and unify under a mask. According to Foucault, the weak identity in itself is a parody. What we rather have is more than one (mortal) image of ourselves, that is, "countless spirits dispute its possession; numerous systems intersect and compete. The study of history makes one "happy, unlike the metaphysicians, to possess in oneself not an immortal soul but many *mortal* ones [italic added]." And in each of these souls, history will not discover a forgotten identity, eager to be reborn, but a complex system of distinct and multiple elements, unable to be mastered by the powers of synthesis" (Ibid, 1980, p. 161). An event then unfolds from within a field of forces, from a complex system of distinct and multiple elements. It, therefore, cannot take form in the strange density of a thin instance, but rather, like a game, unfolds from within an already active field. Foucault writes: "an event, consequently, is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of a masked "other" (Foucault, 1980, p. 154).

Phantasms are linked to bodies. They delineate the topography of the bodies. While reading Galen's *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, Foucault, for instance, doubts that the desire and pleasure might not have been added in

the soul as a mere supplement, but rather, 'it was most certainly planned as an integral consequence of the mechanisms of the body,' and that, they 'are direct effects of anatomical dispositions and physical processes' (Foucault, 1988, p. 107). Galen situates his analysis of *aphrodisia* by invoking and placing it within the ancient thematic of the relations between death, immortality, and reproduction. The Foucault's reading follows: while doing her work, nature encountered an obstacle, a sort of intrinsic incompatibility in her task. When she initiated, what she had in mind was an immortal work, but then the substance on which she had to work did not permit her to accomplish it, as 'she could not make arteries, nerves, bones, and flesh using an "incorruptible" material. Galen, thus, 'discerns at the very core of the demiurge work – the *demiourgema* – an internal limit and a kind of "failure" due to an unavoidable inadequacy between the immortality that was planned and the corruptibility of the material used.

This demanded something ingenious. She, therefore, had to perform a ruse to bring her work to its logical conclusion: to overcome unavoidable corruptibility of the material with which this world is essentially made, she had to perform a ruse of *logos*, a ruse that presides over the world, and thus it brings with itself the play of three elements. First; the organs of fertilization; second, the capacity for pleasure and; third, in the soul, the very longing to make use of these organs – a marvellous, inexpressible desire, that is, she had to place the principle of force, an extraordinary *dynamis*, both in the body and in the soul of living creatures. For Galen, the very necessity of marking sexes, 'the intensity of their mutual attraction, and the possibility of generation are rooted in the very lack of eternity.' Change, consequently, is the condition within which all these relations unfold. The very flux that envelops the surface (of the body) and ceaselessly fills the void that separates and, at the

same time, connects bodies is internal to it as well. It steams out, and become movement, from the internal limit that gives form to the body.

In “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” he points out that we tempt to believe in body as an event that obeys the exclusive laws of physiology and, therefore, it always escapes the influence of the history. Rather a great many distinct regimes are involved in moulding the body – ‘it [rather] is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws;’ it, therefore, builds resistances. Man is in perpetual flux, nothing is sufficiently stable, and not even his body, ‘to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for the understanding of other men’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 153). It is the inscribed surface on which events unfold. It is the locus of the dissociated self, and a volume in perpetual disintegration. It is moulded by everything that touches it – values, diet, climate, and soil.

It is, actually, the very absence of constants that differs the ‘effective history’ from the traditional history, and its metaphysical biases. It introduces discontinuities into our very being. The effective history *descends* and ‘studies what is closest, but in an abrupt dispossession, so as to seize it at a distance.’ Thought gains force from, and hovers over, this certain and spontaneous *lack*. Since it prefers to descent, the thought, in this modern form, stands apart from the ascending traditional metaphysics that is always in search of a distant origin, remote from the reality. In this thought, what hounds language then is the very potential of an immanent silence, the sign of its own death. ‘To live’ also implies ‘to survive’ and that to language is to engage with itself, to *spontaneously* repeat itself at the virtual presence (the absence) of its own death. Since the repetition is impulsive, life to language (if only it carries along with it the trace of imagination) is an excess. Life always affirms itself as infinite potentialities. The spontaneity of life always surpasses the gravity of authenticity, and life is the immanent field of forces – the very freedom of

creativity, the very freedom to create one's own life, like an artist. Hokusai managed to take a snapshot (*The Great Wave off Kanagawa*) and Pollock portrayed its rhythm, as life unfolds itself in them, respectively. And yet, it is also a force that envelops all living forms equally, that is, it is also that vital force that sets itself into action. It, then, is the absolute other of thought, and can only be nurtured through techniques. To language, the spontaneous repetition of itself is a technique of life that born along with itself. The modern thought, then, functions like 'a doctor, who looks closely, who plunges to make a diagnosis and to state its difference' (Foucault, 1980, p. 156). It has more in common with medicine than philosophy. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is placed within the articulation of the body and history (Ibid, 1980, p. 148).

Philosophy, then, becomes a life-form and a way of life that is indefinitely suspended at the threshold where more than one differentiated series intersect – the physical order, the swarm of phantasms, and the series of the absolute 'Other' – death, life, being, (the pre-ontological) body, and nature. Philosophy, thus, concerns not just thought, but also feelings, emotions and body, and is, intrinsically, linked to self-reliance and, ultimately, to freedom. In *The History of Sexuality Vol. III*, Foucault evokes such a form of life from the antiquity.

Philosophy as a Life-form and a Way of Life

The period of the Flavians and the Antonines cultivated an intense and prevalent taste for things that are medical, and widely recognised as a practice that was of interest to the public. It was recognised so, and elevated to the dais of high form of culture along with rhetoric and philosophy. Foucault writes:

“G. W. Bowersock observes that the medical model accompanied the development of the Second Sophistic and that a number of important rhetors had received medical training or manifested interests in the field. It had long been established that philosophy was closely related to medicine, even though the demarcation of boundaries posed doctrinal problems and gave rise to territorial rivalries. In the first lines of *Advice about Keeping Well*, Plutarch echoes these debates: the physician is wrong, he says, when he claims to be able to do without philosophy, and one would be quite mistaken to reproach philosophers with crossing their own boundaries when they concern themselves with health and its regimen. One must consider, Plutarch concludes, that medicine is in no way inferior to the liberal arts (*eleutherai technai*) in elegance, distinction, and the satisfaction it yields. To those who study it, it gives access to a knowledge of great importance since it concerns health and the preservation of life” (Foucault, 1988, p. 99).

Medicine, therefore, is not approached merely as ‘a technique of intervention, replying, in cases of illness, on remedies and operations’ rather it is aimed ‘to define, in the form of a corpus of knowledge and rules, a way of living, a reflective mode of relation to oneself, to one’s body, to food, to wakefulness and sleep, to the various activities, and to the environment’ (Ibid, 1988, p. 100). In everyday life, it is expected to advise, in the form of regimen, a voluntary and rational structure of contact. It is often practiced to attain a degree of self-reliance, in matters concerning one’s own health. Celsus, Foucault suggests, was convinced of the high value of regimen medicine. He was even against subjecting oneself to a physician, if one was in good health (Ibid, 1988, p. 100). The way the physician at times takes control of the client in order to manage him and his life, in order to direct to health was often a concern of criticism. By dictating at every moment the correct regimen of life, the medical *logos*, thus, ensured self-reliance. It avoids too-frequent consultations, and equips oneself with a medical knowledge that one could always use. It is a form of *logos* one acquires from young and refines through practice, so that one is able to become, throughout one’s life and in every ordinary circumstances, one’s own health counsellor.

Foucault quotes Athenaeus:

“It is advisable, or rather, necessary, for everyone to learn, among the subjects that are taught, not only the other sciences but also medicine, and to hear the precepts of this art, so that we may often be our own accomplished counsellors in matters useful to health; for there is almost no moment of the night or the day when we have no need of medicine. Thus, whether we are walking or sitting, whether we are oiling our body or taking bath, whether we are eating, drinking – in a word, whatever we may do, during the whole course of life and in the midst of life’s diverse occupations, we have need of advice for an employment of this life that is worthwhile and free of inconvenience. Now, it is tiresome and impossible always to consult a physician concerning all these details” (Ibid, 1988, pp. 100 – 01).

The medical logos hence dictate, at every moment, the correct regimen of life, and this regimen of life, in its practice, decides the precise relation between *season, environment, circumstances* and *the care that one needs to be given to oneself*. Foucault cites, for instance, Antyllus’s analysis ‘of the different medical “variables” of a house, its architecture, its orientation, and its interior design;’ Athenaeus’s suggestions to confront the winter season; Celsus’s address to ‘that category of people considered to be especially fragile the city-dwellers, and above all, those who devote themselves to study (*litterarum cupidi*)’ – all had positioned the body, in relation to its surroundings, as *a fragile entity*, and suggested a cultivated concern for oneself in relation to season, environment and circumstances.

This regimen of life is based on the articulation of a permanent framework of everyday life that is built on the foundation of a historically developed practical reason, and that is, ‘a reasonable discourse could not unfold without a health practice’ (Ibid, 1988c, p. 101). This model is shaped by the play of understanding, and yet the relation to truth does not take the form of a hermeneutic relation (that is, it does not aim to uncover the truth behind the masks – it neither involves the decipherment of the self by itself nor the

hermeneutics of desires, aimed at their purification), but rather, the relation to truth is imagined as the necessary structural, instrumental and ontological condition for an aesthetics of existence. It rather revolves around a practical reason that insists upon the mastery of both soul (the principle of life) and body, through relentless practice, and thereby, the brightness of soul is reflected in the body. What is elegant, then, does not surface itself, in its best form, just at random, but rather it always involves *active freedom*, and therefore, is always given to sight along with the traces of the forces that created it. A true artist, from this standpoint, is always inclined toward himself – he is at once his own subject matter, and the material to work upon.

The *History of Sexuality Vol. II* tries to outline some of the intricate features of this mode of existence that prevailed in antiquity. The classical Greek thought on ethics is built upon a fundamentally different assumption. For them, the play of forces, by its nature, is potentially *excessive*. Whereas, for the Christians, the pleasure and the forces of desire had their principle in the Fall and in the weakness that marked human nature since. In pain and soaked in the sweat of guilt, the Christians, through the decipherment of the hidden truth behind them, had aimed to purify themselves,. The Greeks, on the other hand, had encountered a different sort of ethical issue here; for them, to seek pleasure from, and to desire for, food, wines, and sexual encounters were essentially natural, and therefore, the question of cleansing themselves never took the form of a problem, rather the trouble that they faced was in, how to confront these forces. For that very reason, the sort of presumptive and pragmatic advices on the subject of conjugal pleasures that the Christian authors lavishly distributed would not have been a concern for Xenophon, Aristotle or later Plutarch, as they all thought them as indecent (Foucault, 1988b, p. 39). For the Greeks, confronting the force of desire and pleasure actually means confronting themselves in an agonistic relation.

Pivotal to this was their conception of *aphrodisia* and the kind of questioning that they posed to them. The questioning that “was not oriented in the least toward the search for their profound nature, their canonical forms, or their secret potential” (Ibid, 1988b, pp. 39 – 40). The definition of *aphrodisia* that *Suda* has given, Foucault writes, repeated again by Hesychius: *aphrodisia* are ‘the works, the acts of Aphrodite’ (*erga Aphrodisia*). They ‘are the acts, gestures, and contacts that produce a certain form of pleasure.’ While trying to determine what exactly “self-indulgence is, Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* excluded from it the pleasures of sight, hearing, and smell, to him, self-indulgence relates only to the pleasures of the body. Neither the delights of colour, shapes, or paintings nor of theatre and music, then, are related to self-indulgence. Those that are related to self-indulgence must involve touch and contact: “contact with the mouth, the tongue, and the throat (for the pleasure of food and drink), or contact with other parts of the body (for the pleasure of sex)” (Ibid, 1988b, p. 40). Plato’s *Laws*, thus, ‘refers to the existence of three appetites, relating to food, drink, and reproduction’ (Ibid, 1988b, p. 49).

The classical thought, however, considered them as not just natural, but also as necessary. Plato classed the desires that lead to the *aphrodisia* among the most natural and necessary, and, according to Aristotle, the pleasures gained from *aphrodisia* have their cause ‘in necessary things that concerned the body and the life of the body in general. In short, as Rufus of Ephesus was to point out, seeing that sexual activity was deeply and harmoniously grounded in nature, there was no way that it could be considered bad’ (Ibid, 1988b, p. 48). The exercise of suspicion (often demanded from the subjects in the Christian experience of the “flesh” and later in “sexuality”) that enables the subjects ‘to recognise from afar the manifestations of a stealthy, resourceful, and dreadful power’ of desires and pleasure seems, then, quite unknown to the Greeks, and their experience of *aphrodisia*. What, then, marked the distinction between self-restrain and self-

indulgence is exaggeration, surplus and excess. Foucault writes: "Aristotle [in the third book of *Nicomachean Ethics*] explains that for the natural desires that are common to everyone, the only offenses that one can commit are quantitative in nature: they pertain to "the more" (*to pleion*); so that natural desire only consists in satisfying needs, "to eat or drink whatever offers itself till one is surfeited is to exceed the natural amount [*toi plethei*]" (Ibid, 1988b, p. 45). Then, he who exceeds all the natural limits is a self-indulgent individual.

Self-indulgence, or the play of the excess, surfaces in man, when he fails to use active freedom, and thereby, letting the forces of desire and pleasure to gain an absolute power over his soul. Though natural, these forces of desire and pleasure are, actually, conceived as inferior forces – forces that should be mastered to elevate oneself to the status of a 'free man.' Consequently, to work out the conditions and modalities of their 'use,' or in other words, to stylise one's own life in accordance with a reasonable use of pleasures, Foucault suggests, takes form in relation to one's need, timeliness, and status, and therefore, it did not, actually, follow any form of universal law, but rather varied from person to person.

The problematisation of the forces of desire and of pleasure, thus, takes an entirely different direction. The Greeks neither fashioned their lives by referring to any list of possible acts, 'such as one finds later in the penitential books, the manuals of confession, or in works on psychopathology' nor had any table that 'served to define what was licit, permitted, or normal, and to describe the vast family of prohibited gestures.' The concern 'for discovering the insidious presence of a power of undetermined limits and multiple masks beneath what appeared inoffensive or innocent' that was a characteristic feature of the way Christianity conceived the problem of flesh and later of sexuality, was unknown to classical Greek thought. The Greeks of the antiquity neither aimed to classification nor to decipherment the truth beneath the forces

of desire and of pleasure (Ibid, 1988b, p. 38), they were rather concerned with the ontology of forces that linked together acts, pleasures, and desires. It 'was this dynamic relationship that constituted what might be called the texture of the ethical experience of the *aphrodisia*' (Ibid, 1988b, p. 43).

In the experience of the *aphrodisia*, 'act, desire, and pleasure formed an ensemble whose elements were distinguishable certainly, but closely bound to one another' (Ibid, 1988b, p. 42), and within their close linkage between them, one's acts take a definite form. The classical thought saw circularity between the performance of act, pleasure and desire – the performance of act (as nature intended) is always "associated with a pleasure, and it was this pleasure that gave rise to *epithumia*, to desire, in a movement that was naturally directed towards what "gives pleasure," according to a principle that Aristotle cites: desire is always "desire for the agreeable thing" (*he gar epithumia tou hedeos estin*).¹ It is true – Plato always comes back to the idea – that for the Greeks there could not be desire without privation, without the want of the thing desired and without a certain amount of suffering mixed in; but the appetite, Plato explains in the *Philebus*, can be aroused only by the representation, the image or the memory of the thing that gives pleasure; he concludes that there can be no desire except in the soul, for while the body is affected by privation, it is the soul and only the soul that can, through memory, make present the thing that is to be desired and thereby arouse the *epithumia*. Thus, what seems in fact to have formed the object of moral reflection for the Greeks in matters of sexual conduct was not exactly the act itself (considered in its different modalities), or desire (viewed from the standpoint of its origin or its aim), or even pleasure (evaluated according to the different objects or practices that can cause it); it was more the dynamics that joined all three in a circular fashion (desire that leads to the act, the act that is linked to pleasure, and the pleasure that occasions desire). The ethical question that was raised was not: which desires?,

which acts?, which pleasures? But rather: with what force is one transported “by the pleasures and desires?” (Ibid, 1988b, p. 43).

The forces with which one is transported by the pleasures and desires, the classical thought suggests, are, in themselves, forces that are untamed, and therefore, if one does not take necessary precautions, they can invade the soul during its slumber. Diogenes, for instance, advocated training, at the same time, both the body and the soul. Foucault writes: “the relationship to desires and pleasures is conceived as a pugnacious one: a man must take the position and role of the adversary with respect to them, either according to the model of the fighting soldier or the model of the wrestler in a match...[consequently] the battle to be fought, the victory to be won, the defeat that one risked suffering – these were processes and events that took place between oneself and oneself. The adversaries the individual had to combat were not just within him or close by; they were part of him” (Ibid, 1988b, p. 67). Then, to combat the forces of desire and pleasure, Foucault’s reading of the classical Greek thought suggests, is not to fight an enemy, alien to oneself, but rather ‘to cross swords with oneself.’

Since it is forces that transport one by the pleasures and desire, to tame them is neither the task of an ego, nor a will, but rather it demands a different genesis of force – an active force. The forces that transport one by the pleasures and desires, however, are passive in relation to those pleasures and desires. The agonistic relation, the relation between oneself and oneself, is a relation between forces. It is the relation between forces that unfolds only in a living body, and therefore, it is the closest of all relationship – whether that is the relation between man and society, or between men and women, or between men, or else between man and nature. Still, this antagonistic relationship with oneself is only a repetition of those other relations. In Plato, the model is the team with its driver. Aristotle contemplated that since the

child should live according to the direction of the tutor, our desiring faculty ought to comply with the prescriptions of reason, and for that reason, he contemplated the model as that of the child with the adult.

In all these models, it seems, Foucault has located an unfolding agonistic relation, and conceived it as an endless war of forces. But then ironically what this perpetual war of forces aims at is some sort of harmony. Since forces by their very nature cannot be harmonised, harmony is conceived in a brutal form as domination, and therefore, peace is always a deferred peace. Self, in Foucault's work, is never in peace with itself, rather it is always distracted by itself, and therefore, always in conflict with itself; and what oversees this battle is *the pure difference of forces*. It is this distraction that introduces a temporal oscillation within the self between the interior and the exterior, between *time* and *space*. The distractions within the self that in effect becomes the temporal oscillation between the interior (*the active thinking*) and the exterior (*the folded desires and pleasures*) comes to effect because the origin (or the pure form) in this model of relation between oneself to oneself is that which repeats itself as a virtual presence (and in this manner, introduces the play of difference) - the "paradigm" of city is, actually, laid up in heaven, and so Plato acknowledges that the philosopher will have little chance of encountering a state so perfect in this world (Ibid, 1988b, p. 71). However, one can say with a certain confidence that the peace is not attained in a state of conflict, in a perpetual battle of forces. In relation to truth, peace, rather, is lucidity.²⁰ Foucault writes:

²⁰ The present reading of Foucault's work so far suggests that the mode of being of human being in the world reflects a state of war: in *The Order of Thing*, man is compressed and withheld in a hollowed out space formed at the middle of the folds of life, labour and language, and yet it is in him that all these differentiated folds unfold themselves; in "Preface to Transgression" the being is conceived as pure moment transgressing the limit; in the "Theatrum Philosophicum" the repetition of an absolutely other series that sets the phantasm into motion and introduces the play of difference and establishes an order of things opens space for the event to surface - here man is constituted by his yet to be fulfilled possibility.

“it is made clear at the beginning of the Laws that this antagonism of oneself towards oneself is meant to structure the ethical attitude of the individual vis-a-vis desires and pleasures: the reason that is given for the need of a ruling authority and a legislative authority in every state is that even in peacetime all states are at war with one another; in the same way one must assume that if “all are enemies of all in public,” then “in private each is an enemy of himself;” and of all the victories it is possible to win, “the first and best” is the victory “of oneself over oneself,” whereas “being defeated by oneself is the most shameful and at the same time the worst of all defeats” (Ibid, 1988b, pp. 68 – 69).

Virtue, then, is not a state of integrity; it is rather at once a relationship of domination and a relation of mastery. Logic behind this model of virtue is the subject, who is able to control the forces that give form to his desires and pleasures, will always restrain himself from giving up himself to violence. The ‘famous test of Socrates, in which he proves capable of resisting seduction by Alcibiades [Foucault writes], does not show him “purified” of all desire for boys: it reveals his ability to resist whenever and however he chooses” (Ibid, 1988b, p. 69). Aristotle, in his analysis, presupposes the presence of desires, and defines *enkrateia* as mastery and victory – and *sophrosyne*, although defined by him as a state of virtue, does not imply the suppression of desires, but rather their control. In relation to Christian spirituality that is built in accordance with a relationship of ‘elucidation-renunciation,’ ‘decipherment-purification,’ in the Greek model, to constitute oneself as a virtuous and moderate subject in the use he makes of pleasures,’ the individual has to construct a type of relationship with the self that is of the ‘domination-submission,’ ‘command-obedience,’ ‘mastery-docility’ (Ibid, 1988b, p. 70).

A model of civic life is often invoked to define the moderate attitude. Plato, for instance, compares desires to ‘a low-born populace that will grow agitated and rebellious unless it is kept in check; but the strict correlation between the individual and the city, which is the mainstay of Plato’s thinking in the *Republic*, enables him to elaborate on the “civic” model of moderation and its

opposite, page after page. There, the ethics of pleasure is of the same order of reality as the political structures: "If the individual is like the city, the same structure must prevail in him;" and he will be self-indulgent when he lacks the power structure, the *arche*, that would allow him to defeat, to rule over (*kratein*) the inferior powers; then "his soul must be full of servitude and lack freedom;" the soul's "best parts" will be enslaved and "a small part, the most wicked and mad, is master" (Ibid, 1988b, p. 71).

Self-mastery involves deploying an arrangement of active forces (through training, meditation, tests of thinking, examination of conscience, control of representation, etc.) to check and control the passive forces that give form to one's desires and pleasures. It involves setting up of *a structure of virility* that relates oneself to oneself. Foucault writes: "self-mastery was a way of being a man with respect to oneself; that is, a way of commanding what needed commanding, of coercing what was not capable of self-direction, of imposing principles of reason on what was wanting reason, in short, it was a way of being active in relation to what was by nature passive and ought to remain so" (Ibid, 1988b, pp. 82 – 83).

The Pythagorean tradition recognises exercises that include: "dietary regimens, reviewing of one's misdeeds at the end of the day, or meditation practices that ought to precede sleep so as to ward off bad dreams and encourage the visions that might come from the gods." Plato proposes, exposing young people to simulated dangers, as a test of their courage. Xenophon 'praises Spartan education for teaching children to endure hunger by rationing their food, to endure cold by giving them only one garment, and to endure suffering by exposing them to physical punishments, just as they were taught to practice self-control by being made to show the strictest modesty in demeanour (walking in the streets in silence, with downcast eyes and with hands hidden beneath their cloaks)' (Ibid, 1988b, pp. 74 – 75).

Besides the opposition between the body and the soul is vigorously reconstituted, when Diogenes and other thinkers demanded the subjugation of both the body and the soul to trainings that are organised around practical reason. These exercises were not distinct from their goals, rather, the Greeks regarded as the actual practice of what one needed to train for.

The virtue of *Sophrosyne* (a general state that ensures that one will do “what is fitting as regards both gods and men”) is actually a state that one attains through the exercise of self-mastery (*enkrateia*) and through restraint in the practice of pleasure; it, then, for the Greeks is freedom. The Greek ethics is, essentially, one that men made for men – it is *masculine* in character. Foucault writes: ‘it is significant that Socrates, in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, after hearing Ischomachus praise the merits of the wife he has himself educated, declares (not without first invoking the goddess of austere matrimony): “By Hera, Ischomachus, you display your wife’s masculine understanding [*andrike dianoia*]”’ (Ibid, 1988b, pp. 83 – 84). For the Greeks of the classical thought, the most dangerous of all danger that is associated with *aphrodisia* is not dishonour, but the bondage to them.

The constitution of a virile structure of power against the passive forces of desires and pleasures assigns a different sort of function for the relation to truth. For the Greeks of the classical thought, moderation as a practice demands a certain form of knowledge as an essential condition. Foucault writes: ‘moderation, says Aristotle, desires only “what the rational principle [*orthos logos*] directs”’ (Ibid, 1988b, p. 86). In the Greek philosophy of the fourth century, the relationship to the *logos* in the practice of pleasures is described in terms of three principal forms. First, as a structural form, *logos*, in the case of moderation, is placed in a position of supremacy that means, it is *logos* that should subdue the forces of desire and pleasure, and regulate behaviour. Foucault writes:

“whereas in the immoderate individual, the force that desires usurps the highest place and rules tyrannically, in the individual who is *sophron*, it is reason that commands and prescribes, in consonance with the structure of the human being: “it is fitting that the reasonable part should rule,” Socrates says, “it being wise and exercising foresight on behalf of the whole soul;” and he proceeds to define the *sophron* as the man in whom the different parts of the soul are in agreement and harmony, when the part that commands and the part that obeys are at one in their recognition that it is proper for reason to rule and that they should not contend for its authority” (Ibid, 1988b, pp. 86 – 87).

However, after considering the agonistic relationship that defines relation of oneself to oneself, and the ways it is described – for instance, Foucault write, “to struggle against “the desires and the pleasures” was to cross swords with oneself” – one can conclude that this harmony is an order imposed through force. The passive forces of desires and pleasure should always be controlled and subordinated to the order that the reasonable part of the soul imposed on itself. Still, it does not give undue importance to the form over force, when the play of forces is necessary in shaping and colouring the form of order. Foucault writes: “the elements of this domain – the “ethical substance” – were formed by the *aphrodisia*; that is, by acts intended by nature, associated by nature with an intense pleasure, and naturally motivated by a force that was always liable to excess and rebellion” (Ibid, 1988b, p. 91). In “*Theatrum Philosophicum*,” Foucault agrees with Deleuze on the role that Deleuze has given to the phantasm in shaping the topography of what which appears in sight. Consequently, the “mode of subjection” is ‘not defined by a universal legislation determining permitted and forbidden acts; but rather by a *savior-faire*, an art that prescribed the modalities of a use that depended on different variables (need, time, status)’ (Ibid, 1988b, p. 91).

Second, it is in its instrumental form. Since the domination of the pleasures ensures their ‘use that is adaptable to needs, times, and circumstances’ a practical reason is unavoidable. It is ‘to determine, as Aristotle says, “the things he ought, as he ought, and when he ought.” Plato emphasizes that it is important for the individual and for the city not to use the pleasures “without

knowledge [*anepistemonos*] and at the wrong time [*ektos ton kairon*]. And from a similar viewpoint, Xenophon shows that the man of moderation is also the man of dialectics – competent to command and discuss, capable of being the best – for, as Socrates explains in the *Memorabilia*, “only the self-controlled have power to consider things that matter most, and sorting them out after their kind, by word and deed alike to prefer the good and reject the evil” (Ibid, 1988b, p. 87). Third, a relation to truth is essential in the ontological recognition of the self by the self. This is a Socratic theme. In order to practice virtue and subdue the desires, it then is necessary that one should know oneself. What the practice of *aphrodisia* ensures is active freedom in relation to forces of desire and pleasure. Foucault, for instance, cites Xenophon: “Tell me, Euthydemus, do you think freedom is a noble and splendid possession both for individuals and for the communities?” “Yes I think it is, in the highest degree.” “Then do you think that the man is free who is ruled by bodily pleasures and is unable to do what is best because of them?” “By no means” (Ibid, 1988b, p. 78).

The relation to truth then does not take one back to a distant origin, or a perfect form. The ‘famous test of Socrates, in which he proves capable of resisting seduction by Alcibiades, does not show his “purified” of all desire for boys: it reveals his ability to resist whenever and however he chooses’ (Ibid, 1988b, p. 69). The original, or else the perfect form, ‘the “paradigm” of the city [the Greeks of the classical thought followed a civic model of moderation] is actually laid up in the heaven, and therefore, ‘the philosopher will have little chance of encountering a state so perfect in this world’ (Ibid, 1988b, p. 71). What, then, is left unaffected is a ceaselessly unfolding drama: a struggle between more than one kind of forces – the struggle between the affirmative forces and the passive forces of desires and pleasure, regulated by the insights of a practical reason (in the case of the Greeks of the classical thought). Beauty, then, does not appear at random, but rather, it is what surfaces within the play of form and forces. Consequently the origin is not a

distant beginning, but rather, it is that which repeats itself at those hollowed out spaces that at once separates and differentiates each of the forces that are at play in a living body. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault writes, “It is no longer origin that gives rise to historicity; it is historicity that, in its very fabric, makes possible the necessity of an origin which must be both internal and foreign to it; like the virtual tip of a cone in which all differences, all dispersions, all discontinuities would be knitted together so as to form no more than a single point of identity, the impalpable figure of the Same, yet possessing the power, nevertheless, to burst open upon itself and become Other” (Foucault, 1994, pp. 329 – 30).

Foucault writes:

A task is thereby set for thought: that of contesting the origin of things, but of contesting it in order to give it a foundation, by rediscovering the mode upon which the possibility of time is constituted – that origin without origin or beginning, on the basis of which everything is able to come into being. Such a task implies the calling into question of everything that pertains to time, everything that has formed within it, everything that resides within its mobile element, in such a way as to make visible that rent, devoid of chronology and history, from which nevertheless cannot escape from it since it is never contemporaneous with the origin; but this suspension would have the power to revolve the reciprocal relation of origin and thought; as it pivoted upon itself, the origin, becoming what thought has yet to think, and always afresh, would be forever promised in an imminence always nearer yet never accomplished. In that case the origin is that which is returning, the repetition towards which thought is moving, the return of that which has already always begun, the proximity of a light that has been shining since the beginning of time. Thus, for the third time, the origin is visible through time; but this time it is the recession into the future, the injunction that thought receives and imposes upon itself to advance with dovelike steps towards that which has never ceased to render it possible, to keep watch in front of itself, on the ever-receding line of its horizon, for the day from which it came and from which it is coming in such profusion (Ibid, 1994, p. 332).

Nietzsche had to distance himself from Wagner, when Wagner, losing his avant-garde spirit, and introduced theatricality into music for the perfection and full realisation of his works, and institutionalised a compromised theatre at the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth. Foucault, Deleuze and Derrida experienced a

pure and non-choreographed *dance* in Nietzsche. Foucault and Deleuze (Deleuze, 1997, pp. 70 – 128) saw it as a pure form of performance – a force that sets into motion their respective philosophical endeavours. Derrida saw it to the very heart of textuality, as an all unsettling dance (Derrida, 2002, pp. 27 – 73; Derrida, 1982, pp. 3 – 27). These two aspects, nonetheless, are only two different views of the same dance. It seems, they all have experienced the Dionysian excess, the pure music intrinsic to dance. Like physicians, they examined its body, pulse and heart beat, and like artists, they observed, wondered and speculated on its movement.

Deleuze writes in *Difference and Repetition*, “Death has nothing to do with a material model. On the contrary, the death instinct may be understood in relation to masks and costumes. Repetition is truly that which disguises itself in constituting itself, that which constitutes only by disguising itself. It is not underneath the masks, but is formed from one mask to another, as though from one distinctive point to another, from one privileged instant to another, with and within the variations. The masks do not hide anything except other masks. There is no first term which is repeated, and even our childhood love for mother repeats other adult loves with regard to other women, rather like the way in which the hero of *In Search of Lost Time* replays with his mother Swann’s passion for Odette” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 17). These thinkers, then, have a shared passion to initiate in philosophy an equivalent of theatre.

III

I would really like to have slipped imperceptibly into this lecture, as into all the others I shall be delivering, perhaps over the years ahead. I would have preferred to be enveloped in words, borne away beyond all possible beginnings. At the moment of speaking, I would like to have perceived a nameless voice, long preceding me, leaving me merely to enmesh myself in it, taking up its cadence, and to lodge myself, when no one was looking, in its interstices as if it had paused as instant, in suspense, to beckon me. There would have been no beginnings: instead, speech would proceed from me, while I stood in its path – a slender gap – the point of its possible disappearance.

Foucault, 1972, p. 215

Since the origin is unapproachable, it is the absolute alterity of thought itself. Body (pre-ontological matter), from the point of view of thought, is in fact more virtual, than anything real. Since thought in itself is virtual, it is incapable of containing anything real.²¹ In the reign of time (time as circularity), body is that very inapprehensible trace of the origin. It is the absolute alterity of thought; its absolute outside that (like the fools' ship in *Madness and Civilization*) is yet the innermost of all insides. The time spins ceaselessly around this inapproachable origin;²² it is around the irreducible materiality of body (the origin that unsettles all presence through internal scission) thought, like the nomadic clouds around impenetrably solid, dark-red Mount Fuji – *Shower Below the Summit* or *Sanka Hakuu* – from the Japanese master printmaker, Katsushika Hokusai's *Thirty-six Views of Mount-Fuji 1760 – 1849* series, drifts and drizzle.²³ What strikes out immediately in this particular print is that there is not a single representation of human figure and, it does not suggest anything about the life of the people (Clarence

²¹ See Appendix 3

²² Nietzsche, for instance, writes: 'An idea made this pale man pale' (Nietzsche, 2012, p. 32), and he then continues, "What is this man? A mass of diseases that reach out into the world through the spirit; there they want to get their prey. What is this man? A coil of wild serpents that are seldom at peace among themselves – so they go forth apart and seek prey in the world. Look at that poor body! What it suffered and craved, the poor soul interpreted to itself – it interpreted it as murderous desire, and eagerness for the happiness of the knife" (Nietzsche, 2012, p. 33). There is, he suggests, one thing that is thought, another thing that is deed, and yet another thing that is the idea of the deed; and 'the wheel of causality doth not roll between them' (Nietzsche, 2012, p. 32). Here not just the conflict between our eternal, and therefore *otherworldly*, ideas and values (in Nietzsche's own words: *the coil of wild serpents*) are brought to light, but also tempts us to see, for ourselves, our own bodies with a clear eye against history. To do so, one must purify oneself, one must free one from oneself, from one's own history, that is, from its forms, logics, concepts, reasoning, understandings, impressions, memories, virtues, values (and more importantly *from the already constituted modes of anxiety, of recollection and of search*), which are constituted in a field of power, disciplines and pain, and affirm with love 'what is' – *the earthly body and its great reservoir of reason*. "To purify himself," [he writes] "is still necessary for the freedman of the spirit. Much of the prison and the mould still remaineth in him: pure hath his eye still to become" (Nietzsche, 2012, p. 39).

²³ Sei Shonagon, from another time and another place has aimed her writing against vision, the *freezing* and sculpting of light into structures of permanence. Her prose, even in the midst of an overriding feeling of loss and melancholy, tenders us with hope. The very tangibility of her experience of seeing shows her *adventure with force*. The old Japanese poem, she quotes in her *The Pillow Book*, from a visitor to the Emperor's palace, Korechika, who has slowly intoned – "The days and the months flow by; But Mount Mimoro lasts forever" (Shonagon, 1967, p. 35) – deeply impresses her, as she *wishes*: 'all this,' that is, this imperial order that she (as the lady-in-waiting at the Court of the Japanese Empress during the last decade of the tenth century) was *part of*, would "indeed continue for a thousand years" (Shonagon, 1967, p. 35).

Buckingham Collection, Art Institute of Chicago). It stands apart from most prints of that collection as the master's abstraction on the very nature of life. The dark-red colour of Japan's spiritual soil, it seems, is intended here to deny our access. Like the hovering clouds below its peak, our thought is destined to wonder without clue. What we could never encounter then is the *pre-ontological* Mount Fuji, in other words, all that we have heard and seen till now are only echoes and reflections. Like music, reverberations always presence themselves as whole. Chris Marker, at the foot of Mount Fuji, for instance, has encountered voice more like King Lear's 'reverberating across the castle walls erected by Akira Kurosawa and the Mount Fuji' for the film, *Ran* (Marker, 1985, 2:40 – 2:53). Transcendence is transcendence as a whole.²⁴

²⁴ From Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil* (sunless): "This name Island of France sounds strangely on the Island of Sal. My memory superimposes two towers: the one at the ruined castle of Montpilloy that served as an encampment for Joan of Arc, and the lighthouse tower at the southern tip of Sal, probably one of the last lighthouses to use oil. A lighthouse in the Sahel looks like a collage until you see the ocean at the edge of the sand and salt. Crews of transcontinental planes are rotated on Sal. Their club brings to this frontier of nothingness a small touch of the seaside resort which makes the rest still more unreal. They feed the stray dogs that live on the beach. I found my dogs pretty nervous tonight; there were playing with the sea as I had never seen them before. Listening to Radio Hong Kong later I understood: today was the first day of the lunar new year, and for the first time in sixty years the sign of the dog met the sign of water...Out there, eleven thousand miles away, a single shadow remains immobile in the midst of the long moving shadows that the January light throws over the ground of Tokyo: the shadow of the Asakusa bonze. For also in Japan the year of the dog is beginning. Temples are filled with visitors who come to toss down their coins and to pray Japanese style a prayer which slips into life without interrupting it. Brooding at the end of the world on my island of Sal in the company of my prancing dogs I remember that month of January in Tokyo, or rather I remember the images I filmed of the month of January in Tokyo. They have substituted themselves for my memory. They are my memory. I wonder how people remember things who don't film, don't photograph, don't tape. How has mankind managed to remember? I know: it wrote the Bible. The new Bible will be an eternal magnetic tape of a time that will have to reread itself constantly just to know it existed. As we await the year four thousand and one and its total recall, that's what the oracles we take out of their long hexagonal boxes at New Year may offer us: a little more power over that memory that runs from camp to camp like Joan of Arc. That a short wave announcement from Hong Kong radio picked up on a Cape Verde island projects to Tokyo, and that the memory of a precise color in the street bounces back on another country, another distance, another music, endlessly" (Marker, 1983, CD 2, 27:49 – 32:42). The attention hence is directed towards our memory (or the current state of our memory), a memory that not just reduces the materiality of the matter to the mere status of an image, but also superimposes images, a memory that runs 'from camp to camp like Joan of Arc;' consequently, an attempt to trace (since all tracing involve four dimensional space-time) the very force that activates and spreads this *memory* into space-time will only further weaken our power over memory. It will only spread memory further into space-time. Yet can we really comprehend the matrix from which this memory materialises itself? Does this superhuman nature of human memory ultimately gain strength from our formal (for that very reason, rigorously cultural) relation with the present, our losing touch with the fleeting instants? With the fleeting instants splitting themselves internally under the sheer pressure of reverberating human history, with we finally losing touch with our present; what rain on us are images and memory of images.

What here fascinates thought, however, is not its own origin, but its very limit - its own limit. Caravaggio, the Italian master from the reformation, quite often plays with this absolute alterity of the material body. In *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* (1601 – 02) the skepticism of the worldly mind, in an act of theatrics, finds its ultimate height, when Saint Thomas, before the resurrected body, leans towards it, as Christ guides his hand to feel the depth of the wound. Does this act aim the mitigation of a bottomless temptation – shared and, for that reason, firmly terrestrial?

At least in Caravaggio, the son of God and his terrestrial followers, who give life to the scene; they all are (like infants swathed in swaddling clothes) swathed in the very force of temptation. Their whining nasal voice only whispers the looming fear in the air. Christ here seems as inquisitive as his worldly disciples that he himself has to guide Thomas's hand as if he is also seeking for some evidence. Could they actually encounter the resurrected body? They couldn't! Seem suggesting Caravaggio. Seems not even the Christ did? But what fascinates thought, besides all, is the earthliness of the scene; *all divinity are heartlessly stripped away from that very act*; the act itself has, consequently, become an ordinary scene, or else quite like a memory of an ordinary scene from Caravaggio's Rome acted somewhere at one of its dark alleys, after a street-fight, in a wild drunken night. Christ here is rather presented wrapped up in flesh – human flesh. Caravaggio's Christ hence is *neither the Son of God nor a dogma*, but rather is human, and a man of action – a great teacher of humanity, who wanted to change the world. The painting, by suggesting *the earthliness of both the peoples depicted and their thought*, warns us on: *how body itself, in the utter mundanity of time, becomes an absolutely impenetrable other for thought, an absolute other of human history itself*. Besides the absolute transcendence of the resurrected body infinitely eludes the order of time, and resists to become a mere signifier, or a signifier of a signifier (an

ego, or I). *From the point of view of thought, the body, as an enigma, that transforms the painted-canvas to a space of theatrical action, apparently, evokes here the painter's primary, or even primordial, relationship to himself.*²⁵ Faith, consequently, to Caravaggio, seems to be carnal in its very nature.



Figure: Caravaggio - The Incredulity of Saint Thomas (1601 -02).

²⁵ In "Thoughts on Caravaggio," Michael Fried, while trying to make sense of one of the Caravaggio's early canvases, *Boy Bitten by a Lizard*, traces *two moments* in its production using (what Foucault would call, a *heterotopias*) a mirror: *first moment*, Fried suggests, is an extended duration, in which the painter absorbs himself, over time, into 'the protracted, repetitive, partly automatic act of painting,' which he calls it as *immersive*; and the *second*, a 'notionally instantaneous' moment of separating or indeed recoiling from the painting itself [or else, a shock of seeing something unexpected in the painting itself], 'which is to say of no longer being immersed in work on it but rather of *seeing* [author's italics] it as if for the first time.' Fried then suggests that it is the second moment that is 'dramatized to the extent of largely eclipsing the first' not just in the *Boy Bitten by a Lizard* but also elsewhere in his oeuvre (Fried, 1997, p. 22). Like a snapshot, Caravaggio, in this masterpiece, portrays the moment when the lizard, hidden beneath the leaves and fruits all on a sudden bits the boy, *the moment when its teeth touched the boy's finger*, capturing the boy's very immediate reaction. In a moment of pain, the boy recoils (his recoiling, at this moment, is only carnal, and has little to do with his thinking) out of shock. At this moment of reflexive response, though his eyes fall upon us, the spectators, he seems not seeing us. He is rather caught in the action, and, to a large extent, *lacks the very sense of existence – not just of himself, but also of viewers*. With the collapsing of the entire symbolic order, the boy at this moment is only about to recollect what has just happened to him. The flower at the back of his right ear here *only suggests the mood before he is bitten by the lizard*. What then Caravaggio aims to show here, and elsewhere in his oeuvre, through dramatisation, is the very carnal themes of his work.

Conclusion

Foucault's work is often differentiated internally from the perspective of discontinuities that it carries with it both at the theoretical and methodological levels, and is marked by three distinctive phases – the archeological, genealogical and the ethical. However, the present chapter takes a different approach. It opens a reading of his work, to locate a problem that persistently repeats throughout his philosophical endeavor, by examining his encounter with Kant, and that is the problem of "What is man?." The problem that shapes his thought in the later works, the problem of "How should I live my life?," actually, steams out of the problem of "what is man?" that has shaped the topography of his thought in his early works, especially, *The Order of Things*. The present chapter, therefore, sees his work as a coherent whole. The reading of *Hamlet* at the beginning has more than one function in this whole endeavor. Hamlet is identified here as someone, who is kept suspended at the threshold between the reality of the King and the time of revenge, and the peculiar relation he has kept with words, the present reading stresses, has always baffled the renaissance society in which his tragic life unfolded, and for that very reason, he is often considered as mad by other characters in the play. On the other hand, the strange play of fear and fury that shapes his subjectivity actually allows us to discuss different forms of relationships with time in the footnotes, and that, then, play as differences to the non-metaphysical traits of Foucault's thought that has been carefully studied afterwards, and this, then, defers, in effect, the possibility of a closure.

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Conclusion

I

The two main problems – “what is man?” and “how should I live?” – that the present study tries to deal with essentially stem out of a single problematic. They surface at different stages of Foucault’s career, though, as the first of the two surfaces in his early works, “Introduction to Kant’s Anthropology” and *The Order of Things*, where he deals with Kant’s thought, and the second question surfaces in his later writing, when he deals with the Greek practice of the care of the self. However, a trace that at once connects and differentiates these problems can actually be retraced. In his reading of Kant’s *Anthropology*, Foucault, for instance, tries to connect the three questions that Kant poses in

the *Critique*. Foucault suggests: it is actually through the determination of the source of human knowledge that one gives meaning to the question: 'what can I know?' It is through determining the domain of the possible and natural use of knowledge that a response to the question 'what shall I do?' can, actually, be produced. It is only through determining the limits of reason that one gives meaning to 'what is possible to hope?'. Hence for Foucault, a fourth question that is not fundamentally different is inevitable. He, thus, tries to link the three questions of the critique, by posing the question: "what is man?"

By connecting the questions of the *Critique* with an essentially anthropological one, Foucault here introduces a deviation. Since all these questions materialise themselves in man from *within the density of becoming*, time that Kant conceived as *apriori* in the *Critique* becomes essentially temporal. It is actually within the density of temporal becoming that all these questions materialise themselves and gain significance. Consequently, the three questions that the *Critique* poses (questions that are directed towards a transcendental philosophy, an enquiry into the very condition of possibility of knowledge) along with the fourth one that Foucault has added have essentially become anthropological. Directed by considerations of practical reason, these questions surface in man rather from within the matrix of the everyday life. It is essentially in man, "Introduction to Kant's Anthropology" indicates, that a synthesis between the world – known – and the God –unknown – can take place.

Through his 'ontology of the present,' Foucault aims at the possibilities of a recession into a future, the possibilities of building a future less constrained by a past. His ontological project actually tries to explore the potentials within the living present to produce something radically new. His work on Kant's critique of the enlightenment project, for instance, asks: "what difference today has brought in relation to yesterday?" Time, here, is not circular, it does not form itself as a circular ruse. It is neither a continuous flux. *Language*

Counter-memory, Practice, for instance, develops a theory of time. The present study, therefore, concludes by outlining the model of movement (that is, time itself) in Foucault's work that the chapters tried to address either directly or indirectly.

Foucault writes: "Chronos is the time of becoming and new beginnings. Piece by piece, Chronos swallows the things to which it gives birth and which it causes to be reborn in its own time" (Foucault, 1980, p. 193). It is monstrous and lawless becoming, 'the endless devouring of each instant, the swallowing up of the totality of life, the scattering of its limbs,' and is related to the exactitude of *re-beginning*. Then from the depths of this great internal labyrinth that is not different in nature from the monster it contains, from the depths of this convoluted and inverted architecture, Foucault suggests, 'a solid thread allows us to retrace our steps and to rediscover the same light of day.' He writes: "Dionysus with Ariadne: you have become my labyrinth" (Ibid, p. 193). Chronos, consequently, "is the time of measure that situates things and persons, develops a form, and determines a subject" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 262).

Aeon, Foucault suggests, is the straight line of time, it is *recurrence* itself. It is a splitting quicker than thought and narrower than any instant. It knows only speed. It is "the indefinite time of the event, the floating line that knows only speeds and continually divides that which transpires into an already-there that is at the same time not-yet-here, a simultaneous too-late and too-early, something that is both going to happen and has just happened" (Ibid, 1987, p. 262). At its both sides, the splitting then causes the same present to arise as always existing, as indefinitely present, and as indefinite future. Still this is not "a succession of present instances that derive from a continuous flux and that, as a result of their plenitude, allow us to perceive the thickness of the past and the outline of a future in which they in turn become the past. Rather, it is the

straight line of the future that repeatedly cuts the smallest width of the present that indefinitely recuts it starting from itself [it is *less* than a cut than a constant fabrication]" (Foucault, 1980, pp. 193 – 4). This schism can actually be traced to its limits, "*but we will never find the indivisible atom that ultimately serves as the minutely present unity of time*" (Ibid, p. 194, italic mine). Time, consequently, is always *an excess to thought*.

It is time that endlessly recurs itself here, that is when the present is endlessly split by the finely sharp arrow of future that carries it forward by always causing its swerving on both sides,' it (the living present) recurs as singular difference, and avoids the return of the *analogous*, the *similar*, and the *identical*. Difference recurs endlessly, and being expressed itself in the same manner with respect to difference. Being is never the universal flux of becoming. Nor is a well-centered circle of identities. It is a return freed from the curvature of the circle. It is recurrence. What is universally affirmed in a single stroke is the eternal and dangerous fissure fully given in an instant, the repetitive fibrillation of the present. The present, then, is a throw of the dice, and it is so, not "because it forms part of a game in which it insinuates small contingencies or elements of uncertainty," but due to the fact that "it is at once the chance within the game and the game itself as chance (Ibid, p. 194). In "A Preface to Transgression" Foucault develops a quite similar model of movement, when he suggests that being – as pure movement, and for that very reason, without existence outside movement – transgressing limits that is the mask of already consolidated forces at the presence of a central absence, an empty skull. Here, he writes: "the play of limits and transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration, and thus it is made to return once more right to the horizon of the uncrossable. But this relationship is considerably more complex: these elements are situated in an uncertain context, in certainties which are

immediately upset so that thought is ineffectual as soon as it attempts to seize them" (Ibid, p. 34).

Whether, it is the future materialised into an arrow splitting the present or the being ceaselessly transgressing the limits, the mask of the already consolidated forces, time, as a purely ontological being that can nevertheless subsist only in man, differentiates itself independent of his consciousness. Consequently, his consciousness is only an effect of time's internal differentiation. *The Order of Things* gives further insights into the causes of this internal differentiation. It hints to us on how time, the floating line, gained the needed consistency in itself to present itself as a line that is repeatedly fibrillated by itself, the arrow of the future. *The Order of Things* gives a spatial being to language. It is out there in the void that separates the subject and the object. Foucault, for instance, ask: "what is language, how can we find a way round it in order to make it appear in itself, in all its plenitude?." It regained this spatial existence in modern age, when language regained its lost consistency that would thicken it into words that can be deciphered, when it regains its material density.

The first chapter takes this argument bit further, using Goethe's colour theory. According to Goethe, light forms a differential relation with darkness, when it falls upon something other than itself – matter, for instance. Then, reality unfolds within the play of refracted light and darkness. It becomes so, when pre-ontological matter becomes inaccessible either to vision or to thought. Consequently, when language recovers its material density, reality unfolds as a play of refolding of light and language (with each having its own history). Here light and language become *apriori* – the two 'there is.' They are always already out there, independent of both the subject and the object. It is so, because of the central absence of an unchangeable presence, a univocal one. Here when a breaching has always already occurred, when language,

independent of both the subject and the object, becomes spatiotemporal, time can never be pure and *empty*. The alien elements that have infested time, give it the necessary consistency to differentiate itself from within into past, present and future. Time becomes an ontological existence. It begins to endlessly split itself from within.

When *light* and *language* are infinitely folded towards themselves and become reality independent of both the subject and the object, time in effect becomes an ontological being subsisting in man, giving form to both his thoughts and actions. The second and the third chapters further analyse the folds of light and language respectively. The Stoics folded light and language, in a culture of silence, listening and soul services through sending frequent missives to friends, and through them they intended to objectify the soul, the principle of life. When these folds of light and language are folded towards themselves they form an inside, the 'I' or the self that contemplates and an outside, a field of forces that can only be felt. It is, however, within the play of this field of forces that the topographies of these folds of light and language take shape.

In the modern age, Foucault suggests, a new form of discourse the tension that separates the empirical and the transcendental becomes internal, while being directed at both. It is when the space of the body and the time of the culture form an internal tension within the form of a discourse that man begins to appear before himself as a reality with his own density. *The Order of Things*, however, sees this as an *epistemic* break at the level of discursive formation. Foucault's analysis indicates actually the shift from the classical to the modern age. However, it should be seen as the condition under which the self affects itself, that is the auto-affection that lets man to follow himself, his thought and actions, or thought as actions. Foucault, for instance, suggests, when language recovered its material density and established a differential relationship between light (thought) and darkness (unthought), man appears to himself

compressed and withheld in a hollowed out space formed at the middle of the folds of life, labour and language. Thus he starts following himself in relation to these folds. When man starts following himself, the question of 'what is man?' becomes important for him, and since the folding of the outside itself is, or it involves auto-affection (the self affecting itself), the question of 'how should I live my life?' becomes internal to the same movement. The fourth chapter tries to link these questions that appear at different stages of his philosophic career.

The question of "what is man?" becomes a concern for man, when a mutation within language transformed it to *a reality with its own density*, when language recovered its lost density to become words, words that can be deciphered. This is when man starts to follow himself again. The question of "how should I live my life?" concerns him, when he develops a certain relationship with truth about his own actions. The ancient Greek practice of *the care of the self*, Foucault suggests, revolves around practical reason. Even though, this ancient model is shaped by the play of understanding, its relationship to truth is of a different order, unlike the Christian experience of the flesh that revolves around deciphering the truth beneath one's actions. The Greeks do not develop a hermeneutical relationship with the truth of one's own actions, that is, they do not try to figure out 'which desires?', 'which acts?', and 'which pleasures?' one should follow. For them, there is no hidden truth that can be deciphered beneath the actions that one does in everyday life.

The Greek ethics is modelled around an ontology of forces. Since forces by their very nature are excess, it stresses that it would rather be much more important to identify the forces that transport desire to act, act to pleasure, and pleasure back to desire than deciphering the hidden meaning beneath them. The regimen of life, therefore, is built upon the articulation of a framework of everyday life, based on the foundation of a practical reason. One of its

governing principles is: 'a reasonable discourse could not unfold without a health practice' (Foucault, 1988c, p. 101). The ancient Greeks, we have seen Foucault showing, sensed the differential relationship between the empirical and the transcendental aspects of thought, as they had observed the effects of food, wine, drugs, climate and the architecture of home on the body and the senses, their ramifications on thought and, *vice versa*. They, hence, developed techniques of life based on practical reason to train both the body and the soul, the principle of life. This practically demands a field of temporality, that is, an immanent field of uninterrupted movement that would initiate a play of interpretation and evaluation organised around a historically formed practical reason.

The senses interpret and introduce the space of the body to the thought and the thought evaluates and introduces the time of the culture to the senses, and *vice versa*. Consequently, the becoming time of space and space of time, a rift faster than thought, is a more originary violence than any other *that introduces thought*. This originary oscillation sets itself into motion and gains intensity, when a central absence, an absolute Limit repeatedly signals the presence of an unapproachable other – an absolute other. It is the repetition of the central absence that differentiates and repeats both *the empirical* and *the transcendental*, and establishes links between them within a form of thought that is grounded in practice. The Greek ethics demands the freedom to train oneself by oneself, by building a counter-force (an active force, since only forces confront forces) that can check the passive forces that take one to desire and pleasure. The model of ethics that Foucault derives from the ancient Greeks also demands an agonistic relationship with oneself – a relationship that would repetitively reconstitute and refresh the inside, the self that contemplates, by folding the outside. It aims the spiritual transformation of oneself.

II

Then, in the light of its own enquires, the present study reiterates that: all acts of signifying inevitably involve forces of fiction. Since we always begin from the centre, that is, since we have not got the power to actually begin; all acts are shaped by a play of force and form. They are, for that reason, not fully given even to the most inquest eye! For Foucault, the self itself is only a fold of the outside. It is nothing but the outside folded towards itself and, consequently, the self nourishes itself from outside, it subsists on the outside. The self that organises the gaze, then, is always already (that is, even before it becomes conscious of itself) organised in relation to its outside. If put differently, the self, in relation to the materiality of the body, is always already transcendence, and for that reason, is fictional. If philosophy is a human affair, its tone is then fictional. It is essentially the fictional that will fill and resonate in the void, building a spiritual ambience. It is in the ambience of its own reverberations that philosophy gains its spiritual force.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Similar theatrical situation unfolds itself in Vyasa's epic poem, *The Mahabharata*, when the son of Kunti slips into a subjective mode; as he has fallen prey to words, Arjuna has spoken words that brave (as he himself is) should not have spoken. As he arrives to 'yonder open ground betwixt the armies,' speaks he those words: "Krishna! as I behold, come here to shed their common blood, yon concourse of our kin, my members fail, my tongue dries in my mouth, a shudder thrills my body, and my hair bristles with horror; from my weak hand slips Gandiv, the goodly bow; a fever burns my skin to parching; hardly may I stand; the life within me seems to swim and faint; nothing do I foresee save woe and wail! It is not good, O Keshav!" (Arnold, 1996, p. 97). Krishna then speaks with lucidity, and advises Arjuna to overcome the delirium imposed on him by words and the thought that carry

them, and to “be thyself;” here the son of Kunti’s restlessness, as is suggested by Sankaracharya, in his Sanskrit commentary of *Bhagavad Gita*, is ingrained on false ideas – ideas that are fixed on differentiation; what Arjuna has done wrong, at least from Gita’s point of view, is that he has actually tried to differentiate, among the enemy line his friends, relatives and family (he tried to identify himself in them) and this has led to the strengthening of the delusion within him, that he is nobody else, but one amongst them (Gambhirananda, 2000, p. 2); consequently, Arjuna, the Incinerator of the Foe, spoke those words with a sighing to Krishna, the Lord of Hearts, that “I will not fight” and then he has held silence (Arnold, 1996, p. 97); Krishna here advises his friend, Arjuna that the truly learned do not fall prey to words, they do not mourn, not even for the dead and the alive, he suggests: “The (truly) learned do not mourn” (Edgerton, 1996, p. 17). What Gita advocates here is to see the present (without the background of the past) or, in other words, to perceive the thing as presence without the mediation of language without the play of words; as words themselves differ and defer. It advises to see ourselves through a meticulous *observation* of the different levels of awareness of human experience, whether there is anything in it that is infinite and changeless by nature (Easwaran, 2007, p. 17); it stresses on seeing behind all the plays of *cause* and *effect* (that is, behind the play of difference and the linear understanding of time inherent to it – time as ceaselessly flowing from the past to the future) an absolute reality in a world of flux, it advises to one with the divine within; it advocates to enable ourselves to see the same thing “in a wise and disciplined Brahmin as in a cow or an elephant, or even in a dog or an outcast” (Johnson, 2008, p. 24). Gita hence locates its observation in a much deeper level, it aims to one with the underlining reality, the changeless infinite background in which the entire drama of difference stages itself. “He whose self is unaffected by outside contact finds his happiness in the self; united through yogic discipline with Brahman, he reaches

inextinguishable happiness” (Johnson, 2008, pp. 24 – 25) ...“For the supreme bliss comes to the yogin whose mind has grown calm, whose passion is stilled, who has become Brahman, without taint” (Johnson, 2008, p. 29). In Hindu metaphysics the morphogenetic field (Maya) that produces names and extensions actually unfolds itself through differentiation within an ultimate universal reality that is Brahma. Interestingly, both Arnold and Johnson, in their translations of Gita, have sensed in it the trace of Sankhya Theory. Sankhya Theory suggests the material nature of universe (including all physical and mental attitudes of human beings). Material nature, it suggests, ‘is a *continuous process* [my italic] manifested in the dynamic interaction of three inextricably intertwined constituents’ – *pure* constituent represents the principle of knowledge and freedom, *passionate* for activity and greed, and the *dark* for inertia and ignorance (Johnson, 2008, p. 10). Life ‘subtended by the duration of the individual Will to Life,’ suggests Coomaraswami in *The Dance of Siva*, may be regarded as constituting a curve, *an arc of time-experience*, and it is since in man that the turning point of this curve is actually reached, both Brahmanical sociology and Buddhist mysticism gives the-birth-in-human-form an immeasurable value. “The outward movement on this curve Evolution, the Path of Pursuit is characterized by self-assertion. [And] the inward movement Involution, the Path of Return characterized by increasing Self-realization. The religion of men on the outward path is the Religion of Time; the religion of those who return is the religion of Eternity. If we consider life as one whole, certainly Self-realization must be regarded as its essential purpose from the beginning” (Coomaraswami, 1918, p. 6/10). According to the spiritual age and the position of the seeker on the great curve, he suggests that *there are three prominent types of men*. First: the mob, who ‘are preoccupied with the thought of I and Mine, whose objective is self-assertion, but are restrained on the one hand by fear of retaliation and of legal or after-death punishment;’ second, there is a smaller, yet quite large number

of thoughtful and good men 'whose behaviour is largely determined by a sense of duty' (who have begun to taste freedom, but still are guided by rule); third, and finally, there is still a much smaller number of great men 'who have definitely passed the period of greatest stress and have attained peace, or at least have attained to occasional and unmistakable vision of life as a whole' (Coomaraswami, 1918, p. 8/10). They, he suggests, are "Prolific" of Blake and the "Masters" of Nietzsche, and 'their activity is determined by their love and wisdom' (Coomaraswami, 1918, p. 8/10). The difference that Gita, then, brings here, against the Pyrrhonians, is the stress for work (and *a unity in purpose*), a stress on action that is without either *prejudice* or *justification*, that is, if Pyrrhonians take scepticism to its extreme point, then Gita advocates engagement, as it does not totally reject sensory-perceptions. To engage, and to engage for the good, it is (Gita says) necessary for each of us to dissolve the always contemplating I, the ego. It is, then, quite easy to suggest here that neither a Pyrrhonian nor anything similar to an ancient Indian ethics has guided any of Hamlet's thought and actions. However, it is quite evident that the deferring of action in Hamlet's case is not due to any delusion of *emotional* attachment with the enemy; but rather (it is) due to pure fear; does this fear that unsettles him from within, the fear of the king and the ruthlessness of his political apparatus, actually gain force also from ignorance?

Appendix 2

Baudrillard, in his critique of Foucault's power, has, actually, kept seduction outside production, and therefore, he has failed to see the tension within discourses that are rooted in actual experience. In discourses rooted in actual experience, their internal tension "would keep separate the empirical [that is rooted in the space of the body] and the transcendental [that which belongs to the time of culture], while being directed at both" (Foucault, 1994, pp. 320 – 21). Baudrillard writes: "from one discourse to the other – since it really is a question of discourse – there runs the same ultimatum of *pro-duction* in the literal sense of the word. The original sense of "production" is not in fact that of material manufacture: rather, it means to render visible, to cause to appear and be made to appear: *pro-ducere*. Sex is produced as one produces a document, or as an actor is said to appear (*se produire*) on stage. To produce is to force what belongs to another order (that of secrecy and seduction) to materialize. Seduction is that which is everywhere and always opposed to *pro-duction*; seduction withdraws something from the visible order and so runs counter to production, whose project is to set everything up in clear view, whether it be an object, a number, or a concept. Let everything be produced, be read, become real, visible, marked with the sign of effectiveness; let everything be transcribed into force relations, into conceptual systems or into calculable energy; let everything be said, gathered, indexed and registered: this is how sex appears in pornography, but this is more generally the project of our whole culture, whose natural condition is "obscenity."...Not a shadow of seduction can be detected in the universe of production, ruled by the transparency principle governing all forces in the order of visible and calculable phenomena: objects, machines, sexual acts, or gross national product" (Baudrillard, 2007, p. 37). What he then fails to see here is: all processes of production are organised ritually or, rather they actually involve

ritualised processes, that is, nothing can actually be rendered visible from vacuum, nor anything radically new can actually be produced by man and added to the whole. Besides, a ritually oriented production processes can have any sense of quality. That which renders visible, essentially, renders itself visible from within a field of seduction – that which renders visible always come along with the forces of secrecy. The numerous conscious and unconscious permutations that render discourses only indicate the fluidity and intensity of the field of forces. Foucault, for instance, writes: “the question I would like to pose is not, Why are we repressed? But rather, Why do we say, with so much passion and so much resentment against our most recent past, against our present, and *against ourselves* [italic added], that we are repressed? By what spiral did we come to affirm that sex is negated? What led us to show, ostentatiously, that sex is something we hide, to say it is something we silence? And we do all this by formulating the matter in the most explicit terms, by trying to reveal it in its most naked reality, by affirming it in the positivity of its power and its effects” (Foucault, 1998, pp. 8 – 9). “Hence...my main concern will be to locate the forms of power, the channels it takes, and the discourses it permeates in order to reach the most tenuous and individual modes of behaviour, the paths that give it access to the rare or scarcely perceivable forms of desire, how it penetrates and controls everyday pleasure – all this entailing effects that may be those of refusal, blockage, and invalidation, but also incitement and intensification: in short, the “polymorphous techniques of power. And finally, the essential aim will not be to determine whether these discursive productions and these effects of power lead one to formulate the truth about sex, or on the contrary falsehoods designed to conceal that truth but rather to bring out the “will to knowledge” that serves as both their support and their instrument” (Ibid, 1998, pp. 11 – 12). Foucault, hence, ‘do not maintain that the prohibition of sex is a ruse,’ then it is, according to him, ‘a ruse to make prohibition into the basic and

constitutive element from which one would be able to write the history of what has been said concerning sex starting from the modern epoch.' He writes: "in short, I would like to disengage my analysis from the privileges generally accorded the economy of scarcity and the principles of rarefaction, to search instead for instances of discursive production (which also administer silences, to be sure), of the production of power (which sometimes have the function of prohibiting), of the propagation of knowledge (which often cause mistaken beliefs or systematic misconceptions to circulate); I would like to write the history of these instances and their transformations" (Ibid, 1998, p. 12). In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault, for instance, writes: genealogy "operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times" (Foucault, 1980, p. 139).

Appendix 3

While acknowledging the considerable progress that Spinoza has made in his struggle against Cartesian theory of substance, Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition*, writes: ‘against the Cartesian conception of distinctions that runs together the ontological, the formal and the numerical (substance, quality and quantity), Spinoza [rather] organises a remarkable division into substance, attributes and modes’ (Deleuze, 1994, p. 40). Extension, according to Spinoza, can be conceived as infinity only from *a thing* conceived through and in itself, only through a law of eternal nature, the univocal being, a sublime subject, that he calls, the Substance. Substance then is prior to all accidents (Spinoza, 1955, pp. 282 – 83). That is, there cannot be another extension, for instance, a second one, if not there is a ‘Being’ with infinite attributes (Ibid, p. 277). Spinoza, for instance, writes: “With regard to what you say concerning my first proposition, I beg you, my friend, to bear in mind, that men are not created but born, and that their bodies already exist before birth, through under different forms” (Spinoza, 1955, pp. 283 – 4). He then reveals, in a correspondence to Oldenburg, a questioner whom he values a great deal, the secrets of the Spinozean world: “*first*, that in the universe there cannot exist two substances without their differing utterly in essence; *secondly*, that substances cannot be produced or created – existence pertains to its actual essence; *thirdly*, that all substances must be infinite or supremely perfect after its kind” (Ibid, p.277). Spinoza’s univocal being, Deleuze (after considering its attribution as a Being) suggests, is a truly *expressive* and affirmative proposition, as it ceases to be neutralised – as there remains a difference between the substance and the modes. “Spinoza’s substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent on substance, but as though on something other than themselves. Substance must itself be said *of* the modes and only *of* the modes. Such a condition can be satisfied only at

the price of a more general categorical reversal according to which being is said of becoming..." (Deleuze, 1994, p. 40). Nevertheless, can this difference that Spinoza traces between 'substance that which is conceived through and in itself' (the first stroke of time, before time – the first narrative, God's narrative) and modes (the *successive habits* and *coexistence memory* central to human narrative, in the following-reading the naming of animals) actually hold weight? While reading Genesis, in "The Animal That Therefore I Am," Derrida quotes: "Elohim created the husbandman as his replica; As a replica of Elohim he created him; Male and female he created them; Elohim blessed them. Elohim said to them: "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, conquer it"" (Derrida, 2008, p. 16). Even after this mandate, after God's mandate, they, husbandman and wife, *still*, perceive themselves to be naked, and yet naked without shame, until a certain *serpent*, the gaze of a non-brother fallen up on them; they, thereafter, 'will perceive themselves naked, and not without shame' (Ibid, p. 16). In 'order to see the power of man, *in order to see* the power of man in action' he, the Supreme Being, destines animals to experience power, man's power. He lets Adam, his own replica, the man to call out names. 'Adam is observed, within sight, he names under observation' (Ibid, p. 16). God "lets him, Ish, speak on his own, call out on his own, call out and nominate, call out and name, as if he were able to say "I name," "I call." God lets Ish call the other living things all on his own, give them their names in his own name, these animals that are older and younger than him, these living things that came into the world before him but were named after him" (Ibid, p. 17). Waiting around the corner, observing within sight, this man naming animals, God also observes himself turning all-powerful (as an infinite gaze) and at the same time finite, as he sees himself filled with a mixture of curiosity and authority. With the infinite right of naming invested on man, God himself encounters his first experience of finitude, as he himself does not know 'what is going to happen to him with language' (Ibid, p. 17). "God,"

writes Derrida, “doesn’t yet know what he really wants: this is the finitude of a God who doesn’t know what he wants with respect to the animal, that is to say, with respect to the life of the living as such, a God who sees something coming without seeing it coming, a God who will say “*I am that I am*” without knowing what he is going to see when a poet enters the scene to give his name to living things” (Ibid, p. 17).

We began this reading, as a footnote to one of the original problems of philosophy, that is, the relation between extension and thought, and have already encountered two decisive directions that philosophy has taken on this issue. Spinoza, by attributing substance as univocal being, has drawn our attention to the difference between substance and modes, and Deleuze, on the other hand, by neutralizing time (instead of God, one should rather say time here) to a pure and empty form, categorically rejects any difference between time and its modes. Before we introduce a (re)reading of Derrida, I would like to introduce Lacan’s famous formula here: if ‘man’s desire is the desire of the Other,’ then ‘unconscious is [the] discourse of the Other’ (Lacan, 1977, p. 312). The following reading, however, does not stress the psychological or the textual; it rather only tries to open up a reading to comprehend the theatrical, the action itself. The play of the form and the formless that is force, like any play, is temporal by nature, therefore, it can only unfold within time. The following reading not just examines Derrida’s reading of Genesis and the origin of time, that is the first stroke of time, but it also investigates how time, with its origin, degrades itself and becomes that which is not itself, in other words, how the origin itself becomes inaccessible. Temporality is the mode of becoming. Temporality, or becoming movement, is the becoming succession of coexistence and the becoming coexistence of succession. In other words, it is the ceaseless modification of time into coexistence (memory), succession (habits) and permanence, at the very presence of a central absence, that is,

when present itself ceases to be presence, and is given only as virtual. When time becomes temporal, it ceaselessly flow from past to future. The present then is given as absence – in “A Preface to Transgression” Foucault, for instance, writes what the upturned eye discovers is that the ‘interior is an empty skull, a central absence’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 49). The present that presences itself as absence that is given only as virtual, consequently, is the very matrix that unfolds time as temporal. The ceaseless deferring of the presentation of the present then suggests that origin is nothing but the beginning of the end. Becoming (either through modification or substitution), in relation to the origin, involves degeneration, and therefore, rejoining with or return to the origin, in the case of the ancient Hindus, was of great importance. The Hindus, against theories of human nature, stress on impersonality and the rejoining with the eternal present. For them to become one with the eternal present is an attempt to return to the lucidity and the playfulness (that is the innocence) of what Derrida would call ‘the first stroke of time,’ that is, the God’s narrative. The return-to-the-eternal-present terminates the auto-distancing of the self from itself and ceases self-affection. For those ancients, the path of return in the arc of time-experience liberates them from the intricately related problems of temporality and difference and leads them to self-realisation and eternal bliss (Coomaraswami, 1918, p. 6/10). Let us go back to Derrida’s reading.

Derrida writes “let me insist: it is only recorded thus in the *second* narrative. If one believes what is called the *first* narrative, God creates man in his image but he brings male and female into the world *at the same time* [my italic] in a single stroke. Naming will thus have been the fact of man as a couple, if it can be put that way. The original naming of the animal does not take place in the first version. It isn’t the man-woman of the first version but man *alone* and *before* woman who, in that second version, gives their names, his names, to the

animals. On the other hand, it is in the so-called first version that the husbandman, created as God's replica, and created male-female, man-woman, immediately receives the order to subject the animals to him" (Derrida, 2008, p. 15). Hence with a single stroke of time, before time, *without a second thought*, He, the Supreme Being, creates out of his image man and brings husbandman and wife, at the same time, into the world; which means, what had been done, had been done with the innocence of a child and had been done without any trace of ignorance or of a tinge of the play of unconscious. At a moment of perfect consciousness, at a moment of "*I am that I am*," he creates man-woman. He creates man-woman, without letting him affecting himself – that is without auto-affection: an *I* affecting the ego (Deleuze, 1984, p. vii – ix) – in the certainty of his non-being, without an interiority. In other words, he makes the first stroke of time, before time, from himself. "Elohim: said: "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness! Let them [note the sudden move to the plural] *have authority* [Derrida's italic] over the fish of the sea and birds of the heavens..." (Derrida, 2008, 15). Hence the *first stroke of time*, the man-woman, is created from pure thought, from what Deleuze calls in "Synthesis and Time," a 'genetic thought' and since he created man out of his image, man's thought, at the moment of his creation was also genetic by nature, with a similar statue of A is A (an analytic – a priori) – means, they, like God, live their lives *in the present without any effort to make sense of either their past or their future*. In other words, they have lived in an ideal world – *they are their world*, and the language they, the man-woman, have spoken is not human, but God's language (for instance, Derrida in "The Essay on the Origin of Language" writes: "[i]n the beginning or in the ideal of the all-harmonious voice, the modification becomes one with the substance that it modifies" (Derrida, 2002, p. 198); in other words there is no much difference between the substance and its modes). Consequently, one must arrive through intuition, if he must grasp the true nature of this original time,

that god creates a genetic thought from himself, (blindly) believing (or *in the very absence of believing*) that they, his creation, the man-woman, will think and do exactly what he thinks. They will do, following (or *without the knowledge of following what they are following*) his (god's) grand narration. Between this *first narrative* and the *second narrative* (that is, man's naming of animal), an incident, which is precisely of the nature of *an Event* (and therefore, I must insist here that *it cannot be part of the original text, god's meta-narrative*), takes place – the first true Event. Husbandman-woman's encounter with the serpent and its ramifications on the second narrative – man's naming of animals. Let us, *therefore*, examine the event! Like an unwanted adjunct to god's grand narrative, an event, with unexpected ramifications, occurs, when the man-woman first encounters a *non-brother*, a serpent. They, before its gaze, encounter, for the first time, their nakedness; and after that, they 'will perceive themselves to be naked and not without shame' (Derrida, 2008, p. 15) The man-woman's encounter with the serpent here establishes a new relation between them and the world; they, *for the first time*, start following themselves following the others; they start following themselves with an *a priori* knowledge *that comes into effect* at the very intersection of the gazes – their *encounter with the serpent*. Within a sudden flash of objectivity (*the knowledge of not-knowing their shame*), both the *World* and *themselves* present before them as phenomena. It is the moment when, on the one hand, both *form and limit* (that is, when I, for instance, ask: '*how to learn*' a new thing – for example, a new skill or a new language – I am actually endeavouring, from a *threshold*, into a *new terrain where language is limited to the uninflected form of the verb: 'to learn,'* for example, means to learn *through practicing*. Therefore, one can say: the man-woman begins to pick, *through their experience before the serpent*, the knowledge of their shame. Their *knowledge-of not-knowing-their-own-shame* till now – which is different from *the-knowledge-of-their-shame* – besides suggests that shame has always been a content of language, but man-woman only

realised it after their experience before the serpent. This is actually the trouble with all knowledge. It is always born with its own alterity, that is, unknown, which is immediately added to the already accumulated undifferentiated swam. This undifferentiated swam, the blood-brother of knowledge, that appears along with the progression of history, that is, the accumulated knowledge in time, *melts and dissolves deeper into time* than knowledge) of *language*, alien to time, slips into, merges and becomes *one* (like *milk into water* – in this case, neither the milk becomes water nor water becomes milk, and yet our finite senses are incapable of detecting which is which) *with* or *in* time, detaching time from everything else, including the god as he himself experiences auto-affection, that is, as he experiences finitude. Here language, like god, must also experience finitude. It is then also the moment when *god becomes God* (with a capital letter), that is, God, from the point of view of knowledge, becomes an excess – Deleuze, however, argues in “Kant” that since Kant has given God ‘quite a different function, a moral, practical function,’ he has ‘subtracted God and the soul from knowledge (Deleuze, 1978). ‘Knowledge (in Derrida’s own words, they ‘will perceive themselves naked, and not without shame,’ which means *with a sense and knowledge of shame*) here, from the point of view of the man-woman, actually functions like an apparition to the senses, as it not only reveals its content, but also strengthens their deeper believe in *a world of unkown* (not in the sense of darkness, but a world of undifferentiated force which in no way can be reduced to the order of logic, reason or any binary coupling). Thus, *on the other hand*, man-woman’s encounter, with the serpent, initiated in them auto-affection: an *ego*, immersed, till now, in itself comes (by splitting open its thick and hard outer-shell) into life, against a self-differentiating point, the *I*, that differentiates itself in relation to that very *ego* that starts to feed itself in the *out*. In this field of action, when *non-time merges with or into time*, the duration gets *intensity* and *quality*. Time consequently can never be *pure* and *empty*. It is

rather inscribed *in* or *with* the word, producing, *at once* (along with real effects) virtual effects – that is, not just producing apparitions, rather producing apparitions of very real effects (the Lacanian Real resists integration, transforming the Imaginary and the Symbolic, within the triode, to appear, through deploying *fields of virtual*, more real than they actually are: see, for further reading, Žižek’s lecture: *The Reality of the Virtual*). Deleuze, for instance, suggests the apparition for Kant “is what appears in so far as it appears” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 5). Kant calls it phenomenon. It is then the inscriptions in the very form of time that allows time to contain *at once* more than one mode (for instance, the *successive habit* and the *coexistence of memory*), and brings a difference between its form and modes. One experiences time only through its modes, and yet, as conceived by Spinoza, modes are not time. Since time here has the form of deception of deception, that is, the form of *unconscious*, turning everything, including God and his beloved creation, the man-woman, into puppets. The Husbandman and Wife’s encounter with the serpent hence is precisely an Event, as it opens up the Infinity, the God, to his own ignorance. It is the moment of the *Infinity confronting his own finitude*; God, for the first time, confronts his ignorance, his pride and his emotions. It is the moment of *Infinity forced to contemplate Infinity*, a higher source of power – here we encounter a *hierarchy among forces*. We are in Cantor’s territory: still I believe, (precisely *due to my own finitude* I insist that I believe – in any case, I can only believe what is not given to me as concrete) that it might be God, and not Cantor, who, *for the first time*, has taken up this question for intuition. *How big is Infinity?* However, God’s exposure, for the first time, to surprise here (Derrida’s reading of Genesis) only confirms the beingness of the Infinity. *God at last becomes a Spinozean God – a being* (or auto-affection). God, for the first time, experiences finitude, implies that he can even be extinguished. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida writes, “Auto-affection is a universal structure of experience. All living things are capable of auto-affection. And only a being

capable of symbolizing, that is, to say of auto-affecting, may let itself be affected by the other in general" (Derrida, 2002, p. 165). Yet the divinity of the divine gains force only *from the point of view of thought*, only from the limits of his seeker. His divinity ascends with thought, that is, with thought's own sense of its finitude.

Are we sensing in the above-described logic, what Derrida calls an anthropocentric logic? An abyssal limit! Well it is then our finitude, and at the same time, it also opens up an ethical possibility. "This powerful yet deprived "in order to see" that is God's, the first stroke of time, God's exposure to surprise, to the event of what is going to occur between man and animal, this time before time has always made *me dizzy* [my italic]" (Derrida, 2008, p. 17). If seen from a different standpoint, that is from the very limit of human reason, it is a different scene (different from the one explained just above) unfolds itself; there he, the Supreme Being, along with his own creation, animals, become the first (silent) witnesses of man's power in action. What we then see in them, in each of them, is an *Other*, a (silent) witness, 'powerful yet deprived of power,' contained totally in itself – an *absolute Other*, not even a brother (face-to-face in the case of Levinas), rather a non-brother that, by ceasing itself from becoming a *concept*, keeps itself as a silent witness to the becoming-identical of the becoming itself, the circularity of pure energy. They are consequently the witnesses of that play of an immanent field of form and force that gives form to the I.

Since they, the husbandman and wife, have experienced their nakedness, and their shamelessness, only after the appearance of the serpent, before the gaze of a non-brother, their shame itself is a gift. It is then under the gaze of certain *serpent* that our early ancestors first received (or recognised) their unconscious; and therefore, our infinite right to name, our language, is only a received gift. If language is something that comes to our possession from

outside, something that we received as a gift, something that eventually colonised us, then we ourselves should be, among those other silent witnesses, a witness of our own linguistic violence. From this particular standpoint, the most intimate and the innermost in ourselves, (the most innermost, and therefore, like Heidegger's Being, the most furthest of all, is also the most silent *within* us; a witness, a non-brother, that circulate the excess, the intensities that overflows any signifiers that designate us to or attach us permanently to an order) is beyond, and therefore unapproachable with, the *specificities of the humanity* defined and attached on us. Does the uninterrupted becoming-identical of the becoming, *the becoming-identical of the ceaseless becoming-I of the I, in relation to a relative-ego*, then unfolds itself in, what Deleuze calls, an *immutable* time? Time, he writes, 'is the form of everything that *changes and moves* [my italic], but it is an immutable Form which does not change" (Deleuze, 1984, p. viii). This form of time, according to Deleuze, *separates one from oneself* (Deleuze, 1984, ix), separates 'the I' (the *active* I that synthesises time) from 'the ego' (the *passivity*) and establishes a *differential* relationship between them. In this differential relationship, time presences itself in its different modes – as *permanence, succession, coexistentive*. Yet to establish any differential relationship between an active *I* and a passive *ego*, time and language must (*at once*) be given as the *a priori*. Time, in itself (that is, time as immutable form), must *lack the power of differentiation* – yet Deleuze writes: "Having abjured its empirical content, having overturned its own ground, time is defined not only by a formal and empty order *but also by a totality and a series* [my italic] (Deleuze, 1994, p. 89). What then could be that difference (that which Deleuze preferred to call: 'a *fundamental difference*') that must have driven this differential relationship? Can the difference between thought and extension (thought and its absolute alterity, *a potentiality that has never succumbed itself to the order of thought* – the matter itself) be considered as this fundamental difference? Does Matter, as the perfect witness (or as a

detached-engagement) to the 'Eternal Return,' tempt it with sense that could stop the Eternal Return *from bringing back 'the same'*? Wallace Stevens, for instance, writes: "What was the ointment sprinkled on my beard?; What were the hymns that buzzed beside my eyes?; What was the sea whose tide swept through me there? Out of my mind the golden ointment rained, And my ears made the blowing hymns they heard. *I was myself the compass of that sea* [my italic]: I was the world in which I walked, and what I saw; or heard or felt come not but from myself; And there *I found myself more truly and more strange* [my italic]" (Stevens, 1971, p. 77). If the *I is another* – Rimbaud's formula (Deleuze, 1984, pp. viii – ix): that is, if *the I indeed is distanced from itself by the line of time*, by, what Borges would call, *a true labyrinth* (Borges, 1998, pp. 147 – 56) – then the I must indeed be nothing but a force of intuition derived from a virtual field (a sequence of *I-He*) that has appeared in time and given before us in the coexistence of memory (hence coexistence, a characteristic of space, becomes a mode of time itself). Foucault, for instance, in "Different Spaces" has argued that the present age indeed is the age of space. "We are [he writes] in an era of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition, of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the scattered" (Foucault, 1998, p. 175). Our habit of asserting ourselves under *the illusive singularity of the I*, therefore, must not have gained force from the I, but rather from *a singularity that is exterior to both time and language*, an immediate presence that presents itself as a certain absence (a presence that, by resisting integration, baffles us all) that observes, in silence, the unfolding relationship between, on the one hand, *the active I and the passive Ego* and, on the other hand, *the I with itself* (auto-affection). If put differently, the differential relationship both between *the I and the Ego*, and *I with itself* unfolds when language confronts *its exterior*, within the very *fundamental difference* between *the unfolding thought* and the Matter (of its infinite potentials, extension is only one). Can the body (when that upturned eye closes upon the world, what it discovers is that, the interior is nothing but an

empty skull, a central absence (Foucault, 1980, p. 49); *body as the never totally actualised potentiality*) be then the ‘compass of that sea’ of rhythm, scent and imagination (the very directness and intimacy of that immanent field of sensuality, *the poetic moment*) that which Stevens talks about? The “Greek ethics,” Foucault, for instance, has suggested, “is centred on a problem of personal choice, of the *aesthetics of existence*’ [my italic] (Foucault, 1997, p. 260). It is in this context that the techniques of self (the very art of freeing oneself from oneself) become neither a hermeneutic relationship nor an attachment to a pre-given identity, it is rather an art of giving form to what is otherwise formless. Can we then suggest here that the subject is the very locus where all these different gazes of Otherness converge? A grand theatre, the very locus of not only *action*, but also deferring of action (if deferring as holding back is, at the same time, an opening up of possibility, a possibility for actualising another act – or else, holding back oneself, or freeing oneself from temptation, freeing oneself from oneself, in today’s world at a time when ‘time [itself] is out of joint,’ is the ultimate act, an act in its most purity, *a real challenge*)! Can we hence approach, with the light of this reading, Foucault’s shift from grand genealogical projects (searching for, *who we really are?*) to micro technologies of the self (focusing on, *how should I live my life?*)? The question of Freedom, for Foucault, is rather deeply entangled within one’s relationship with the time.

Intuition, or *one with the present*, can never lead to absolute *Truth*, but it affirms life itself. Yet it is precisely this event (non-time merging into time) that made intuition (in a Kantian sense the willing to receive what is *presented in time and space*) possible. Intuition is *not prior to word*, rather it is born with or along with the word, along with the image of the terrain it scans (the question before us, therefore, is: under what condition an image, or *a reflection on one’s own retina*, gets coherence and sense? Or if put differently, *the condition under*

which meaning gets meaning, that is, the condition under which meaning materialises itself either as signification – that is through definition and interpretation – or as significance, and that is through relevance and explanation – Deleuze, for instance, talks about infinitive verbs – or else through a combination of both). The *content and limit of language* hence have to detach itself from the succession and progression of history, and deeply ingrained in time, or else *vice versa*: means, language too has to be given, before us, as ‘historical a priori.’ Intuition, consequently, is nothing but the very scanning of the topography of thought itself. It is at once the scanning, through detached engagement, of topography – as all *theatrics*, that is, all possible *emotional theatrical behaviours*, unfold within the established relationships between man-made and natural features of the surface: the setting – and the grounding of oneself, with an effort of imagination, in that topography *in order to sense the ‘simple and indivisible feeling’ that one encounters through identifying oneself with the others, from within them* (Bergson, for instance, in “An Introduction to Metaphysics” writes “[b]y intuition is meant the kind of *intellectual sympathy* [author’s italic] by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible”). Since everything is presented in time, in the different modes of time, intuition is intuition of time itself. It is the eye (since an eye does not contemplate, rather reflects *light* – eye is spontaneous) of a bird over the valley – it seems, it is important to keep here in mind the distinction between an *image* and a *word*. Neither a (spoken) word can be an image nor can image (unless it is linked within a system) be a word. An Image rather is connected to measured light; it is only an effect of measured light. If considered the functioning of eye, it is quite clear that the measuring of light is neither psychological nor linguistic but biological. It is constituted by the very form, virility and force of the biological body, yet to constitute an image as an image, that is, to constitute *an image with signification* (for example, *a personal facade*), image must take shape

in the background of or fed by *psychic* and *language* environment. Image then couldn't be prior to word. Intuition, therefore, can never be instinctual. Intuition has not just *causes*, but also *purposes*, and therefore, is born *at once* with or along with psychological and linguistic determinants. Much more than its spontaneity, it is essentially its very context and precision – Bergson's philosophy, for instance, gains precision, when he develops intuition as a *method*. Deleuze, for instance, poses a question: how come intuition, which primarily denotes *an immediate knowledge (connaissance)* capable of forming a method, when method, for that matter any method, involves more than one meditation? But then, as a defence, he also writes "Bergson often presents intuition as a simple act. But, in his view, simplicity does not exclude a qualitative and virtual multiplicity" (Deleuze, 1991, p. 14). "[A]n absolute," he writes in "An Introduction to Metaphysics," 'could only be given in an intuition' – that differentiates intuition from imagination (which is actually a play of excess).

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