

# Foucault

Gilles Deleuze

*Translated and edited by*  
SEÁN HAND

*Foreword by*  
PAUL BOVÉ

University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis

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## Foldings, or the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation)

What happened during the fairly long silence following *The History of Sexuality*? Perhaps Foucault felt slightly uneasy about the book: had he not trapped himself within the concept of power relations? He himself put forward the following objection: 'That's just like you, always with the same *incapacity to cross the line*, to pass over to the other side . . . it is always the same choice, for the side of power, for what power says or of what it causes to be said.'<sup>1</sup> And no doubt his own reply was that 'the most intense point of lives, the one where their energy is concentrated, is precisely where they clash with power, struggle with it, endeavour to utilize its forces or to escape its traps.' He might equally have added that the diffuse centres of power do not exist without points of resistance that are in some way primary; and that power does not take life as its objective without revealing or giving rise to a life that resists power; and finally that the force of the outside continues to disrupt the diagrams and turn them upside down.

But what happens, on the other hand, if the transversal relations of resistance continue to become restructured, and to encounter or even construct knots of power? Already the ultimate failure of the prison movement, after 1970, had saddened Foucault, on top of which other events, on a world scale, must have saddened him even more. If power is constitutive of truth, how can we conceive of a 'power of truth' which would no longer be the truth of power, a truth that

would release transversal lines of resistance and not integral lines of power? How can we 'cross the line'? And, if we must attain a life that is the power of the outside, what tells us that this outside is not a terrifying void and that this life, which seems to put up a resistance, is not just the simple distribution within the void of 'slow, partial and progressive' deaths? We can no longer even say that death transforms life into destiny, an 'indivisible and decisive' event, but rather that death becomes multiplied and differentiated in order to bestow on life the particular features, and consequently the truths, which life believes arise from resisting death. What remains, then, if not to pass through all these deaths preceding the great limit of death itself, deaths which even afterwards continue? Life henceforth consists only of taking one's place, or every place, in the cortège of a 'One dies'.

It is in this sense that Bichat broke with the classical conception of death, as a decisive moment or indivisible event, and broke with it in two ways, simultaneously presenting death as being coextensive with life and as something made up of a multiplicity of partial and particular deaths. When Foucault analyses Bichat's theories, his tone demonstrates sufficiently that he is concerned with something other than an epistemological analysis<sup>2</sup>: he is concerned with a conception of death, and few men more than Foucault died in a way commensurate with their conception of death. This force of life that belonged to Foucault was always thought through and lived out as a multiple death in the manner of Bichat.

What remains, then, except an anonymous life that shows up only when it clashes with power, argues with it, exchanges 'brief and strident words', and then fades back into the night, what Foucault called 'the life of infamous men', whom he asked us to admire by virtue of 'their misfortune, rage or uncertain madness'?<sup>3</sup> Strangely, implausibly, it is this 'infamy' which he claimed for himself: 'My point of departure was those sorts of particles endowed with an energy that is all the greater for their being small and difficult to spot.' This

culminated in *The Use of Pleasure*'s searing phrase: 'to get free of oneself'.<sup>4</sup>

*The History of Sexuality* explicitly closes on a doubt. If at the end of it Foucault finds himself in an impasse, this is not because of his conception of power but rather because he found the impasse to be where power itself places us, in both our lives and our thoughts, as we run up against it in our smallest truths. This could be resolved only if the outside were caught up in a movement that would snatch it away from the void and pull it back from death. This would be like a new axis, different from the axes of both knowledge and power. Could this axis be the place where a sense of serenity would be finally attained and life truly affirmed? In any case, it is not an axis that annuls all others but one that was already working at the same time as the others, and prevented them from closing on the impasse. Perhaps this third axis was present from the beginning in Foucault (just as power was present from the beginning in knowledge). But it could emerge only by assuming a certain distance, and so being able to circle back on the other two. Foucault felt it necessary to carry out a general reshuffle in order to unravel this path which was so tangled up in the others that it remained hidden: it is this recentring which Foucault puts forward in the general introduction to *The Use of Pleasure*.

But how was this new dimension present from the beginning? Up until now, we have encountered three dimensions: the relations which have been formed or formalized along certain strata (Knowledge); the relations between forces to be found at the level of the diagram (Power); and the relation with the outside, that absolute relation, as Blanchot says, which is also a non-relation (Thought). Does this mean that there is no inside? Foucault continually submits interiority to a radical critique. But is there *an inside that lies deeper than any internal world*, just as the outside is farther away than any external world? The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and

foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside. *The Order of Things* developed this theme: if thought comes from outside, and remains attached to the outside, how come the outside does not flood into the inside, as the element that thought does not and cannot think of? The unthought is therefore not external to thought but lies at its very heart, as that impossibility of thinking which doubles or hollows out the outside.<sup>5</sup>

The classical age had already stated that there was an inside of thought, the unthought, when it invoked the finite, the different orders of infinity. And from the nineteenth century on it is more the dimensions of finitude which fold the outside and constitute a 'depth', a 'density withdrawn into itself', an inside to life, labour and language, in which man is embedded, if only to sleep, but conversely which is also itself embedded in man 'as a living being, a working individual or a speaking subject'.<sup>6</sup> Either it is the fold of the infinite, or the constant folds [*replis*] of finitude which curve the outside and constitute the inside. *The Birth of the Clinic* had already shown how the clinic brought the body up to the surface, but equally how pathological anatomy subsequently introduced into this body deep foldings which did not resuscitate the old notion of interiority but constituted instead the new inside of this outside.<sup>7</sup>

[The inside as an operation of the outside: in all his work Foucault seems haunted by this theme of an inside which is merely the fold of the outside, as if the ship were a folding of the sea.] On the subject of the Renaissance madman who is put to sea in his boat, Foucault wrote:

he is put in the interior of the exterior, and inversely [. . .] a prisoner in the midst of what is the freest, the openest of routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads. He is the Passenger *par excellence*: that is, the prisoner of the passage.<sup>8</sup>

Thought has no other being than this madman himself. As Blanchot says of Foucault: 'He encloses the outside, that is, constitutes it in an interiority of expectation or exception.'<sup>9</sup>

Or, rather, the theme which has always haunted Foucault is

that of the double. But the double is never a projection of the interior; on the contrary, it is an interiorization of the outside. It is not a doubling of the One, but a redoubling of the Other. It is not a reproduction of the Same, but a repetition of the Different. It is not the emanation of an 'I', but something that places in immanence an always other or a Non-self. It is never the other who is a double in the doubling process, it is a self that lives me as the double of the other: I do not encounter myself on the outside, I find the other in me ('it is always concerned with showing how the Other, the Distant, is also the Near and the Same').<sup>10</sup> It resembles exactly the invagination of a tissue in embryology, or the act of doubling in sewing: twist, fold, stop, and so on.

*The Archaeology of Knowledge* showed, in its most paradoxical pages, how one phrase was the repetition of another, and above all how one statement repeated or doubled 'something else' that was barely distinguishable from it (the transmission of letters on the keyboard, AZERT). Equally, the books on power showed how the stratified forms repeated relations between forces that were barely distinguishable from one another, and how history was the doubling of an emergence. This permanent theme in Foucault had already been analysed in depth in *Raymond Roussel*. For what Raymond Roussel had discovered was the phrase of the outside, its repetition in a second phrase, the minuscule difference between the two (the 'snag' [*l'accroc*]) and the twisting and doubling from one to the other. The snag is no longer the accident of the tissue but the new rule on the basis of which the external tissue is twisted, invaginated and doubled. The 'facultative' rule, or the transmission of chance, a dice-throw. They are, says Foucault, games of repetition, of difference, and of the doubling that 'links them'.

This is not the only time Foucault presents in a literary and humorous way what could be demonstrated by epistemology or linguistics, which are both serious disciplines. *Raymond Roussel* has knitted or sewn together all the meanings of the

word *doublure*, in order to show how the inside was always the folding of a presupposed outside.<sup>11</sup> And Roussel's last method, the proliferation of parentheses inside one another, multiplies the foldings within the sentence. This is why Foucault's book on Roussel is important, and no doubt the path it traces is itself double. This does not at all mean that the primacy can be reversed: the inside will always be the doubling of the outside. But it does mean that either, like Roussel recklessly searching for death, we want to undo the doubling and pull away the folds 'with a studied gesture', in order to reach the outside and its 'stifling hollowness'; or like Leiris, who is more wise and prudent but none the less in another sense incredibly audacious, we follow the folds, reinforce the doublings from snag to snag, and surround ourselves with foldings that form an 'absolute memory', in order to make the outside into a vital, recurring element.<sup>12</sup> As *The History of Madness* put it: to be put in the interior of the exterior, and inversely. Perhaps Foucault has always oscillated between the two forms of the double, already characterized at this early stage as the choice between death or memory. Perhaps he chose death, like Roussel, but not without having passed through the detours or foldings of memory.

Perhaps he even had to go back to the Greeks. In this way even the most impassioned problem would be given a context that would restore a sense of calm. If folding or doubling haunts all Foucault's work, but surfaces only at a late stage, this is because he gave the name of 'absolute memory' to a new dimension which had to be distinguished both from relations between forces or power-relations and from stratified forms of knowledge. Greek education presents new power-relations which are very different from the old imperial forms of education and materialize in a Greek light as a system of visibility, and in a Greek *logos* as a system of statements. We can therefore speak of a diagram of power which extends across all qualified forms of knowledge: 'governing oneself,

managing one's estate, and participating in the administration of the city were three practices of the same type', and Xenophon 'shows the continuity and isomorphism between the three "arts", as well as the chronological sequence by which they were to be practised in the life of an individual.'<sup>13</sup> However, not even this marks the great novelty of the Greeks. Such novelty ultimately emerges thanks to a double unhooking or 'differentiation' [*décrochage*]: when the 'exercises that enabled one to govern oneself' *become detached* both from power as a relation between forces, and from knowledge as a stratified form, or 'code' of virtue. On the one hand there is a 'relation to oneself' that consciously derives from one's relation with others; on the other there is equally a 'self-constitution' that consciously derives from the moral code as a rule for knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

This derivative or differentiation must be understood in the sense in which the *relation to oneself* assumes an independent status. It is as if the relations of the outside folded back to create a doubling, allow a relation to oneself to emerge, and constitute an inside which is hollowed out and develops its own unique dimension: 'enkrateia', the relation to oneself that is self-mastery, 'is a power that one brought to bear on oneself *in* the power that one exercised over others' (how could one claim to govern others if one could not govern oneself?) to the point where the relation to oneself becomes 'a principle of internal regulation' in relation to the constituent powers of politics, the family, eloquence, games and even virtue.<sup>15</sup> This is the Greek version of the snag and the doubling: a differentiation that leads to a folding, a reflection.

This, at least, is Foucault's version of the novelty of the Greeks. And this version appears very important in both its detail and its superficial modesty. What the Greeks did is not to reveal Being or unfold the Open in a world-historical gesture. According to Foucault they did a great deal less, or more.<sup>16</sup> They bent the outside, through a series of practical exercises. The Greeks are the first doubling. [Force is what

belongs to the outside, since it is essentially a relation between other forces: it is inseparable in itself from the power to affect other forces (spontaneity) and to be affected by others (receptivity). But what comes about as a result is *a relation which force has with itself, a power to affect itself, an affect of self on self*. Following the Greek diagram, only free men can dominate others ('free agents' and the 'agonistic relations' between them are diagrammatic characteristics).<sup>17</sup> But how could they dominate others if they could not dominate themselves? The domination of others must be doubled by a domination of oneself. The relation with others must be doubled by a relation with oneself. The obligatory rules for power must be doubled by facultative rules for the free man who exercises power. As moral codes here and there execute the diagram (in the city, the family, tribunals, games, etc.), a 'subject' must be isolated which differentiates itself from the code and no longer has an internal dependence on it.

This is what the Greeks did: they folded force, even though it still remained force. They made it relate back to itself. Far from ignoring interiority, individuality or subjectivity they invented the subject, but only as a derivative or the product of a 'subjectivation': They discovered the 'aesthetic existence' – the doubling or relation with oneself, the facultative rule of free man.<sup>18</sup> (If we do not regard this derivation as being a new dimension, then we must say that there is no sense of subjectivity in the Greeks, especially if we look for it on the level of obligatory rules.) Foucault's fundamental idea is that of a dimension of subjectivity derived from power and knowledge without being dependent on them.

In another way it is *The Use of Pleasure* which in several respects differentiates from the previous books. On the one hand it invokes a long period of time that begins with the Greeks and continues up to the present day by way of Christianity, while the previous books considered short periods, between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. On the other it discovers the relation to oneself, as a new dimension

that cannot be reduced to the power-relations and relations between forms of knowledge that were the object of previous books: the whole system has to be reorganized. Finally, there is a break with *The History of Sexuality*, which studied sexuality from the double viewpoint of power and knowledge; now the relation to oneself is laid bare, but its links with sexuality remain uncertain.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, the first step in a complete reorganization is already there: does the relation to oneself have an elective affinity with sexuality, to the point of renewing the project of a 'history of sexuality'?

The reply is a vigorous one: just as power-relations can be affirmed only by being carried out, so the relation to oneself, which bends these power relations, can be established only by being carried out. And it is in sexuality that it is established or carried out. Perhaps not immediately; for the constitution of an inside or interiority is alimentary before it is sexual.<sup>21</sup> But here again, what is it that leads sexuality to 'differentiate' itself gradually from alimentary considerations and become the place in which the relation to oneself is enacted? The reason is that sexuality, as it is lived out by the Greeks, incarnates in the female the receptive element of force, and in the male the active or spontaneous element.<sup>22</sup> From then on, the free man's relation to himself as self-determination will concern sexuality in three ways: in the simple form of a 'Dietetics' of pleasures, one governs oneself in order to be capable of actively governing one's body; in the composed form of a domestic 'Economics', one governs oneself in order to be capable of governing one's wife, who in turn may attain a good receptivity; in the doubled form of an 'Erotics' of boys, one governs oneself in order that the boy also learns to govern himself, to be active and to resist the power of others.<sup>23</sup> The Greeks not only invented the relation to oneself, they linked it to sexuality, composing and doubling it within the latter's terms. In short, the Greeks laid the foundation for an encounter between the relation to oneself and sexuality.

The redistribution or reorganization takes place all on its

own, or at least over a long period. For the relation to oneself will not remain the withdrawn and reserved zone of the free man, a zone independent of any 'institutional and social system'. The relation to oneself will be understood in terms of power-relations and relations of knowledge. It will be reintegrated into these systems from which it was originally derived. The individual is coded or recoded within a 'moral' knowledge, and above all he becomes the stake in a power struggle and is diagrammatized.

The fold therefore seems unfolded, and the subjectivation of the free man is transformed into subjection: on the one hand it involves being 'subject to someone else by control and dependence', with all the processes of individuation and modulation which power installs, acting on the daily life and the interiority of those it calls its subjects; on the other it makes the subject 'tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge', through all the techniques of moral and human sciences that go to make up a knowledge of the subject.<sup>24</sup> Simultaneously, sexuality becomes organized around certain focal points of power, gives rise to a 'scientia sexualis', and is integrated into an agency of 'power-knowledge', namely Sex (here Foucault returns to the analysis given in *The History of Sexuality*).

Must we conclude from this that the new dimension hollowed out by the Greeks disappears, and falls back on the two axes of knowledge and power? In that case we could go back to the Greeks and find a relation to oneself based on free individuality. But this is obviously not the case. There will always be a relation to oneself which resists codes and powers; the relation to oneself is even one of the origins of these points of resistance which we have already discussed. For example, it would be wrong to reduce Christian moralities to their attempts at codification, and the pastoral power which they invoke, without also taking into account the 'spiritual and ascetic movements' or subjectivation that continued to develop before the Reformation (there are collective sub-

jectivations).<sup>25</sup> It is not even enough to say that the latter resist the former; for there is a perpetual communication between them, whether in terms of struggle or of composition. What must be stated, then, is that subjectivation, the relation to oneself, continues to create itself, but by transforming itself and changing its nature to the point where the Greek mode is a distant memory. Recuperated by power-relations and relations of knowledge, the relation to oneself is continually reborn, elsewhere and otherwise.

The most general formula of the relation to oneself is the affect of self by self, or folded force. Subjectivation is created by folding. Only, there are four foldings, four folds of subjectivation, like the rivers of the inferno. The first concerns the material part of ourselves which is to be surrounded and enfolded: for the Greeks this was the body and its pleasures, the 'aphrodisia'; but for Christians this will be the flesh and its desires, desire itself, a completely different substantial modality. The second, properly speaking, is the fold of the relation between forces; for it is always according to a particular rule that the relation between forces is bent back in order to become a relation to oneself, though it certainly makes a difference whether or not the rule in question is natural, divine, rational, or aesthetic, and so on. The third is the fold of knowledge, or the fold of truth in so far as it constitutes the relation of truth to our being, and of our being to truth, which will serve as the formal condition for any kind of knowledge: a subjectivation of knowledge that is always different, whether in the Greeks and the Christians, or in Plato, Descartes, or Kant. The fourth is the fold of the outside itself, the ultimate fold: it is this that constitutes what Blanchot called an 'interiority of expectation' from which the subject, in different ways, hopes for immortality, eternity, salvation, freedom or death or detachment. These four folds are like the final or formal cause, the acting or material cause of subjectivity or interiority as a relation to oneself.<sup>26</sup> These folds are eminently variable, and moreover have different rhythms whose variations constitute

irreducible modes of subjectivation. They operate 'beneath the codes and rules' of knowledge and power and are apt to unfold and merge with them, but not without new foldings being created in the process.

On each occasion the relation to oneself is destined to encounter sexuality, according to a modality that corresponds to the mode of subjectivation. This is because the spontaneity and receptivity of force will no longer be distributed on the basis of an active and a passive role, as it was for the Greeks, but rather as in the completely different case of the Christians, on the basis of a bisexual structure. From the viewpoint of a general confrontation, what variations exist between the Greek sense of the body and the pleasures, and the Christian sense of flesh and desire? Can it be that Plato remains at the level of the body and the pleasures to be found in the first folds, but is already beginning to raise himself to the level of Desire to be found in the third fold, by folding truth back into the lover, and is consequently isolating a new process of subjectivation that leads to a 'desiring subject' (and no longer to a subject of pleasures)?<sup>27</sup>

And what can we ultimately say about our own contemporary modes and our modern relation to oneself? *What are our four folds?* If it is true that power increasingly informs our daily lives, our interiority and our individuality; if it has become individualizing; if it is true that knowledge itself has become increasingly individuated, forming the hermeneutics and codification of the desiring subject, what remains for our subjectivity? There never 'remains' anything of the subject, since he is to be created on each occasion, like a focal point of resistance, on the basis of the folds which subjectivize knowledge and bend each power. Perhaps modern subjectivity rediscovers the body and its pleasures, as opposed to a desire that has become too subjugated by Law? Yet this is not a return to the Greeks, since there never is a return.<sup>28</sup> The struggle for a modern subjectivity passes through a resistance to the two present forms of subjection, the one consisting of

individualizing ourselves on the basis of constraints of power, the other of attracting each individual to a known and recognized identity, fixed once and for all. The struggle for subjectivity presents itself, therefore, as the right to difference, variation and metamorphosis.<sup>29</sup> (Here we are multiplying the questions, since we are touching on the unpublished manuscript of *Les aveux de la chair* [the projected fourth volume of *The History of Sexuality*], and beyond, into Foucault's very last topics of research.)

In *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault does not discover the subject. In fact he had already defined it as a derivative, a function derived from the statement. But by defining it now as a derivative of the outside, conditioned by the fold, he draws it out fully and gives it an irreducible dimension. So we have the basis for a reply to the most general question: How can we name this new dimension, this relation to oneself that is neither knowledge nor power? Is the affect of self by self pleasure, or desire? Or do we call it 'individual conduct', the conduct of pleasure or desire? We shall find the exact term only if we note the limits which this third dimension assumes over long periods of time. The appearance of a folding of the outside can seem unique to Western development. Perhaps the Orient does not present such a phenomenon, and the line of the outside continues to float across a stifling hollowness: in that case asceticism would be a culture of annihilation or an effort to breathe in such a void, without any particular production of subjectivity.<sup>30</sup>

The conditions for a bending of forces seem to arise with the agonistic relationship between free men: that is, with the Greeks. It is here that force folds back on itself in relation with the other force. But even if we made the Greeks the origin of the process of subjectivation, it still occupies a long period of time in the run-up to the present day. This chronology is all the more remarkable given that Foucault examined the diagrams of power as places of mutation, and the archives of knowledge, over short periods of time.<sup>31</sup> If we ask why *The Use*

of Pleasure suddenly introduces a long period of time, perhaps the simplest reason is that we have all too quickly forgotten the old powers that are no longer exercised, and the old sciences that are no longer useful, but in moral matters we are still weighed down with old beliefs which we no longer even believe, and we continue to produce ourselves as a subject on the basis of old modes which do not correspond to our problems. This is what led the film director Antonioni to say that we are sick with Eros . . . Everything takes place as if the modes of subjectivation had a long life, and we continue to play at being Greeks or Christians, and to indulge in a taste for trips down memory lane.

But there is a deeper positive reason. The folding or doubling is itself a Memory: the 'absolute memory' or memory of the outside, beyond the brief memory inscribed in strata and archives, beyond the relics remaining in the diagrams. The aesthetic life of the Greeks had already essentially prompted a memory of the future, and very quickly the processes of subjectivation were accompanied by writings that were real memories, 'hypomnemata'.<sup>32</sup> Memory is the real name of the relation to oneself, or the affect on self by self. According to Kant, time was the form in which the mind affected itself, just as space was the form in which the mind was affected by something else: time was therefore 'auto-affection' and made up the essential structure of subjectivity.<sup>33</sup> But time as subject, or rather subjectivation, is called memory. Not that brief memory that comes afterwards and is the opposite of forgetting, but the 'absolute memory' which doubles the present and the outside and is one with forgetting, since it is itself endlessly forgotten and reconstituted: its fold, in fact, merges with the unfolding, because the latter remains present within the former as the thing that is folded. Only forgetting (the unfolding) recovers what is folded in memory (and in the fold itself).

There is a final rediscovery of Heidegger by Foucault. Memory is contrasted not with forgetting but with the for-



getting of forgetting, which dissolves us into the outside and constitutes death. On the other hand, as long as the outside is folded an inside is coextensive with it, as memory is coextensive with forgetting. It is this coextensive nature which is life, a long period of time. Time becomes a subject because it is the folding of the outside and, as such, forces every present into forgetting, but preserves the whole of the past within memory: forgetting is the impossibility of return, and memory is the necessity of renewal. For a long time Foucault thought of the outside as being an ultimate spatiality that was deeper than time; but in his late works he offers the possibility once more of putting time on the outside and thinking of the outside as being time, conditioned by the fold.<sup>34</sup>

It is on this point that the necessary confrontation between Foucault and Heidegger takes place: the 'fold' has continued to haunt the work of Foucault, but finds its true dimension in his last research. In what ways is he similar to and different from Heidegger? We can evaluate them only by taking as our point of departure Foucault's break with phenomenology in the 'vulgar' sense of the term: with intentionality. The idea that consciousness is directed towards the thing and gains significance in the world is precisely what Foucault refuses to believe. In fact intentionality is created in order to surpass any psychologism or naturalism, but it invents a new psychologism and a new naturalism to the point where, as Merleau-Ponty himself said, it can hardly be distinguished from a 'learning' process. It restores the psychologism that synthesizes consciousness and significations, a naturalism of the 'savage experience' and of the thing, of the aimless existence of the thing in the world.

This gives rise to Foucault's double challenge. Certainly, as long as we remain on the level of words and phrases we can believe in an intentionality through which consciousness is directed towards something and gains significance (as something significant); as long as we remain on the level of things

and states of things we can believe in a 'savage' experience that lets the thing wander aimlessly through consciousness. But if phenomenology 'places things in parenthesis', as it claims to do, this ought to push it beyond words and phrases towards statements, and beyond things and states of things towards visibilities. But statements are not directed towards anything, since they are not related to a thing any more than they express a subject but refer only to a language, a language-being, that gives them unique subjects and objects that satisfy particular conditions as immanent variables. And visibilities are not deployed in a savage world already opened up to a primitive (pre-predicative) consciousness, but refer only to a light, a light-being, which gives them forms, proportions and perspectives that are immanent in the proper sense – that is, free of any intentional gaze.<sup>35</sup> Neither language nor light will be examined in the areas that relate them to one another (designation, signification, the signifying process of language; a physical environment, a tangible or intelligible world) but rather in the irreducible dimension that gives both of them as separate and self-sufficient entities: 'there is' light, and 'there is' language. All intentionality collapses in the gap that opens up between these two monads, or in the 'non-relation' between seeing and speaking.

This is Foucault's major achievement: the conversion of phenomenology into epistemology. For seeing and speaking means knowing [*savoir*], but we do not see what we speak about, nor do we speak about what we see; and when we see a pipe we shall always say (in one way or another): 'this is not a pipe', as though intentionality denied itself, and collapsed into itself. Everything is knowledge, and this is the first reason why there is no 'savage experience': there is nothing beneath or prior to knowledge. But knowledge is irreducibly double, since it involves speaking and seeing, language and light, which is the reason why there is no intentionality.

But it is here that everything begins, because for its part phenomenology, in order to cast off the psychologism and

naturalism that continued to burden it, itself surpassed intentionality as the relation between consciousness and its object (being [*l'être* or *Seiende*]). And in Heidegger, and then in Merleau-Ponty, the surpassing of intentionality tended towards Being [*l'Etre* or *Sein*], the fold of Being. From intentionality to the fold, from being to Being, from phenomenology to ontology. Heidegger's disciples taught us to what extent ontology was inseparable from the fold, since Being was precisely the fold which it made with being; and that the unfolding of Being, as the inaugural gesture of the Greeks, was not the opposite of the fold but the fold itself, the pivotal point of the Open, the unity of the unveiling-veiling. It was still less obvious in what way this folding of Being, the fold of Being and being, replaced intentionality, if only to found it. It was Merleau-Ponty who showed us how a radical, 'vertical' visibility was folded into a Self-seeing, and from that point on made possible the horizontal relation between a seeing and a seen.

An Outside, more distant than any exterior, is 'twisted', 'folded' and 'doubled' by an Inside that is deeper than any interior, and alone creates the possibility of the derived relation between the interior and the exterior. It is even this twisting which defines 'Flesh', beyond the body proper and its objects. In brief, the intentionality of being is surpassed by the fold of Being, Being as fold (Sartre, on the other hand, remained at the level of intentionality, because he was content to make 'holes' in being, without reaching the fold of Being). Intentionality is still generated in a Euclidean space that prevents it from understanding itself, and must be surpassed by another, 'topological', space which establishes contact between the Outside and the Inside, the most distant, the most deep.<sup>36</sup>

There is no doubt that Foucault found great theoretical inspiration in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty for the theme that haunted him: the fold, or doubling. But he equally found a practical version of it in Raymond Roussel, for the latter

raised an ontological Visibility, forever twisting itself into a 'self-seeing' entity, on to a different dimension from that of the gaze or its objects.<sup>37</sup> We could equally link Heidegger to Jarry, to the extent that *pataphysics* presents itself precisely as a surpassing of metaphysics that is explicitly founded on the Being of the phenomenon. But if we take Jarry or Roussel in this way to be the realization of Heidegger's philosophy, does this not mean that the fold is carried off and set up in a completely different landscape, and so takes on a different meaning? We must not refuse to take Heidegger seriously, but we must rediscover the imperturbably serious side to Roussel (or Jarry). The serious ontological aspect needs a diabolical or phenomenological sense of humour.

In fact, we believe that the fold as doubling in Foucault will take on a completely new appearance while retaining its ontological import. In the first place, according to Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty, the fold of being surpasses intentionality only to found the latter in a new dimension: this is why the Visible or the Open does not give us something to see without also providing something to speak, since the fold will constitute the Self-seeing element of sight only if it also constitutes the Self-speaking element of language, to the point where it is the same world that speaks itself in language and sees itself in sight. In Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, Light opens up a speaking no less than a seeing, as if signification haunted the visible which in turn murmured meaning.<sup>38</sup> This cannot be so in Foucault, for whom the light-Being refers only to visibilities, and language-Being to statements: the fold will not be able to refound an intentionality, since the latter disappears in the disjunction between the two parts of a knowledge that is never intentional.

If knowledge is constituted by two forms, how could a subject display any intentionality towards one object, since each form has its own objects and subjects?<sup>39</sup> Yet it must be able to ascribe a relation to the two forms which emerges from their 'non-relation'. Knowledge is Being, the first figure of

an analogy to ontology

Being, but Being lies between two forms. Is this not precisely what Heidegger called the 'between-two' or Merleau-Ponty termed the 'interlacing or chiasmus'? In fact, they are not at all the same thing. For Merleau-Ponty, the interlacing or between-two merges with the fold. But not for Foucault. There is an interlacing or intertwining of the visible and the articulable: it is the Platonic model of weaving that replaces intentionality. But this interlacing is in fact a stranglehold, or a battle between two implacable foes who are the forms of knowledge-Being: if you like it is an intentionality, but one that is reversible, has multiplied in both directions, and has become infinitesimal or microscopic. It is still not the fold of Being, but rather the interlacing of its two forms. It is still not a topology of the fold, but rather a strategy of the interlacing. Everything takes place as though Foucault were reproaching Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty for going too quickly. And what he finds in Roussel, in a different way again in Magritte, and what he could have found in yet another sense in Jarry, is the audiovisual battle, the double capture, the noise of words that conquered the visible, the fury of things that conquered the articulable.<sup>40</sup> In Foucault, there has been a hallucinatory theme of Doubles and doubling that transforms any ontology.

But this double capture, which is constitutive of knowledge-Being, could not be created between two irreducible forms if the interlocking of opponents did not flow from an element that was itself informal, a pure relation between forces that emerges in the irreducible separation of forms. This is the source of the battle or the condition for its possible existence. This is the strategic domain of power, as opposed to the stratic domain of knowledge. From epistemology to strategy. This is another reason why there is no 'savage' experience, since battles imply a strategy and any experience is caught up in relations of power. This is the second figure of Being, the 'Possest', power-Being, as opposed to knowledge-Being. It is the informal forces or power-relations that set up relations 'between' the two forms of formed knowledge. The two forms

of knowledge-Being are forms of exteriority, since statements are dispersed in the one and visibilities in the other; but power-Being introduces us into a different element, an unformable and unformed Outside which gives rise to forces and their changing combinations. This shows that this second figure of Being is still not the fold. It is, rather, a floating line with no contours which is the only element that makes the two forms in battle communicate. The Heraclitean element has always gone deeper in Foucault than in Heidegger, for phenomenology is ultimately too pacifying and has blessed too many things.

Foucault therefore discovers the element that comes from outside: force. Like Blanchot, Foucault will speak less of the Open than of the Outside. For force is linked to force, but to the force of the outside, such that it is the outside that 'explains' the exteriority of forms, both for each one and for their mutual relation. This accounts for the importance of Foucault's declaration that Heidegger always fascinated him, but that he could understand him only by way of Nietzsche and alongside Nietzsche (and not the other way round).<sup>41</sup> Heidegger is Nietzsche's potential, but not the other way round, and Nietzsche did not see his own potential fulfilled. It was necessary to recover force, in the Nietzschean sense, or power, in the very particular sense of 'will to power', to discover this outside as limit, the last point before Being folds. Heidegger rushed things and folded too quickly, which was not desirable: this led to the deep ambiguity of his technical and political ontology, a technique of knowledge and a politics of power. The fold of Being can come about only at the level of the third figure: can *force* fold so as to be self-action, the affect of self by self, such that the outside in itself constitutes a coextensive inside? What the Greeks did was not a miracle. Heidegger has a Renan side to him, with his idea of the Greek light or miracle.<sup>42</sup> In Foucault's opinion the Greeks did a lot less, or a lot more, depending on your choice. They folded force, discovered it was something that could be folded, and

only by strategy, because they invented a relation between forces based on the rivalry between free men (the government of others through self-government, and so on). But as a force among forces man does not fold the forces that compose him without the outside folding itself, and creating a Self within man. It is this fold of Being which makes up the third figure when the forms are already interlocked and battle has already been joined: from this point Being no longer forms a 'Sciest' or a 'Possest', but a 'Se-est', to the extent that the fold of the outside constitutes a Self, while the outside itself forms a coextensive inside. Only through a stratico-strategic interlocking do we reach the ontological fold.

[These three dimensions – knowledge, power and self – are irreducible, yet constantly imply one another.] They are three 'ontologies'. Why does Foucault add that they are historical?<sup>43</sup> Because they do not set universal conditions.

[Knowledge-Being is determined by the two forms assumed at any moment by the visible and the articulable, and light and language in turn cannot be separated from 'the unique and limited existence' which they have in a given stratum. Power-Being is determined within relations between forces which are themselves based on particular features that vary according to each age. And the self, self-Being, is determined by the process of subjectivation: by the places crossed by the fold (the Greeks have nothing universal about them).] In brief, the conditions are never more general than the conditioned element, and gain their value from their particular historical status. The conditions are therefore not 'apodictic' but problematic. [Given certain conditions, they do not vary historically; but they do vary *with* history. What in fact they present is the way in which the problem appears in a particular historical formation: what can I know or see and articulate in such and such a condition for light and language? What can I do, what power can I claim and what resistances may I counter? What can I be, with what folds can I surround myself or how can I produce myself as a subject? On these

three questions, the 'I' does not designate a universal but a set of particular positions occupied within a One speaks-One sees, One confronts, One lives.<sup>44</sup> No single solution can be transposed from one age to another, but we can penetrate or encroach on certain problematic fields, which means that the 'givens' of an old problem are reactivated in another. (Perhaps there still is a Greek somewhere in Foucault, revealed by a certain faith which he places in a 'problematization' of pleasures.)

Finally, it is praxis that constitutes the sole continuity between past and present, or, conversely, the way in which the present explains the past. *If Foucault's interviews form an integral part of his work*, it is because they extend the historical problematization of each of his books into the construction of the present problem, be it madness, punishment or sexuality. What are the new types of struggle, which are transversal and immediate rather than centralized and mediatized? What are the 'intellectual's' new functions, which are specific or 'particular' rather than universal? What are the new modes of subjectivation, which tend to have no identity? This is the present triple root of the questions: *What can I do, What do I know, What am I?*

The events which led up to 1968 were like the 'rehearsal' of these three questions.<sup>45</sup> What is our light and what is our language, that is to say, our 'truth' today? What powers must we confront, and what is our capacity for resistance, today when we can no longer be content to say that the old struggles are no longer worth anything? And do we not perhaps above all bear witness to and even participate in the 'production of a new subjectivity'? Do not the changes in capitalism find an unexpected 'encounter' in the slow emergence of a new Self as a centre of resistance? Each time there is social change, is there not a movement of subjective reconversion, with its ambiguities but also its potential? These questions may be considered more important than a reference to man's universal rights, including in the realm of pure law. In Foucault,

everything is subject to variables and variation: the variables of knowledge (for example, objects and subjects as immanent variables of the statement) and the variation in the relation between forms; the variable particularities of power and the variations in the relations between forces; the variable subjectivities, and the variation of the fold or of subjectivation.

But if it is true that the conditions are no more general or constant than the conditioned element, it is none the less the conditions that interest Foucault. This is why he calls his work historical research and not the work of a historian. He does not write a history of mentalities but of the conditions governing everything that has a mental existence, namely statements and the system of language. He does not write a history of behaviour but of the conditions governing everything that has a visible existence, namely a system of light. He does not write a history of institutions but of the conditions governing their integration of different relations between forces, at the limits of a social field. He does not write a history of private life but of the conditions governing the way in which the relation to oneself constitutes a private life. He does not write a history of subjects but of processes of subjectivation, governed by the foldings operating in the ontological as much as the social field.<sup>46</sup> In truth, one thing haunts Foucault – thought. The question: ‘What does thinking signify? What do we call thinking?’ is the arrow first fired by Heidegger and then again by Foucault. He writes a history, but a history of thought as such. To think means to experiment and to problematize. Knowledge, power and the self are the triple root of a problematization of thought. In the field of knowledge as problem thinking is first of all seeing and speaking, but thinking is carried out in the space between the two, in the interstice or disjunction between seeing and speaking. On each occasion it invents the interlocking, firing an arrow from the one towards the target of the other, creating a flash of light in the midst of words, or unleashing a cry in the midst of visible things. Thinking makes both seeing and speaking

attain their individual limits, such that the two are the common limit that both separates and links them.

On top of this, in the field of power as problem, thinking involves the transmission of particular features: it is a dice-throw. What the dice-throw represents is that thinking always comes from the outside (that outside which was already engulfed in the interstice or which constituted the common limit). Thinking is neither innate nor acquired. It is not the innate exercise of a faculty, but neither is it a learning process constituted in the external world. Artaud contrasted the innate and the acquired with the ‘genital’, the genitality of thought as such, a thought which comes from an outside that is farther away than any external world, and hence closer than any internal world. Must this outside be called Chance?<sup>47</sup> The dice-throw does in fact express the simplest possible power- or force-relation, the one established between particular features arrived at by chance (the numbers on the different faces).

The relations between forces, as Foucault understands them, concern not only men but the elements, the letters of the alphabet, which group either at random or according to certain laws of attraction and frequency dictated by a particular language. Chance works only in the first case; while the second case perhaps operates under conditions that are partially determined by the first, as in a Markov chain, where we have a succession of partial relinkings. This is the outside: the line that continues to link up random events in a mixture of chance and dependency. Consequently, thinking here takes on new figures: drawing out particular features; linking events; and on each occasion inventing the series that move from the neighbourhood of one particular feature to the next. There are all sorts of particular features which have all come from outside: particular features of power, caught up in the relations between forces; features of resistance, which pave the way for change; and even *savage* features which remain suspended outside, without entering into relations or allowing themselves to be integrated (only here does ‘savage’ take on a

meaning, not as an experience but as that which cannot yet be absorbed into experience).<sup>48</sup>

All these determinations of thought are already original figures of the action of thought. And for a long time Foucault did not believe that thought could be anything else. How could thought invent a morality, since thought can find nothing in itself except that outside from which it comes and which resides in it as 'the unthought'? That *Fiat!* which destroys any imperative in advance.<sup>49</sup> However, Foucault speeds up the emergence of one strange final figure: if the outside, farther away than any external world, is also closer than any internal world, is this not a sign that thought affects itself, by revealing the outside to be its own unthought element?

It cannot discover the unthought [...] without immediately bringing the unthought nearer to itself – or even, perhaps, without pushing it further away, and in any case without causing man's own being to undergo a change by that very fact, since it is deployed in the distance between them.<sup>50</sup>

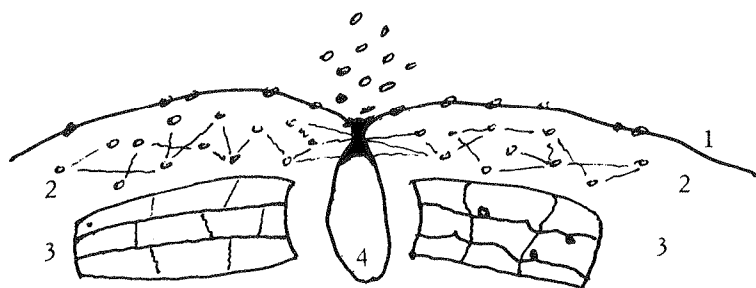
This auto-affection, this conversion of far and near, will assume more and more importance by constructing an *inside-space* that will be completely co-present with the outside-space on the line of the fold. The problematical unthought gives way to a thinking being who problematizes himself, as an ethical subject (in Artaud this is the 'innate genital'; in Foucault it is the meeting between self and sexuality). (To think is to fold, to double the outside with a coextensive inside.) The general topology of thought, which had already begun 'in the neighbourhood' of the particular features, now ends up in the folding of the outside into the inside: 'in the interior of the exterior and inversely', as *Madness and Civilization* put it. We have shown how any organization (differentiation and integration) presupposed the primary topological structure of an absolute outside and inside that encourages relative intermediary exteriorities and interiorities: every inside-space is

topologically in contact with the outside-space, independent of distance and on the limits of a 'living'; and this carnal or vital topology, far from showing up in space, frees a sense of time that fits the past into the inside, brings about the future in the outside, and brings the two into confrontation at the limit of the living present.<sup>51</sup>

Foucault is not only an archivist in the manner of Gogol<sup>1</sup>, or a cartographer in the manner of Chekhov, but a topologist in the manner of Bely in his great novel *Petersburg*, which uses this cortical folding in order to convert outside and inside: in a second space the industry of the town and of the brain are merely the obverse of one another. It is in this way – which no longer owes anything to Heidegger – that Foucault understands the doubling or the fold. If the inside is constituted by the folding of the outside, between them there is a topological relation: the relation to oneself is homologous to the relation with the outside and the two are in contact, through the intermediary of the strata which are relatively external environments (and therefore relatively internal).

[On the limit of the strata, the whole of the inside finds itself actively present on the outside. The inside condenses the past (a long period of time) in ways that are not at all continuous but instead confront it with a future that comes from outside, exchange it and re-create it. To think means to be embedded in the present-time stratum that serves as a limit: what can I see and what can I say today? But this involves thinking of the past as it is condensed in the inside, in the relation to oneself (there is a Greek in me, or a Christian, and so on). We will then think the past against the present and resist the latter, not in favour of a return but 'in favour, I hope, of a time to come' (Nietzsche), that is, by making the past active and present to the outside so that something new will finally come about, so that thinking, always, may reach thought. Thought thinks its own history (the past), but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present) and be able finally to 'think otherwise' (the future).<sup>52</sup>

This is what Blanchot called 'the passion of the outside', a force that tends towards the outside only because the outside itself has become 'intimacy', 'intrusion'.<sup>53</sup> The three agencies of topology are at once relatively independent and constantly replacing one another. The strata have the task of continually producing levels that force something new to be seen or said. But equally the relation to the outside has the task of reassessing the forces established, while, last of all, the relation to oneself has the task of calling up and producing new modes of subjectivation. Foucault's work links up again with the great works that for us have changed what it means to think.



1. Line of the outside
2. Strategic zone
3. Strata
4. Fold (zone of subjectivation)

'I have never written anything but fictions . . .' But never has fiction produced such truth and reality. How could we narrate Foucault's great fiction? The world is made up of superimposed surfaces, archives or strata. [The world is thus knowledge. But strata are crossed by a central fissure that separates on the one hand the visual scenes, and on the other the sound curves: the articulable and the visible on each

stratum, the two irreducible forms of knowledge, Light and Language, two vast environments of exteriority where visibilities and statements are respectively deposited. So we are caught in a double movement. We immerse ourselves from stratum to stratum, from band to band; we cross the surfaces, scenes and curves; we follow the fissure, in order to reach an interior of the world: as Melville says, we look for a central chamber, afraid that there will be no one there and that man's soul will reveal nothing but an immense and terrifying void (who would think of looking for life among the archives?). But at the same time we try to climb above the strata in order to reach an outside, an atmospheric element, a 'non-stratified substance' that would be capable of explaining how the two forms of knowledge can embrace and intertwine on each stratum, from one edge of the fissure to the other. If not, then how could the two halves of the archive communicate, how could statements explain scenes, or scenes illustrate statements?

The informal outside is a battle, a turbulent, stormy zone where particular points and the relations of forces between these points are tossed about. Strata merely collected and solidified the visual dust and the sonic echo of the battle raging above them. But, up above, the particular features have no form and are neither bodies nor speaking persons. We enter into the domain of uncertain doubles and partial deaths, where things continually emerge and fade (Bichat's zone). This is a micropolitics. Here, says Faulkner, we no longer act like people but like two moths or feathers, deaf and blind to one another, 'in the midst of the furious and slowly dispersing clouds of dust that we fling at each other shouting Death to the bastards! Kill! Kill!'. Each atmospheric state in this zone corresponds to a diagram of forces or particular features which are taken up by relations: a strategy. If strata are of the earth, then a strategy belongs to the air or the ocean. But it is the strategy's job to be fulfilled in the stratum, just as it is the diagram's job to come to fruition in the archive, and the non-

stratified substance's job to become stratified. To be realized in this way means becoming both integrated and different. The informal relations between forces differentiate from one another by creating two heterogeneous forms, that of the curves which pass through the neighbourhood of particular features (statements) and that of the scenes which distribute them into figures of light (visibilities). And at the same time the relations between forces become integrated, precisely in the formal relations between the two, from one side to the other of differentiation. This is because the relations between forces ignored the fissure within the strata, which begins only below them. They are apt to hollow out the fissure by being actualized in the strata, but also to hop over it in both senses of the term by becoming differentiated even as they become integrated.

Forces always come from the outside, from an outside that is farther away than any form of exteriority. So there are not only particular features taken up by the relations between forces, but particular features of resistance that are apt to modify and overturn these relations and to change the unstable diagram. And there are even savage particular features, not yet linked up, on the line of the outside itself, which form a teeming mass especially just above the fissure. This is a terrible line that shuffles all the diagrams, above the very raging storms. It is like Melville's line, whose two ends remain free, which envelops every boat in its complex twists and turns, goes into horrible contortions when that moment comes, and always runs the risk of sweeping someone away with it; or like Michaux's line 'of a thousand aberrations' with its growing molecular speed, which is the 'whiplash of a furious charioteer'. But however terrible this line may be, it is a line of life that can no longer be gauged by relations between forces, one that carries man beyond terror. For at the place of the fissure the line forms a Law, the 'centre of the cyclone, where one can live and in fact where Life exists *par excellence*'. It is as if the accelerated speeds, which last only briefly,

constituted 'a slow Being' over a longer period of time. It is like a pineal gland, constantly reconstituting itself by changing direction, tracing an inside space but coextensive with the whole line of the outside. The most distant point becomes interior, by being converted into the nearest: *life within the folds*. This is the central chamber, which one need no longer fear is empty since one fills it with oneself. Here one becomes a master of one's speed and, relatively speaking, a master of one's molecules and particular features, in this zone of subjectivation: the boat as interior of the exterior.