

# Foucault/ Derrida Fifty Years Later

*THE FUTURES OF GENEALOGY,  
DECONSTRUCTION, AND POLITICS*

*Edited by Olivia Custer,  
Penelope Deutscher,  
and Samir Haddad*



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# Power and the “Drive for Mastery”

DERRIDA'S FREUD AND THE DEBATE WITH FOUCAULT

► ROBERT TRUMBULL

IN THE 1990S, NEARLY THIRTY years after the publication of “Cogito and the History of Madness,” Derrida returned to Foucault in a text intended to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Foucault’s *Histoire de la folie*. In “To Do Justice to Freud” (“Être juste avec Freud”), Derrida revisits some of the central questions in the contretemps around *History of Madness* and “Cogito and the History of Madness,” but he does so in the context of an engagement with Foucault that extends the debate in a new direction. The turn in the debate is announced straightaway in the title: at issue, now, will be the precise relation of Foucauldian genealogy—Foucault’s account of the history of madness and, in turn, of the history of sexuality—to psychoanalysis, and above all to Freud. The title, however, and Derrida’s fairly measured tone in the text, mask somewhat the deeper issues at stake in his reading of Foucault. The broad thrust of Derrida’s argument in “To Do Justice to Freud” will be that Foucault’s published works evidence a fundamental ambivalence toward Freud. Sometimes Freud is credited with resisting the confinement of unreason and the modern construction of sexuality, and sometimes Freud appears as the most effective purveyor of the discourse through which power penetrates the subject. This ambivalence is, to a certain extent, unavoidable, Derrida suggests: it is “a structural duplicity that his work reflects from the thing itself, namely, from the event of psychoanalysis” (JF 77/101). Yet, according to Derrida, Foucault never quite manages to “do justice to Freud,” as Foucault at one point claims to do in acknowledging Freud’s originality. Specifically, Derrida argues, Foucault overlooks the crucial topic of power and mastery in Freud, themes that

speak directly to the concerns of Foucault's thinking. At stake, it would seem, is something like an unacknowledged resistance on Foucault's part to Freud and psychoanalysis, and Derrida's criticism that Foucault does not adequately measure or analyze his relation to psychoanalysis would seem to be informed by psychoanalysis's role as a crucial resource in Derrida's thought across his entire oeuvre.

Scholars such as Geoffrey Bennington and Michael Naas have gone some way in rectifying this perception, however. In particular, they draw attention to the ways in which Derrida's analysis of the relation to Freud in Foucault allows him to reapproach the deeper issues concerning periodization and the fundamental conditions of possibility of Foucault's own project broached in "Cogito and the History of Madness."<sup>1</sup> As Bennington and Naas have shown, Derrida analyzes the marked ambivalence in Foucault's references to Freud in this later text precisely in order to pose, once again, serious questions about the very possibility of writing a history of madness or sexuality, questions that remain, to a certain extent, unthought in Foucault.

Still, if this last installment in the Derrida/Foucault debate bears revisiting today, more than two decades on, I suggest that this is because it contains an unanalyzed element. At stake in this final encounter, I will argue, is not simply the place of Freud in Foucault and its attendant implications. At issue here, even more importantly, I will suggest, is a particular activation of Freud in Derrida.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, I seek to demonstrate, it is Derrida's mobilization of Freud's thinking on power or mastery that poses the most serious challenge to Foucault at this stage of the debate: specifically, the Freudian figure of a fundamental "instinct" or drive for power or mastery, what Freud called *Bemächtigungstrieb*. In short, following Derrida, I will argue that Freud's thinking in this area shows Foucault's notion of power to be deconstructible. My claim will be that the Freud Derrida strategically invokes near the close of "To Do Justice to Freud," the Freud of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, fundamentally complicates the notion of power at the core of Foucault's project in *The History of Sexuality*. While, from a certain perspective, Freud's thinking on the question of power or mastery makes him an ally to Foucault, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in fact points to a notion of power Foucault does not and cannot think. While Derrida traces a certain ambivalence in Foucault around Freud, I analyze another ambivalence suggested by this reading: the Freud who seems to offer Foucault's

project key resources is also the one who undercuts one of Foucault's most crucial concepts.

Initially, Derrida argues in "To Do Justice to Freud" that the imbrication of Foucault's project in the historical processes it sets out to describe has the effect of putting into question Foucault's ability to properly delimit the object of historical analysis, as when Foucault specifies his project in *History of Madness* as a study of the classical age.<sup>3</sup> Or then again, when, in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, Foucault refers to a particular organization of bodies and techniques that he suggests ought to be rethought today, as if from a position external to it. On Derrida's reading, the persistent ambiguity one finds in Foucault's writing concerning Freud's place in these historical processes is the symptom of an unacknowledged problem. As Derrida puts it, redeploying the word Foucault used to describe the object of study in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault's analysis "calls for the *problematization of its own problematization*. And this must *itself* also question itself, with the same archaeological and genealogical care" (JF 115/143). It is precisely at this point that Derrida raises the speculative question: what might Foucault have made of the Freud who would seem to have the most to say about the concerns of Foucault's project?<sup>4</sup> The Freud of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, for instance, explicitly addressed the relation between pleasure and power, the very question that occupies so much of Foucault's attention in *The History of Sexuality*.

What might Foucault have made of Freud's references in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and elsewhere to an irreducible drive for power or mastery, Derrida asks: "Where would Foucault have situated this drive for mastery in his discourse on power or on irreducibly plural powers? How would he have read this drive, had he read it, in this extremely enigmatic text of Freud?" (JF 117/145). Foucault's own work leads one to pose this question, Derrida specifies. It is the question that Foucault's work "carries within itself," in Derrida's words (JF 115/143–144). The implication here is fairly clear. Had Foucault complicated his understanding of the Freudian project, had he pursued a closer analysis of Freud's thought, he might have found the resources for his own project already in Freud. The speculative question raised here allows Derrida to rearticulate the problematic developed across the essay as a whole, the ultimately unresolvable question of the precise relation of Foucault's project to "the age of psychoanalysis." Here, as elsewhere, Foucault's project is understood as irreducibly entangled with its

object. Yet another underexplored line of inquiry is suggested by this reading. Following the thread of Derrida's references to Freud in this later text, I will demonstrate, we begin to see that the thinking of power or mastery thus mobilized by deconstruction in fact challenges the concept of power central to Foucault's project.

The operations of power are, of course, a key theme in *The History of Sexuality*. Indeed, Foucault's explicit aim there is to develop a new understanding of power that goes beyond the simple notion of domination from above, and to disclose its effects at the level of everything that became knowable and practicable around sexuality in the modern era.<sup>5</sup> Power, in Foucault's well-known formulation, is mobile and essentially dispersed. Its operations do not answer to any given subject; it is permanent and self-reproducing. It is immanent in even the most intimate relations (knowledge relationships and sexual relationships). Moreover, it depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance, which are not external to power but rather "present everywhere in the power network" (HS 95/126). The definition thus offered in the famous "Method" chapter in volume 1 undergirds the genealogical project Foucault undertakes in *The History of Sexuality*, the project of mapping how power takes charge of sexuality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the operations of a certain "will to knowledge" around sexuality (HS 12/20) and in a whole array of varied "practices of the self."<sup>6</sup>

In volume 1, this takes the form of analyzing what Foucault will see as an intimate relation between power and pleasure. He discloses the previously hidden intersection of these two terms, the penetration of pleasure, in its most intimate forms, by diverse mechanisms of power (HS 45/62). The relationship thus posited between these two terms orients the entire project of *The History of Sexuality* outlined in volume 1: Foucault's project is launched by a rebuttal of "the repressive hypothesis" grounded in an analysis of the positive effects of the power that takes charge of sexuality. Thus, as Derrida underscores, "there is no need to oppose, as one so often and naively believes, power and pleasure" (JF 111/138). Hence, in Part One of *The History of Sexuality*, when Foucault discusses the doubts he will oppose to the repressive hypothesis and begins to outline his approach—"the object, in short," he writes, "is to define the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality in our part of the world"—he will characterize his project as an analysis of how power "penetrates and controls everyday pleasure—all this entailing effects that

may be those of refusal and blockage, and invalidation, but also incitement and intensification" (HS 11/19–20). The object, in short, is to disclose what Foucault will call "the 'polymorphous techniques of power'" (HS 11/19–20). It is as if, to put it in psychoanalytic terms, the various mechanisms, institutions, and discursive formations that Foucault analyzes adhere to a kind of "power principle": everywhere there is pleasure, there is the exercise of power. If, as Foucault seems to suggest, pleasure is not entirely reducible to power, it is nonetheless understood here as "penetrated" or "controlled" by mechanisms of power in the end.

The nexus of these two terms in Foucault is most clearly visible in the famous passage on "spirals of pleasure and power" that Derrida invokes at the close of "'To Do Justice to Freud.'" There, again, for Foucault, it is a matter of challenging and overturning the naive opposition between these terms. Discussing the medicalization of sexuality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Foucault describes how the forms of power that took charge of sexuality in this period "wrapped the sexual body in its embrace," such that there resulted "an increase in the effectiveness and an extension of the domain controlled; but also a sensualization of power and a gain of pleasure" (HS 44/61). It is at this point that Foucault speaks of certain mechanisms of knowledge that entail what he calls a "double impetus" of pleasure and power:

The medical examination, the psychiatric investigation, the pedagogical report, and family controls may have the over-all and apparent objective of saying no to all wayward or unproductive sexualities, but the fact is that they function as mechanisms with a double impetus: pleasure and power. The pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light; and on the other hand, the pleasure that kindles at having to evade this power, flee from it, fool it, or travesty it. The power that lets itself be invaded by the pleasure it is pursuing; and opposite it, power asserting itself in the pleasure of showing off, scandalizing, or resisting. . . . These attractions, these evasions, these circular incitements have traced around bodies and sexes, not boundaries not to be crossed, but *perpetual spirals of power and pleasure*.

(HS 45/62)<sup>7</sup>

For Foucault, the figure of the spiral is that of two terms that collude and come to reinforce one another. Bringing to a close the portion of the text

on the circular relation between pleasure and power, he underscores that, in the period he is analyzing, these two terms are ultimately conjoined:

This concatenation [Foucault is speaking of a process whereby “scattered sexualities” become reified], particularly since the nineteenth century, has been ensured and relayed by the countless economic interests which, with the help of medicine, psychiatry, prostitution, and pornography, have tapped into both this analytical multiplication of pleasure and this optimization of the power that controls it. Pleasure and power do not cancel or turn back against one another; they seek out, overlap, and reinforce one another.

(HS 48/66–67)

At stake in the spiral of pleasure and power, then, is what Derrida will call “the principled unity of pleasure and power” (JF 117/146): the mechanism by which they work in conjunction. And it is the axiomatic notion of the unity of pleasure and power that ultimately undergirds Foucault’s genealogy of bodies and practices in *The History of Sexuality*. Again, it is the task of the genealogist here is to analyze historical zones of “problematization” and specific configurations of pleasure that operate, in the end, in accordance with power.<sup>8</sup>

To return to the issue of Foucault’s relation to Freud, we could say, following Derrida, that some of the most powerful resources for such a thinking of power are to be found already in Freud, and in particular, the Freud of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Foucault seems not to have shown any interest in this text, as Derrida underscores. Yet before Freud introduces the hypothesis of something beyond the pursuit of pleasure in *Beyond* (what he will ultimately theorize as a radically destructive death drive), his thinking in this text actually “problematizes, in its greatest radicality, the agency of power and mastery” (JF 116/145). At issue here, as I have noted, is what Freud at times refers to as the drive for ascendancy or mastery, *Bemächtigungstrieb*. Stated simply, what Derrida invokes under the heading of the drive for mastery is what Freud seems to envision as an absolutely irreducible tendency in human beings toward the exercise of dominance or power. I say “seems to envision” insofar as the *Bemächtigungstrieb* remains an undertheorized term in Freud’s metapsychology across the entire body of his work.<sup>9</sup> This area of Freud’s thinking is complex, but for the purposes of the present discussion, we can take *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as our



starting point. Initially, in an easily overlooked passage highlighted by Derrida in *The Post Card*, Freud speculates that there may be something like an original drive for mastery in human beings operating to some degree independently of the pleasure principle that had, to this point, been said to govern the psychic apparatus as a whole.<sup>10</sup> The *Bemächtigungstrieb* would seem, then, to be the first instance in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* of a tendency "beyond the pleasure principle." Yet Freud never quite explains what he seems to have in mind with this term, and there are few references to such a drive in his writings published after 1920.

As if leaving this hypothesis to one side, in his later "sociological" writings Freud more often sees the propensity to dominate as one form of an ineradicable tendency toward aggressivity and destruction associated with the so-called death drive. This purely "aggressive or destructive drive," as Freud sometimes calls it, is a kind of outward manifestation of the radically destructive death drive, which otherwise is said to operate in absolute silence (SE 22:209). Unlike what Freud now begins to call Eros or the life drives, the death drive is said to lack any psychical representatives, through which excitation coming from the body takes on psychical form. Now, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud had already suggested that the death drive has a social dimension—understood there as a radical force of unbinding, it works to undo every unity, whether it be at the level of the individual organism or at the level of the social unit. In his writings on "civilization," war, and violence, however, Freud develops this notion further. In these later works, the tendency toward aggressivity and destructiveness, sometimes characterized as a drive toward cruelty and domination, ultimately originates in the process whereby the death drive, originally a drive toward self-destruction, is split, and a portion of its energy is turned outward toward external "objects." This impure form of the death drive, as it were, is in the end the only perceptible form the death drive ever takes, Freud goes so far as to suggest.

Regardless of whether it is conceived as a wholly independent tendency or as the outward manifestation of the destructive death drive, the concept of a drive for mastery or power in Freud ultimately opens onto a thinking of power as an absolutely ineradicable force operative not just in the psyche but in the relation between subjects and in the broader sociocultural field. If Freud attempts to think through the agency of power "in its greatest radicality," as Derrida puts it in the passage just cited, this is because

he theorizes it as a fundamentally irreducible, unshakable force that will never be dissolved. For Freud, there can be no question of eradicating or surmounting this tendency; it can only ever be a question of redirecting the drive to dominate by means of certain strategic interventions. And it is precisely to this extent, we could now say, that Freud could be said to contribute to a critical analysis of power such as Foucault's. In other words, Freud would seem to offer here a radical thinking of power proximate to Foucault's own, whereby there is no beyond of power. There is no beyond of power because it is absolutely permanent; there is only strategic resistance. Moreover, it would be possible to put the Freudian conception of power to work in analyzing the place of Freud himself in the exclusion of unreason, say, or in the construction of a particular form of discourse on sexuality in the modern era.

At the same time, Freud, so attentive to the essentially malleable and dispersed character of unconscious drives and affects—their vicissitudes, in short—would seem to allow us to think with even more precision the very crossing of pleasure and power or mastery Foucault seeks to analyze in *The History of Sexuality*. The framework of the drives, and the notion of a drive for mastery operating to some degree independently of the pursuit of pleasure, would seem to allow us to further analyze and map the manner in which sexuality is penetrated by effects of power, the massive effort, as Foucault describes it, aimed at seeking out, making known, and taking charge of pleasure. Already in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud begins to theorize that some portion of the aggressive, destructive death drive can be redirected within the psychic apparatus, and to that extent can comele with the sexual drives; it can be put, in his words, “in the service of the sexual function,” for instance in certain forms of sadism (SE 18:54). A bit later on, in “The Economic Problem of Masochism” (1924), Freud sees the vicissitudes of the death drive as the source of both sadism and what he begins to call “erotogenic masochism” (SE 19:163–164). From this point on, this is how Freud will understand both sadism and masochism. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), for instance, he will refer to sadism and masochism as “manifestations of the destructive instinct (directed outwards or inwards), strongly alloyed with erotism” (SE 21:120). Without even touching on the complexities involved in this area of Freud's thinking, we begin to see that even if Foucault never takes it up, Freud goes some way in opening up the thought of how power penetrates sexuality.

More importantly, however, if we follow this line of inquiry further, taking seriously everything Freud said concerning the themes of power and pleasure, the axiomatic concept of power itself is to a certain extent destabilized or "problematized." For in the Freudian theory of the drives, the unity of the agency of power or mastery is itself fundamentally and originally compromised. In order to see this, we need to return to the concept of the drive for mastery in Freud and its relation to the figure of the death drive. Firstly, for Freud, the drive for power or mastery is always inscribed in what he sees as an absolutely fundamental dualism: on the one side, there are the life drives (which include the self-preservative drives alongside the sexual drives, operating in accordance with the pleasure principle), and, on the other, there is the radically destructive death drive, in which the cruel tendency toward mastery originates. There is no simple unity of pleasure and power here—pleasure will never be entirely "controlled" by power—insofar as these two terms are situated in an absolutely irreducible, complex tension. As Freud theorizes it, sometimes pleasure is overtaken by power, and sometimes, according to a whole other principle of operation, the pursuit of pleasure runs counter to and opposes the tendency toward power and mastery.

Strictly speaking, then, power could no longer serve as the singular, foundational term for a critical analysis of the history of sexuality. The Freudian notion of a drive for mastery situated within an irresolvable dualism is a thinking of power that fundamentally complicates the Foucauldian project—precisely insofar as, on this view, there is no "principled unity of pleasure and power." Derrida invokes this fracturing or splitting in the relation between pleasure and power at the close of "To Do Justice to Freud." Having raised the speculative question of what Foucault might have made of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, he begins, respectfully but fairly clearly, to formulate a new critique of Foucault. Trying "to imagine the principle" of Foucault's reply in his absence, Derrida formulates it this way: "it would perhaps be something like this: what one must stop believing in is principality or principleness, in the problematic of the principle, in the principled unity of pleasure and power, or of some drive that is thought to be more originary than the other. The theme of the *spiral* would be that of a drive duality (power/pleasure) that is *without principle*" (JF 117/146). The thought of this "drive duality," then, the thought of power as inscribed in the irreducible tension of a fundamental dualism, we could now say, would

ultimately complicate, “problematize,” or put into question Foucault’s conception of power. And it is precisely this discordance in the relation between pleasure and power that is at stake in the figure of “perpetual spirals” of pleasure and power, even if Foucault himself does not think it in these terms. The image of a perpetual spiral, after all, would seem to suggest a complex interweaving or crossing of terms irreducible to a simple unity.

Yet, if the agency of power or mastery is to be understood as fundamentally compromised, as I have suggested, the deepest reason for this lies in the way Freud conceptualizes the drive for mastery itself. More specifically, in the way the drive for mastery is understood as a form of the so-called death drive. Derrida himself invokes the figure of the death drive somewhat cryptically at the very close of “‘To Do Justice to Freud,’” in his discussion of the duality of the drives. Putting significant pressure on the term “power,” Derrida writes, “Is not what Freud was looking for, under the names ‘death drive’ and ‘repetition compulsion,’ that which, coming ‘before’ the principle (of pleasure or reality), would remain forever heterogeneous to the principle of principle?” (JF 117–118/146). Derrida identifies this term “heterogeneous to the principle of principle” with the figure of the spiral and, from there, reformulates the question: “Is not the duality in question, this spiraled duality, what Freud tried to oppose to all monisms by speaking of a dual drive and of a death drive, of a death drive that was no doubt not alien to the drive for mastery?” (JF 118/146). What Derrida begins to suggest here, I submit, is that if we follow Freud, the agency of power or mastery can never serve as a foundational term, not just because it is inscribed in a fundamental dualism, but because this agency can never be gathered into the unity of a principle or concept. It always remains, to some degree, “heterogeneous” to this structure. A drive for mastery that is also a death drive is internally fractured or divided from the very start.

In the perspective opened up by *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the agency of power or mastery is internally compromised to the extent that it is understood as coterminous with what ultimately undoes the exercise of power: the death drive. This is, in the end, what Freud’s conception of the drive for mastery suggests when we follow it as far as it will go. For if, within the fundamental duality of the life and death drives—or, if one likes, the drives of pleasure and power—every drive for power or mastery is, at bottom, *also* a death drive—a particular manifestation of something radically destructive—then the drive for power ultimately aims at what puts an end

to the exercise of mastery or power. Even if we conceive of it as a deflection of the death drive operative in the social field, the drive for mastery pursues not control within a given social configuration, however subtle and dispersed in its effects, but rather the absolute dissolution of every social configuration, the only site within which it makes sense to speak of the exercise of power. As such, a drive for power that is also a death drive necessarily undermines or turns back on itself. The agency of mastery or power, here, has to be understood as, to some degree, divided against itself, internally compromised. On this view, power or mastery actually disrupts and undoes itself. And it is this notion of power, we could say, following Derrida, that Foucault remains blind to in his dealings with Freud. In the final lines of "To Do Justice to Freud," Derrida attempts once again to imagine Foucault's response. "I can't quite do it," he writes, "but in this place where no one can answer for him . . . I would venture to wager that, in a sentence that I will not construct for him, he would have associated and yet also dissociated, he would have sent them packing back to back, mastery and death, that is the same—death *and* the master, death *as* the master" (JF 118/146).

At this point, we begin to see more clearly the stakes of Derrida's mobilization of Freud in the later engagement with Foucault. Without necessarily subscribing to Freud's theory of the drives or to his conception of the subject—everything Derrida said about Freud before and after "To Do Justice to Freud" makes clear that he never simply adopts Freud's terms or concepts—Derrida underscores the manner in which Freud opens up a logic whereby power undermines itself and, precisely to this extent, can never be gathered together in the unity of a principle or concept. This thinking of power—whereby the agency of power or mastery contains within itself what would undo it, in accordance with what Derrida would begin to call a kind of "auto-immune process"—would fundamentally complicate or compromise the problematization Foucault seeks to carry out.<sup>11</sup> In question is not just Foucault's ability to delimit the "age" from which he writes from the one he analyzes. Rather, the question concerns the very terms in which Foucault's project in *The History of Sexuality* articulates itself. Once the axiomatic concept of power is put into question, the very project the genealogist undertakes is destabilized. Even if power is irreducibly dispersed, there must be a unity of the concept in order for a genealogy of power relations to get underway in the first place. To put it another way, if Foucault were to listen more carefully to Freud, if he were really to try to do justice to



what is most radical in Freud, he could not avoid the situation in which the genealogist's procedure of problematization itself is put into question, "such that the very idea of a gathering of problematization or procedure [*dispositif*], to say nothing any longer of age, *episteme*, paradigm, or epoch, would make for so many problematic names, just as problematic as the very idea of problematization" (JF 117/145–146).

Following the thread of Derrida's activation of Freud in "'To Do Justice,'" the full scope of the Derridean critique of Foucault comes into view. Even if Derrida never subscribes to all of Freud's concepts and metapsychology, more is at issue than Foucault's relationship to Freud. Derrida's rearticulation of psychoanalysis allows him to interrogate or problematize—indeed, we could say "deconstruct"—the concept of power at the very heart of Foucault's project in *The History of Sexuality*. To do justice to this critique, however, is to understand Derrida as doing more than simply disabling the Foucauldian project, leaving it to one side and abandoning it. Rather, he submits it to a privileged scrutiny, rigorously and explicitly problematizing the conceptual terms and axiomatic logic presupposed by Foucault's important work. Derrida called for this problematization in Foucault's work in "Cogito and the History of Madness" and does so again here. For Derrida, from the very beginning, it was a matter of calling for an explicit reflection on the conditions of possibility of Foucault's own project, a procedure Foucault himself never carried out. Rather than undoing Foucault's project in its entirety, this procedure allows the urgent, absolutely necessary, and critical analysis of power, of institutions, of sedimented concepts and discourses Foucault undertakes—just as urgent today as ever—to live on, so to speak, even if this means that this analysis must undergo transformation and rearticulation.

This problematization is performed once we see that the Foucauldian concept of power can be deconstructed; it remains blind to an alternate conception of power that it never manages to think. In this way, we are offered the beginnings of an alternate framework for thinking power. Above all, once the agency of power or mastery is understood to be fundamentally compromised, one sees how there might be a minimal opening in a given historical regime or *episteme*—a minimal "dislocation," to use Derrida's word in "Cogito and the History of Madness"—in which a critique such as Foucault's finds its condition of possibility. Foucault, recall, consistently struggles to specify the historical process of liberation in which

his own project would necessarily have to ground itself. A kind of symptom of this inability is seen in the continual oscillations of his relation to Freud, or to "the age of psychoanalysis." Sometimes Freud has initiated the process of liberation in which Foucault finds his footing. Sometimes Freud is on the side of everything Foucault critiques, and this footing remains obscure. Adopting the alternate perspective, one can see how the critique of power gets underway in the first place, insofar as, on this view, a dislocation internal to power opens the way to deconstructive-genealogical critique. Such a critique can locate those conceptual and discursive sites where this internal divide operates, showing how particular forms of power are in fact predicated on its disavowal. Crucially, it provides an account of its own condition of possibility. The task, as we have seen, is to analyze and critique not just the mechanisms of power operative in the social field, but also to think, explicitly and as rigorously as possible, the possibility of this critique itself.

Derrida tried to mobilize, in his own analyses of sovereign power, just such a thinking of power as fundamentally and originarily compromised. Not coincidentally, these were developed after this later engagement with Foucault. Indeed, we might even see much of Derrida's later work on inherited political concepts and formations in this light. In these later works, it is clear that sovereignty and mastery are opened up to deconstructive critique by their own autoimmunity. That makes available to the genealogist the resources to bring forward their internal contradictions and blind spots. Returning to the idiom I have used throughout this essay, from the perspective of what Derrida at times called deconstructive genealogy, any power principle at work in the social field, in institutions, discourses, and forms of knowledge, is, at best, problematic. This is because power, to some degree, undoes and undermines itself, forming the very condition of possibility of its deconstructibility.

To reiterate, the point of the deconstructive move I have tracked is not to disable Foucauldian genealogy. Rather, it is to rearticulate it, recognizing the continued importance of Foucault's monumental work. Derrida consistently affirms this in the text under consideration here and elsewhere. Reformulating it in this way might even be the most powerful way of relaunching the Foucauldian project, giving it new resources, new life, as it were. A Foucauldian genealogical analysis of power relations transformed and reformulated by deconstruction is called for. Or, one could say, a process of deconstruction that passes through psychoanalysis.

Somewhat paradoxically, submitting Foucault's thought to critique in this manner—opening it up to the question it seems to “carry within itself”—here represents one of the best ways of paying tribute to it. It would be, to use the phrase Derrida borrows from Foucault (who himself used it to describe how the actually quite bad “good genius Freud” relaunched the injunction to study sex and transform it into discourse [HS 159/210]), one way of giving Foucault's thought “a new impetus.”

#### NOTES

1. Michael Naas, *Taking on the Tradition: Jacques Derrida and the Legacies of Deconstruction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 56–75. Geoffrey Bennington, *Not Half No End: Militantly Melancholy Essays in Memory of Jacques Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 100–110.
2. While Bennington and Naas have shed some helpful light on the broader questions at play in Derrida's reading of Foucault in “To Do Justice,” the deconstructive work performed by Derrida's mobilization of Freud in this text—especially the Freudian theory of the drives—has not yet been addressed. It is this underexplored dimension of Derrida's thinking that I seek to analyze in what follows.
3. As Derrida puts it, citing and reformatting a key passage from “Cogito and the History of Madness,” if Foucault's book is capable of being written, “we must assume that a certain liberation of madness has gotten underway, that psychiatry has opened itself up, however minimally [and, in the end, I would be tempted simply to replace psychiatry by psychoanalysis . . . ], and that the concept of madness as unreason, if it ever had a unity, has been dislocated. And that a project such as Foucault's can find its historical origin and passageway in the opening produced by this dislocation” (JF 73/96, brackets in the original). The original passage can be found in CH 38/61.
4. As Derrida notes explicitly in the text, the final section of “To Do Justice to Freud” draws on an earlier, unpublished presentation delivered in 1985. We can now say that this final section in large part reproduces that presentation. An archival transcript of the presentation, which Derrida titled “Beyond the Power Principle,” was published in 2014. See Jacques Derrida, “Au-delà du principe de pouvoir,” *Rue Descartes* 82 (2014): 4–13.
5. In the chapter on method in Part Four of *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, Foucault articulates the aim of his analysis most succinctly: “The objective is to analyze a certain form of knowledge regarding sex, not in terms of repression or law, but in terms of power” (HS 92/121).
6. Michael Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of “The History of Sexuality,”* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 13; originally published as Michel Foucault, *L'usage des plaisirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 19.
7. Two pages later, Foucault returns to this figure of the spiral. Arguing against the view that bourgeois society in the nineteenth century was simply repressive, Foucault con-



tends that rather than erecting barriers to nonnormative forms of sexuality, bourgeois society "[pursued] them according to lines of indefinite penetration." It did not simply exclude sexuality, but rather "included it in the body as a mode of specification of individuals. It did not seek to avoid it; it attracted its varieties by means of spirals in which pleasure and power reinforced one another" (HS 47/65).

8. See Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 11/17.
9. For a detailed discussion of the translation of this term and its genesis in Freud, see J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), 217–218.
10. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London, Hogarth Press, 1953–1974), 18:16–17. Citations will be given parenthetically using the abbreviation "SE" followed by the volume and the page number. See also Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 325–327 and 403–405.
11. Jacques Derrida, "Preface," in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, Pascale-Anne Brault, and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), viii; originally published as Jacques Derrida, "Preface," in *Résistances de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 9.