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Foucault, Deleuze, and the Playful Fold of the Self

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In his 1986 tribute to his friend and fellow philosopher Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze offers an especially dense and challenging account of the Foucauldian self as the product of a process of subjectivation and as a “fold” that constitutes an “inside” of thought. Concentrating on volumes 2 and 3 of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*, Deleuze not only situates these late studies of the ethics of self-formation in relation to the Foucauldian archaeologies of knowledge of the 1960s and the genealogies of power of the mid-1970s, but also provides, as I hope to show, a means of bringing together Foucault’s disparate remarks on subjectivation, politics, and the history of thought within the general theoretical context of a Nietzschean affective physics of force. The self that emerges from Deleuze’s analysis, this Foucauldian subject of desire, political resistance, and ecstatic thought, ultimately is hardly a self at all in any conventional sense, but instead the locus of an internalization of chance, becoming, and force. And if in certain respects it is truly a Foucauldian self, it is above all a Deleuzian creation that occupies an important position in Deleuze’s developing thought.

The points raised in Deleuze’s commentary on the Foucauldian subject are particularly useful in illuminating the relationship between mimesis, play, and the self, both in ancient Greek thought and in contemporary theory. In Foucault’s analysis of the Greek desiring subject one can see equally the workings of an archaic mentality, in which mimesis is above all monstration, agonistic play, and the manifestation of power, and a median mentality, in which mimesis entails representation and the mediation of reason.¹ As Deleuze’s commentary makes clear, Foucault finds valuable the Greek ideal

of aesthetic self-formation and the conception of the desiring subject as a locus of force—both of which are consonant with an archaic mimesis of monstration. What Foucault rejects in the Greek subject is the median mentality of rational self-regulation, but also the archaic constitution of the self through asymmetrical, hierarchical power relations. The conception of the self as a fold of forces, explicit in Deleuze's thought and implicit in Foucault's, ultimately may be seen, then, as a contemporary transformation of archaic mimesis, one that attempts to salvage the positive aspects of mimetic play while rejecting the negative effects of an aristocratic power mentality.

I

When volumes 2 and 3 of *The History of Sexuality* appeared in 1984, many readers were caught off guard, even those who had studied closely Foucault's remarks in interviews and articles during the years following the publication of volume 1 in 1976. Not only had Foucault abandoned his usual investigatory domain of sixteenth- through nineteenth-century Northern Europe for the broad expanses of classical Greek and Roman antiquity, and not only had he apparently departed from his genealogical methodology and chosen to focus much more on texts than on practices, but he had also concentrated his attention on the "desiring subject," thereby deflecting the initial orientation of his analysis in *The History of Sexuality* from the formation of the modern concept of 'sexuality' to the constitution of the ethical self.

Throughout his early archaeological work Foucault had remained an inveterate enemy of the subject, opposing his own history of discontinuity and rupture to the continuity of traditional historiography which is grounded in the sovereign *cogito*. As he states in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, "Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject. . . . Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all action are the two sides of the same system of thought" (*Archaeology*, p. 12). And in his genealogical studies he had sustained his attack on the subject, following Nietzsche's lead in creating histories that are, as he says in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," parodic, dissociative, and sacrificial—parodic in regarding the historical actor as a carnival mask; dissociative in treating individual identity as heterogeneous multiplicity; and sacrificial in making the subject of knowledge the object of a necessary liquidation.²

Yet Foucault was in no way reverting to a foundational subject in his ethical studies, for his purpose was to examine the ways in which subjects are *produced*, the “forms and modalities of the relation to self by which the individual constitutes and recognizes himself *qua* subject” (*The Use of Pleasure*, 6). In his archaeologies Foucault delineates the discursive formations that produce knowledge, and in his genealogies the networks of power that are immanent within knowledge. In his ethical studies, by contrast, Foucault shows how the individual is summoned as a locus of knowledge and power to an elaborate process of self-coding, self-discipline, and self-formation that varies across historical periods. The specific domain of that summons on which Foucault concentrates is that of the ethics of sexuality—how is it that sexual conduct becomes a problem that solicits an individual’s moral concern and thereby requires an active molding and shaping of the self? By focusing on the question of the constitution of the desiring subject Foucault hopes to detail the ways in which an archaeology of problematizations and a genealogy of those practices that make problematizations possible may be interrelated within an etho-poetics of self-creation.

Foucault adopts a loosely Aristotelian schema in his investigation of the desiring subject, analyzing the self’s relation to itself in terms of its ethical substance (material cause), its mode of subjection (efficient cause), its forms of elaboration (formal cause) and its telos (final cause). The ethical substance is that part of oneself, whether it be, say, one’s desires, feelings, sensations, or intentions, that requires one’s moral concern and hence functions as a matter or substance upon which one must bring to bear one’s formative energies. The mode of subjection is “the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice” (*The Use of Pleasure*, 27), whether in response to social conventions, the claims of reason, divine law, the aesthetics of a beautiful life, etc. The forms of elaboration are the self-shaping practices that guide ethical work—those, for example, of an ascetic regime of sudden renunciations, a hermeneutics of continuous self-examination, an agon of relentless psychic combat, or a perpetual indulgence in therapies of self-expression and self-discovery. The telos, finally, is the mode of being to which the ethical subject aspires, whether it be that of tranquility and detachment, mastery and autonomy, oneness with God, or some other moral ideal. Foucault’s project, then, is to show how in each age a specific dimension of an individual’s life is taken to constitute the domain of the ethical, a specific relation of the individual to this domain is established, and specific means

and ends are recognized as appropriate for directing the individual's actions within that domain.

Foucault's primary task in volume 2 of *The History of Sexuality* (to which I restrict my attention here) is to characterize the desiring subject of the ancient Greeks in terms of these four aspects of the self. Foucault argues that the ethical substance for the Greeks must be understood in terms of aphrodisia, or "the acts, gestures, and contacts that produce a certain form of pleasure" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 40). The principal constituents of aphrodisia are the pleasures of eating and sex, for these are the pleasures that involve the sense of touch and hence are liable to self-indulgence (akolasia). Rather than concentrating on proscribed acts, shameful desires, or forbidden pleasures, the Greeks viewed acts, desires, and pleasures as naturally joined in a dynamic, circular relationship and hence as indissociable components of a single process. Their ethical attention was drawn instead to the "force that linked together acts, pleasures, and desires," to "this dynamic relationship that constituted what might be called the texture of the ethical experience of the *aphrodisia*" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 43). The Greek ethics of sexuality, then, focused on the regulation and management of this circuit of forces, and on questions of the frequency or intensity of the circuit's functioning and the active or passive role that one assumed within it.

Hence the Greek mode of subjectivation, the second aspect of the self, involved a style or proper use of *aphrodisia*. It was not "a question of what was permitted or forbidden, among the desires that one felt or the acts that one committed, but of prudence, reflection, and calculation in the way one distributed and controlled his acts" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 54). Since need arose naturally in the circuit of aphrodisia, one might manage the circuit by allowing need to increase and thereby intensify pleasure at the same time that one avoided creating unnatural desires that go beyond need. One might also intervene in the circuit by regulating its tempo, by finding the proper time of day, time of year, or time of life for the use of specific pleasures. Finally, one might control the circuit in a qualitative fashion by selecting pleasures, engaging in acts, and satisfying desires that were suited to one's way of life, "which was itself determined by the status one had inherited and the purposes one had chosen" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 60).

The forms of elaboration of Greek sexual ethics centered on the concept of *enkrateia*, an active type of self-mastery "located on the axis of struggle, resistance and combat," which may be referred "in general to the dynamics of a domination of oneself by oneself and to the effort that this demands"

(*The Use of Pleasure*, 65). The forces of aphrodisia were seen as natural and necessary, but always given to revolt and excess; therefore, ethical conduct inevitably entailed “a battle for power” (*The Use of Pleasure*, 66), an internal struggle between the higher and lower parts of the soul for domination and mastery. The ethical subject was to seek a stable state of rule within the soul that mirrored the proper hierarchy of the well-governed household and state. And the subject was to attain such mastery through rigorous training, which would “enable the individual to face privations without suffering, as they occurred, and to reduce every pleasure to nothing more than the elementary satisfaction of needs” (*The Use of Pleasure*, 73).

The telos of Greek sexual ethics was *sōphrosynē*, the freedom of self-mastery that allowed one to rule oneself and thereby rule others; hence, “in its full, positive form,” this freedom “was a power that one brought to bear on oneself in the power that one exercised over others” (*The Use of Pleasure*, 80). A virile, active quality, *sōphrosynē* also entailed a relation to truth, since “to rule one’s pleasures and to bring them under the authority of the *logos* formed one and the same enterprise” (*The Use of Pleasure*, 86). The freedom of self-mastery required the structural dominance of reason over the appetites, the instrumental use of reason as a dialectical tool of discovery, and the ontological recognition of the *logos* as the soul’s true being. Finally, *sōphrosynē* made possible an aesthetics of existence, in which the well-governed life “took on the brilliance of a beauty that was revealed to those able to behold it or keep its memory present in mind” (*The Use of Pleasure*, 89).

As one can see, Foucault’s account of the Greek desiring subject makes little use of the median concepts of representational mimesis so often associated with discussions of the self—unity, identity, the selfsame, imitation, reflection. In his treatment of the ethical telos of *sōphrosynē*, Foucault does acknowledge the well-known Platonic motifs of rational self-formation, especially that of the soul’s imitative doubling of the *logos* within. But in general, Foucault situates the Greek ethical subject in an archaic, aristocratic mentality. That self emerges in an agonistic play of forces. It is constituted as a manifestation, or mimetic monstration, of power. And in every respect it is grounded in the values of a hierarchical, aristocratic culture: its ethical substance is defined in terms of active and passive aphrodisia; its mode of subjection presupposes class-specific styles of self-regulation; its forms of elaboration are framed in terms of domination and submission; and its telos of self-mastery (*sōphrosynē*) is founded on the opposition of freedom to slavery.

II

Yet despite this clear articulation of the aristocratic features of the Greek desiring subject, and despite Foucault's protestations that the ancient world was no golden age,³ many readers have seen in Foucault's description of Greek sexual ethics a nostalgic "return to the Greeks," and understandably so. Clearly, Foucault finds sympathetic an ethics that is "not directed toward a codification of acts, nor toward a hermeneutics of the subject, but toward a stylization of attitudes and an aesthetics of existence" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 92). Foucault's description of the ethical substance of the Greeks as a dynamic relationship among forces that link together desires, acts, and pleasures, is consonant with the fundamentally Nietzschean orientation of his own thought. His treatment of the mode of subjection as a stylistics of self-regulation of one's aphrodisia suggests the possibility of conceiving morality along aesthetic rather than juridical lines, and hence of imposing a greater distance between sexual behavior and disciplinary institutions than exists in most Western societies at present, something Foucault no doubt would have found attractive. His characterization of the forms of elaboration of Greek ethics in terms of an agonistic struggle for power and self-mastery, even as it brings to light those classist and sexist aspects of Greek ethical life that Foucault found most objectionable, at the same time reinforces his claims in *Discipline and Punish* and volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality* that power is ubiquitous and unavoidable. And in his discussion of freedom and self-creation as the telos of Greek ethics one senses that Foucault is positing values that are as much his own as those of the ancient Greeks.

It would seem, then, that Deleuze is justified in reading Foucault's late studies in the ethics of the self as more than mere histories and in treating them instead as essential components of a single philosophical project of a decidedly Nietzschean cast. In his book *Foucault*, Deleuze constructs an elaborate map of Foucauldian thought, describing the early archaeological works in terms of strata of the storable and the visible, the later genealogies in terms of strategies of unformed forces, and the final ethical studies in terms of folds that constitute an inside of thought. In order to explore in detail Deleuze's analysis of the Foucauldian self, it is necessary first to plot that self on the coordinates of this general map.

Deleuze argues that Foucault's conception of knowledge, developed in his archaeologies and utilized in his later works as well, is informed by a basic distinction between the storable (*l'énonçable*) and the visible (*le visible*), or that which can be stated and that which can be seen. The strata of historical

formations that the archaeologist of knowledge excavates are composed of statements and visibilities, which are closely interrelated and intertwined in a complex fashion, but which have separate modes of constitution and histories of emergence. In any age, only a limited number of things can be said and seen, and what Foucault reveals in his archaeologies are the conditions that make possible the articulation of statements within a particular discursive field and the disclosure of visibilities within a particular regime of light.

Statements are serious speech acts that have as their condition the regularities of a discursive formation, a pattern of practices that determines the possible referents, subject positions, conceptual networks, and nondiscursive relations of statements that may occur in a given historical domain of knowledge. Visibilities, in turn, are “forms of luminosity, created by light itself and allowing things or objects to exist only as flashes, mirrorings, scintillations” (*The Foucault Reader*, 60), and they have as their condition the regularities of nondiscursive practices “which distribute the clear and the obscure, the opaque and the transparent, the seen and the not-seen” (*The Foucault Reader*, 64) within a particular historical period. According to Deleuze’s analysis, then, what Foucault does in *Madness and Civilization*, for example, is to examine the strange body of statements that comprise the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’ science of madness and the peculiar collection of self-evident visible entities that the age saw in the domain of unreason, and then disclose those regularities of discursive and nondiscursive practices that made possible the formation of the complex of statements and visibilities that constituted the period’s knowledge of madness. He then shows how a reconfiguration of practices in the nineteenth century makes possible a new body of statements and a new collection of visibilities that combine to form a psychiatric knowledge of insanity incommensurable with the preceding century’s science of madness.

Deleuze insists that Foucault’s statements and visibilities, despite their intimate interconnections, cannot be related to one another as signifiers to signifieds or signs to referents, for they have no common origin or isomorphic, unifying structure. What puts them in relation to one another is power, which constitutes a domain immanent within knowledge but irreducible to its categories of analysis. Deleuze defines power as relations between forces, each force having a varying capacity to affect and to be affected by other forces. Unlike statements and visibilities, which have concrete forms and specified functions, forces comprise an unformed matter with nonformalized functions. The relationship between the strata of knowledge and the

unstratified field of power may be clarified, perhaps, if one compares statements and visibilities to the macroscopic objects of our everyday world and forces to the molecules of which they are formed, with the exception that forces are less molecular particles than vectors or zones of becoming, unstable, mobile, and nonlocalizable elements imbued with a constant microagitation.

To specify further the nature of force, Deleuze makes use of a mathematical model, which is worth exploring briefly. Deleuze describes forces as singular points, i.e., as foci or nodes of curves or parabolas, the curves or parabolas being analogous to the regularities of statements and visibilities. Singular points, Deleuze argues, belong to a domain of problems that should be distinguished from the domain of specific equations and concrete solutions. For every general species of curve or parabola one may determine the existence of a singular point, Deleuze points out, but one cannot specify the coordinates of such a point until a particular curve or parabola is generated through the assignment of a given set of values. Thus, the singular point, before specific values are assigned, may be seen as a real but virtual entity that delimits a problem, or a zone of possibilities, with any number of concrete curves or parabolas actualizing that problem as various values are assigned to the basic equation that generates that species of curve or parabola. Although the location of the singular point is determined as a secondary result of the generation of a specific curve or parabola, the singular point has priority over individual curves or parabolas in that it is the focal element of the general problem of which various curves and parabolas are only so many actualizations.

Forces, then, are like singular points, real but virtual, nonlocalizable entities that determine the regularities of statements and visibilities while remaining themselves elements of a qualitatively distinct realm of problems and zones of possibility. Forces instigate the formation of statements and visibilities, even as these statements and visibilities consolidate, integrate, and actualize relations of forces within the complex regularities of large-scale regimes of signs and regimes of light. What puts statements and visibilities in relation to one another is the field of forces they have in common. These forces, however, are not intrinsic components of statements and visibilities; hence the relation between the stable and the visible, since it passes through the intermediary of force, may be described as a non-relation, and since that non-relation is formed in a domain of nonlocalizable elements, it may be described as a non-relation in a non-place.

An instructive example of the relationship between strata of statements and visibilities and vectors of forces may be found in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975). One of Foucault's objectives in this book is to describe the emergence of the modern penal system in the nineteenth century. He demonstrates that the prison became the standard form of punishment in Europe only as the result of a complex series of events quite separate from those that generated the discourse on delinquency which regulated the juridical mechanisms of penal detention. The prison found its conceptual ideal in Jeremy Bentham's "Plan of the Panopticon" (1791), a blueprint for a prison with a central observation tower and encircling cells that would allow guards to observe the prisoners without themselves being seen and hence to exercise a perpetual and ubiquitous surveillance over their charges. The panoptic prison served as a machine for creating visibilities, and its function gradually was duplicated in barracks, factories, hospitals, and schools. The discourse of delinquency generated a body of statements that became interconnected with the visibilities created by the prisonmachine, but what instigated the formation of statements and visibilities and what put them in relation to one another was a particular field of forces, a general dimension of non-formed matter and nonformalized functions. This non-formed matter found actualization within various forms of visibility, including the architectural structures of prisons, barracks, factories, and schools and the human forms of prisoners, soldiers, workers, and students; and it also found actualization within various forms of enunciability, including the discursive categories of the delinquent, the deviant, the malignant, and the normal. The nonformalized function that characterized the nineteenth-century field of forces was that of a universal panopticism, a function of seeing without being seen, which manifested itself in diverse regulative and normalizing practices within a heterogeneous collection of institutions.

Forces generate the forms of the strata of knowledge, but they remain separate from those strata. They constitute what Deleuze calls an Outside—not that which is outside of and removed from strata, but the outside *of* strata, at the limit of the knowable (since strata comprise knowledge) and the determinable. The Outside is immanent within strata, intimately interfused at a molecular level, yet nonlocalizable, and hence, as Deleuze cryptically remarks, "*an outside more distant than any exterior world and even any form of exteriority, and consequently infinitely closer*" (*The Foucault Reader*, 92). In his genealogical studies Foucault demonstrates the intimate ways in which power infiltrates the strata of knowledge by isolating the various subtle means whereby forces discipline bodies in a micropolitics of normalization and

regimentation. But the internalization of power, that most intimate application of forces to oneself, Foucault treats only in his ethical studies. In Deleuze's schema, this internalization of power constitutes an inside of the Outside, and its figure is that of the fold.

The fold Deleuze has in mind is that of an invagination of a surface, such as the alveoli of the lungs or the bays and harbors of a coastline. The fold is a topological figure of a single surface that forms two volumes, an inside and an outside, yet two volumes that communicate with one another as the inside of the outside and the outside of the inside. What Deleuze finds in the Greek ethical self that Foucault analyzes, then, is no foundational interiority, no discrete inner subject, but a fold that forms an inside of the outside—an invagination of forces. If the Greeks may be credited with having invented the self, it is because they managed to detach forces from collective networks of power and explicitly coded strata of knowledge and to turn forces back upon themselves. The activity of self-formation attained a relative autonomy among the Greeks that allowed a reflexive use of forces, and it is this doubling of forces that created the fold of the Greek ethical self. In these broad terms, therefore, the gradual shift in emphasis that Foucault detects from the optional, unstructured forms of subjectivation of the classical world to the mandatory, juridical applications of social codes of behavior of the Christian and modern world represents a slow unfolding of the Greek ethical self, a return of detached forces of self-formation to the general network of social forces. Yet this shift is only relative, and even among Christians and moderns the fold of the self remains an isolable dimension of the relation of forces.

The four aspects of self-formation that Foucault identifies—the ethical substance, the mode of subjectivation, forms of elaboration, and telos of the desiring subject—Deleuze treats as four folds of the self. Of these four folds, however, it is the fold of the telos that Deleuze regards as most important. The ethical substance Deleuze reads simply as a material fold. The mode of subjectivation he labels “the fold of the relation of forces, properly speaking, for it is always according to a particular rule that the relation of forces is bent back to become a relation to oneself” (*The Foucault Reader*, 111). The forms of elaboration Deleuze identifies as “the fold of knowledge, or the fold of truth, in that it constitutes a relation of the true to our being, and of our being to the true” (*The Foucault Reader*, 111). And the telos he regards as “the fold of the outside itself, the ultimate fold” (*The Foucault Reader*, 111). In essence, what Deleuze has done is to redistribute the elements of Foucault's analysis, first by extracting those agonistic elements that appear

in all four aspects of the self and assigning them to a single fold of forces, and then by removing the self's relation to truth from the telos of Greek ethics and classifying it with other codifications of behavior within a fold of knowledge. Thus, the telos, which Foucault discusses in terms of self-mastery, virility, truth, and aesthetics, becomes in Deleuze's reformulation a fold of freedom and aesthetic self-creation. Since the first fold simply establishes the matter of ethical labor, and the second and third folds are folds of power and knowledge, the only fold that adds anything new to Deleuze's map of Foucault is the fourth fold of the outside itself.

III

Deleuze is somewhat free in his handling of the details of Foucault's analysis, yet his purpose obviously is not to recapitulate the minute points of the final volumes of *The History of Sexuality* but to make sense of those works as parts of a general philosophical project. As we have seen, Deleuze systematizes Foucault's thought by establishing the relationship between the archaeological strata of knowledge, the genealogical domain of power, and the ethical folds of the self. In his discussion of the self, however, Deleuze also posits a relationship between Foucault's ethical studies and his numerous political interventions in roundtables, interviews, and discussions and his scattered remarks about a projected history of systems of thought. Deleuze's conjectures on this relationship between the self, politics and thought are necessarily rather speculative, given the paucity of evidence he has to go on, yet it is perhaps here that Deleuze's analysis is at its most profound.

As Foucault indicates at several points, his genealogies are histories of the present, studies that commence with an intolerable situation in the contemporary world and seek a moment of discontinuity in the history of that situation, one that will defamiliarize existing practices and make it possible to imagine alternatives to them. So, in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault starts with the intolerable institution of the modern prison, traces its history to its problematic formation at the beginning of the nineteenth century, demonstrates its arbitrary logic and its perpetual complicity with movements for prison reform, and hopefully opens up possibilities for undoing this institution—possibilities, of course, which Foucault himself encouraged by forming the *Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons* in 1971. Yet in Foucault's genealogies, the oppressive networks of power seem to grow ever more constraining as the analysis proceeds, and one soon comes to wonder how resistance of any kind is possible if power is as pervasive and insidious as

Foucault claims. What Deleuze sees in Foucault's ethical studies is an effort to envision the self as a locus of resistance, a point at which thought itself can become a political force. Hence, Deleuze concludes that the question Foucault's final books poses is: "If power is constitutive of truth, how can one conceive of a 'power of truth' which would not be the truth of power, a truth that would flow from transverse lines of resistance and not from integral lines of power?" (*The Foucault Reader*, 101).

Resistance is fundamental to force, Deleuze argues, since force is by nature unstable, mobile, and metamorphic. The regularities of statements and visibilities may consolidate and organize forces, but a contrary movement of forces toward dispersion and disorganization is immanent within all strata of knowledge, and resistance is merely a matter of accelerating this movement. (In his theoretical remarks on power, in fact, Foucault always recognizes the instability of relations of force and the existence of lines of resistance inherent within power, even if he does not stress this dimension of power in his genealogies.) If the self, then, is an internalization of forces, it necessarily may function as a locus of resistance. But what have forces and the self to do with thought?

In his introduction to volume 2 of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault speaks briefly of all his works as so many parts of a general "history of truth," which analyzes "the games of truth and error through which being is historically constituted as experience; that is, as something that can and must be thought" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 6-7). His archaeologies and genealogies, he says, articulate "the *problematizations* through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought—and the *practices* on the basis of which these *problematizations* are formed" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 11). Yet these studies do more than simply describe *problematizations* and *practices*, for Foucault sees philosophical activity as "the critical work that thought brings to bear on itself," as "the endeavor to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 9). Foucault's effort is to think differently and to satisfy a certain kind of curiosity, "not the curiosity that seeks to assimilate what it is proper for one to know, but that which enables one to get free of oneself" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 8). Thought, then, is an act of freedom, a way of seeing otherwise and of escaping oneself. As Foucault remarks in a late interview, "Thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning; rather, it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does,

the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem" (*The Foucault Reader*, 388). Thus, in summary we may say that problematizations and practices constitute being as experience; problematizations instigate thought; and thought in turn frees one from problematizations, thereby making it possible for one to think otherwise and to initiate an aesthetics of self-formation.

Deleuze sees in these scattered remarks of Foucault's a way of bringing together Foucault's practice of thought—his histories of knowledge, power and the self—and his theory of thought and its relation to the self. What Foucault refers to as problematizations are the conditions of possibility of statements and visibilities, the regularities of discursive formations and regimes of light that allow some things to be said and seen and others not. That which determines the forms of the storable and the visible and which puts them in relation to one another is the field of forces operative within a given historical period. The general configuration of such a field of forces may be described in terms of a distribution of singular points, an arrangement of various problems or zones of possibility that find actualization and consolidation in the specific strata of knowledge. The great epistemological shifts that Foucault studies—those, for example, from classical unreason to nineteenth-century psychiatry, or from royal torture in the *ancien régime* to nineteenth-century penal discipline—entail new distributions of singular points, each of which may be seen as a large-scale throw of the dice. Only at the level of forces, of the continuous throw of dice of the Outside, does thought gain autonomy from statements and visibilities, for only then can thought grasp them in terms of their conditions of possibility and modes of relation.

Yet if Foucault's thought is a thought of the Outside, it is also a thought from the Outside. In an early essay on Blanchot, Foucault details the many ways in which Blanchot's work constitutes a "*pensée du dehors*," a "thought from without" or "thought from outside," which does not have its origin in a subject but emerges from the anonymous murmur of language itself, or from language's confrontation with the mute world that always escapes it. Deleuze argues that for Foucault as well thought comes from the Outside, from a disruptive play of forces that sets thought in motion. And to the extent that thought is able to arrive at something new, "to think differently," as Foucault says, "instead of legitimating what is already known" (*The Use of Pleasure*, 9), thought itself is a play of forces. Just as the epistemological shifts that Foucault describes in his histories entail an aleatory redistribution of singular points, so his own thought aspires to induce a similar reconfiguration

of singular points, one equally unpredictable in its arrangement and its ultimate effects. Hence Deleuze's conclusion that "To think is to emit singularities, to throw the dice" (*The Foucault Reader*, 124–5).

The subject of thought is a fold in the domain of forces, a topological inside of the Outside, but the fold must be understood temporally as well as spatially, argues Deleuze, for the redoubling of force creates an "absolute memory" that makes it possible "to put time on the outside, and to think the outside as time" (*The Foucault Reader*, 115). The term *absolute memory* Deleuze takes from Foucault's 1963 book *Raymond Roussel*, in which Foucault contrasts the fiction of Roussel and Michel Leiris by noting that while Roussel strives through various radical textual strategies to reach the "unbreathable void" of a pure Outside, Leiris adopts a slower and more patient methodology for reaching the Outside, in his autobiographical *Les règles du jeu*, for example, gradually gathering together, as Foucault says, "from so many things without social standing, from so many fantastic civil records. . . his own identity, as if in the *folds* of words there slept, with dreams never completely dead, an absolute memory" (*Raymond Roussel*, 28–29). In his histories of the self Foucault follows Leiris' practice, seeking among the disparate records and documents of the Western archive the lingering trace of the Greek and Christian subject within the modern self. But in these histories Foucault also discovers an absolute memory, claims Deleuze, a "memory of the outside, beyond the short memory which is inscribed in strata and archives, beyond the relics still caught in the diagrams [of power]" (*The Foucault Reader*, 114).

Deleuze's analysis of absolute memory focuses on the relationship between thought, memory, and forgetting, a topic of clearly Heideggerian provenance but one that owes much less to *Was heisst denken* than to Maurice Blanchot's *L'Entretien infini*. Blanchot approaches the theme of memory and forgetting through an intriguing discussion of Tristan and Iseult, in which he notes that the effect of the fatal love potion, according to one of the principal accounts of the tale, is said to last only three years. And in fact, in that version of the story at the end of three years the lovers awake from their spell, part, and proceed to pursue their separate lives. Yet their passion does not die, but continues its own existence, as if their separation itself formed a new relation between the two lovers—a non-relation—as if in forgetting their love "they approached the true center of their passion," a passion of impossibility and darkness, in which "it is the infinity of night itself that continues to desire itself, a neuter desire that has nothing to do with you or me" (*L'Entretien*, 287). What this tale reveals is that desire is a forgetting that is retained, an enfolded, ineffable infinity that can never be

known directly. "Forgetting: the movement of forgetting: infinity which opens up, in closing shut, with forgetting—provided that it is gathered together, not through the lightness that liberates the memory of memory, but, in the reminiscence [*souvenir*] itself, as the relation with that which is hidden and which no presence would be able to retain" (p. 288). That which can only be retained as a forgetting is what Blanchot calls the Outside, that stubbornly resistant dimension of experience that defies signification yet inhabits language as its shadowy, anonymous unthought.

Blanchot finds a similar structure of forgetting and remembering on a social scale in Foucault's account of the relationship between seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *déraison* and *raison* in *Madness and Civilization*. During the Great Internment of the early seventeenth century, Foucault reports, madmen, perverts, prostitutes, libertines, beggars, and blasphemers were gathered together and placed in asylums that had formerly housed lepers. Through this internment, loci of "unreason" were established, sites for sequestering those who had lost the proper use of reason and who "thought wrongly." The asylum, says Blanchot, created a magic circle that enclosed "a truth, but a strange one, a dangerous one: the extreme truth which threatens all power of being true" (p. 293). It also enclosed death—not the living death of the lepers who formerly inhabited the asylums, but a death that was "more interior. . . the empty head of the fool substituted for the macabre skull, the senseless laugh instead of the funereal rictus, Hamlet facing Yorick, the dead jester, two times a jester" (p. 293). Those who were sequestered were forgotten by the world of reason but retained within it. And though the world of reason could establish no relation with unreason, since the mad refused to speak the language of reason, the asylum functioned as a foundational non-relation between reason and unreason that made possible the delineation of reason through the expulsion and forgetting of its other, the Outside.

For Blanchot, then, the thought of the Outside entails a paradoxical relation between memory and forgetting, in that this thought requires a retention of that which is necessarily forgotten. The asylum preserves the Outside at the same time that it relegates the Outside to forgetfulness; hence, one might say, the asylum is a memory of the Outside that is simultaneously a site of forgetting. Likewise, the passion of Tristan and Iseult is forgotten after three years, but its forgetting is retained as an anonymous and ongoing desire, a memory of the Outside that enfolds within it its own forgetting. This structure of retention and expulsion, of memory and forgetting, is unavoidable in thinking the Outside, for the Outside is that which is excluded

through signification but which nevertheless continues to *insist* and *persist* even if it cannot not *exist* in any articulable present.

Deleuze makes use of Blanchot's investigation of memory and forgetting in his treatment of the Foucauldian subject, arguing that the self, like the asylum, is an enclosure of the Outside, a way of constituting "an interiority of waiting and exception" (*L'Entretien*, p. 292, cited by Deleuze, *The Foucault Reader*, 104). But Deleuze extends Blanchot's analysis to consider the structure of time itself in the thought of the Outside, a structure framed in terms of an enfolding and unfolding of the pure becoming of the Outside that constitutes a memory (a folding) of forgetting (an unfolding). That structure, though it is met with through history and historical analysis, is finally outside history, or rather the Outside of history, for it is the structure of the untimely, or the Eternal Return.

Memory, claims Deleuze, "is the true name of the relation to self, or the affect of self by self" (*The Foucault Reader*, 115). The Outside is a dimension of pure becoming ruled by chance, a "moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, by folds and foldings that constitute an inside" (*The Foucault Reader*, 103–104). The inside, as fold of the Outside, doubles the Outside and is coextensive with it, in that the chaotic, unformed Outside and inside together comprise an undifferentiated matter. The present of the Outside is doubled on the inside, but it is perpetually forgotten and at each moment reconstituted anew. The Outside, however, is retained in the past, in an absolute memory.

The forgotten present is the present of what Deleuze calls "the event," a time of pure becoming that qualitatively differs from measured, chronological time. In *What Is Philosophy?* Deleuze elaborates on this concept of the event by comparing it to Bergsonian *durée*. Bergson argues that, if time is continuous, an atomized conception of time is inadequate, for if time consists simply of a succession of discrete moments or instants, there must always be time *between* any two instants. In the case of the time of the event, by contrast,

It is no longer time which is between two instants; it is the event which is a between-time [*entre-temps*, "meanwhile, meantime"]: the between-time is not of the eternal, but it is no longer (of) time either, it is (of) becoming. The between-time, the event is always a dead time, there where nothing happens, an infinite waiting [*attente*] which is already infinitely passed, waiting and reserve. This dead time does not succeed that which arrives; it coexists with the instant or the time of the accident, but as the immensity of empty time [*temps vide*] where one sees time both as still to come and as already arrived. (*Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* 149)

The time of the event is a between-time, a dead time of pure becoming, a gap in chronological time that, as gap, eludes any present and functions as a forgetting. The virtual time of the event, however, is retained within an absolute memory. This absolute memory resembles what Deleuze refers to elsewhere as a Bergsonian virtual past, a past which has never existed as present, but which doubles every present moment and extends to include all virtual past moments within a single, coexisting dimension. Such a past constitutes the condition of possibility of all memory, a real but virtual dimension of pure memory within which specific, actual memories may arise.

The Outside, then, is forever forgotten as present but continually retained as past, its retention constituting a folding of the Outside, and its forgetting an unfolding. One may say, then, that the forgetting or unfolding of the present is that which is folded within memory. Hence, Deleuze argues, "that which is opposed to memory is not forgetting, but the forgetting of forgetting, which dissolves us in the outside, and which constitutes death" (*The Foucault Reader*, 115). It is through this interplay of memory and forgetting that we discover time as subject, for time "is the folding of the outside, and, as such, makes every present pass into forgetting, but conserves every past in memory, forgetting as the impossibility of return, and memory as the necessity of recommencement" (*The Foucault Reader*, 115). This interplay of necessary recommencement and impossible return, of course, is the interplay of the Eternal Return, the time of the perpetual repetition of difference.⁴

The Outside is the unthought-of thought, and when the thinking subject discovers this unthought the subject problematizes itself and becomes an ethical subject with a new relation to time. The topological fold of the inside of the Outside, says Deleuze, "liberates a time that condenses the past in the inside, brings about the advent of the future from the outside, and confronts the two at the limit of the living present" (*The Foucault Reader*, 126-127). Through an ethics of thinking the Outside as the unthought-of thought, the subject is summoned first to analyze the past in terms of forces, to discover the distributions of singular points that form the conditions of strata of knowledge, and hence to recognize those conditions as the Outside. Then the subject is summoned to think "the past against the present, to resist the present" (*The Foucault Reader*, 127) by challenging the forms of knowledge, the relations of power, and the codifications of the self that are sedimented in the present and that make up our identity, with the hope that something new may come about, an unpredictable and unforeseeable redistribution of singular points, a thought from the Outside. Thus, Deleuze concludes,

"thought thinks its own history (past), but in order to liberate itself from that which it thinks (present), and to be able finally to 'think otherwise' (future)" (*The Foucault Reader*, 127).

Deleuze always thinks with other philosophers, rather than about them. Hence his commentaries on Hume, Nietzsche, Bergson, Spinoza, and Leibniz are as much expositions of his own thought as explications of theirs. Deleuze's *Foucault* is no exception to this practice. Yet I would argue that Deleuze's thought is as close to Foucault's as to anyone else's, and that his reading of Foucault remains one of our best guides to the Foucauldian corpus as a philosophical project. It is difficult to separate Deleuze from Foucault, to locate precisely the point at which Deleuze swerves to pursue his own distinct ends, although clearly in his development of the concepts of absolute memory and the Outside as the unthought-of thought he is elaborating an argument that has only the most tenuous of connections with actual texts of Foucault's. Yet even here, I believe, Deleuze is pursuing a line of investigation that is in accord with the basic ends of Foucault's thought. It has been argued that in his description of the Foucauldian self Deleuze "errs in linking Foucault too closely with Nietzschean aspirations" (Bernauer, p. 230), and that he takes no account in his portrait of the "critical maturity" (Bové, p. xxxiv) of Foucault's cautious political activism. But ultimately these objections are matters more of emphasis and tone than of substance, for there is nothing in Deleuze's ethics of the Outside to preclude the establishment of solidarity with group struggles or the engagement of a prudent politics that goes beyond the easy rhetoric of liberation.

Foucault's thought is Nietzschean, and Deleuze is right in arguing for the centrality of force in the development of Foucault's archaeological, genealogical, and ethical studies. The conception of the self as a fold of forces, as an inside of the Outside, not only relates subjectivation to the domains of knowledge and power but also makes possible a description of thought as a mode of resistance. Yet this Nietzschean thought of the self, as we have seen, may also be situated within the broad context of a modern transformation of archaic mimesis. In his description of the Greek desiring subject, Foucault shows sympathy toward the ancient aesthetics of self-formation and the notion of the self as a manifestation or production of force, even as he distances himself from the archaic structuration of the subject within the asymmetrical power relations of gender and class. The unstructured, aleatory fold of forces, which Deleuze identifies as the Foucauldian self, is finally a version of the ecstatic monstration of power inherent in archaic mimesis, but one that is anarchic rather than aristocratic, conceived of as a mode of

resistance to asymmetrical power relations rather than an integral part of such relations. Something of the archaic agon of forces remains in this conception of the self as fold, and it is in this regard that Deleuze differentiates himself and Foucault from Heidegger. ("In Foucault there has always been a Heraclitism that is deeper than in Heidegger, for finally phenomenology is too pacifying, it has blessed too many things" [*The Foucault Reader*, 120].) Yet this agon of forces is seen as a means of subverting fixed power relations rather than supporting them. Whether an ecstatic play of forces may be opposed to asymmetrical power relations or whether the monstration of force is inseparable from a stratifying power mentality remains to be seen. This is the great wager that Deleuze and Foucault venture, the throw of the dice that is the playful fold of the self.

Notes

1. For a full exposition of the concept of *mimesis* and its relation to archaic and median mentalities in ancient Greek culture, see Mihai I. Spariosu, *God of Many Names: Play, Poetry, and Power in Hellenic Thought from Homer to Aristotle* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991), especially pp. ix–xiii and 1–98.

2. For a full explication of the parodic, dissociative, and sacrificial aspects of Nietzschean thought, see the final section of "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History," *Foucault Reader*, pp. 93–99.

3. See, for example, Foucault's remarks in "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," *Foucault Reader*, pp. 344–351.

4. For an elaboration of Deleuze's interpretation of the Eternal Return, see *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, pp. 26–43, 77–82, 207–222, and *Différence et répétition*, pp. 128–153. See also R. Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, pp. 27–34.

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