

ARTICLE

Force and Knowledge: Foucault's Reading of Nietzsche

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ABSTRACT: Building on Nietzsche's view of power, Foucault developed an original analysis of power by making use of concepts like "disciplinary power," "bio-power," "governmentality," etc.; however, existing studies have not sufficiently examined his reading of Nietzsche's works on this topic. Therefore, in order to clarify the connection between the two, this article examines Foucault's reading of Nietzsche in detail. Firstly, this article examines the notion of "force" which Foucault recognized is at the center of Nietzsche's view of power, and will explicitly show its conceptual determinations. In doing so, this paper will also clarify related notions such as "event," "body" and "history," and thus bring to light the general principle of force. In addition, Foucault focused on the point at which Nietzsche—using these principles—radically reinterpreted a central concept of human intellectual activity, namely knowledge. Therefore, this article secondly examines how knowledge is formed under the principle of force, and explicitly shows the general mechanism of knowledge. Finally, the article explains that Nietzsche's view of power is understood by Foucault as the duality between force and knowledge; in other words, as an ontology of force.

Keywords: Foucault, Nietzsche, force, knowledge, event, body, history.

Introduction

In the 1960s, Michel Foucault analyzed how the discourses of the human sciences were formed historically, and studied the problems of knowledge from this perspective. In the 1970s, however, he became interested in the question of how those discourses were related to political, economic, or social practices, and wrestled with the problem of power anew. During this time, Nietzsche's books had a decisive influence on him, as is widely known. Foucault read them intensively and found in them a unique view of power. While using these works as a theoretical foundation, he developed his own theory of power and later made many successful analyses of "disciplinary power," "bio-power," "governmentality," etc. These circumstances are well-known and often repeated, but in reality one cannot say that Nietzsche's view of power as interpreted by Foucault has been made clear enough so far. This is, generally speak-

ing, because many existing studies such as H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, B. Han and J. Revel¹, examined Foucault's studies of Nietzsche from the perspective of a methodology of historical research (genealogy) and not from the perspective of his theory of power. This because in spite of devoting himself to Nietzsche, Foucault published few essays on him and where he does Nietzsche is explored, on the whole, from the perspective of genealogy. However, when reading these texts in great detail, one can actually see a coherent view of power; therefore, this paper will examine the view of power as Foucault understands it and explain its theoretical framework.

To achieve this task, one has to go through two stages. The first stage is to clarify the domain proper to power. In Foucault's reading of Nietzsche, the notion of "force" (*force, Kraft*) is treated as what we could call a fundamental element of the world. Therefore, this paper will first examine how force constitutes the world and develops history. In this task, it will clear up not only the notion of force but also other important related notions such as "event," "body" and "history," and will finally elucidate what can be called the ontology of force (Section 1 "Force, Event," Section 2 "Body, History"). The second stage is to clarify the domain of knowledge. In Foucault's reading of Nietzsche, the human activity of knowledge is reinterpreted within the context of his notion of force; therefore, this paper will examine what kind of mechanism knowledge is in this reinterpretation (Section 3 "Knowledge"). By going through these two stages, this paper will elucidate the ontology of force founding the mechanism of knowledge, and will thus highlight the theoretical framework of Nietzsche's view of power as understood by Foucault.

As is obvious from the above-mentioned, the main issue of this paper does not consist in clarify Nietzsche's view of power itself, but in clarify Foucault's interpretation of that view of power. It is Foucault's interpretation that we must examine while distinguishing from Nietzsche's view of power itself. This is because, although Foucault interprets Nietzsche's view of power, he does not necessarily aim to extract exact theoretical essences from that vision of power. Foucault says that in the interpretation of Nietzsche, it is not very important to be faithful to his original text, but rather to use and manipulate his thought.² Consequently, this paper will clarify Nietzsche's view of power as it is used, modified, and deformed by Foucault. In other words, by questioning only Foucault's fragmentary interpretation of Nietzsche, this paper will examine what kind of coherent view of power can be extracted from them. The

¹ Hubert Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Béatrice Han, *L'ontologie manquée de Michel Foucault. Entre l'historique et le transcendantal* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1998); Judith Revel, *Michel Foucault. Expérience de la pensée* (Paris: Bordas, 2005).

² "Nietzsche's presence is more and more important. However, I am tired of attentions that one pays to make on him the same comments that one made or will make on Hegel or Mallarmé. If the persons I like come into question, I use them. The only mark of gratitude that one can present to a thought like Nietzsche's is exactly to use it, to deform it, to make it rasp and cry. Therefore, it is nonsense that the commentators say if one is faithful or not." (Michel Foucault, "Entretien sur la prison: le livre et sa method," in *Dits et écrits II*, edited by Daniel Defert, François Eward & Jacques Lagrange (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 753) In fact, for example, in examining Nietzsche's theory of knowledge, Foucault is clearly conscious of using and modifying it. (Michel Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," in *Dits et écrits II*, 550)

time may come when one should check Foucault's interpretation of Nietzsche against the original texts and judge their validity or when one should place his reading within a historical relationship to other interpretations of Nietzsche; however, these things will not be feasible until one finishes the work that this paper tackles. The problem at issue here may seem limited in its significance as it deals with a relatively small area of Foucault scholarship; however, by basing his interpretation of power on Nietzsche's writings, Foucault developed original analytical concepts like "disciplinary power," "bio-power," "governmentality," etc. which today have greatly influenced the works of A. Negri and M. Hardt, G. Agamben, and F. Gros³, for example. Thus we are able to see how important these reflections on Foucault's reading of Nietzsche may be. By examining the point of departure of the analyses of power which permeates so much nowadays (namely Foucault's reading of Nietzsche), we would radically question Foucault's and his heirs' analyses of power about their theoretical or philosophical significance and cogency.

1. Force, Event

Around 1970, Foucault tackled the problems of power as he studied Nietzsche's written works. Judging from the number of citations, what he examined primarily was *The Gay Science*. This is likely because, at that time, this book had only just been published in the new version of the complete works of Nietzsche. It is well known that Foucault, with Deleuze, acted as members of the editorial staff for this complete works. What he examined next were *The Dawn*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *On the Genealogy of Morals*. *The Will to Power*, too, was read very closely, but because Foucault had some doubts about the validity of its editing, generally speaking, he kept a careful distance from it.⁴ *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Untimely Meditations* had been studied very well before, but were not cited much at this period; additionally, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* seems to have been left largely unexamined.⁵ Resulting from the reading of these aforementioned texts, Foucault wrote some essays on Nietzsche. The following four texts are available to us today: (1) "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,"⁶ an article included in *Hommage for Jean Hyppolite* in which he talks about Nietzsche's genealogy; (2) "The Will to Knowledge,"⁷ lectures at the Collège de France in academic year 1970-1971 in which he discusses Nietzsche's critique of knowledge; (3) "Lecture about Nietzsche,"⁸ a lecture given in Canada in 1971, and (4) "Truth and Juridical Forms,"⁹ a lecture given in Brazil in 1973. In the latter two Foucault

³ Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Frédéric Gros, *Etat de violence. Essai sur la fin de la guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006).

⁴ Cf. Michel Foucault, "Michel Foucault et Gilles Deleuze veulent rendre à Nietzsche son vrai visage," in *Dits et écrits I*, edited by Daniel Defert, François Eward & Jacques Lagrange (Paris: Gallimard, 1994); Michel Foucault, "Introduction générale aux Œuvres philosophiques complètes de F. Nietzsche," in *Dits et écrits I*; Michel Foucault, "Sur Nietzsche," in *Michel Foucault*, edited by Philippe Artières et al. (Paris: L'Herne, 2011).

⁵ Cf. Michel Foucault, "Les problèmes de la culture. Un débat Foucault-Preli," in *Dits et écrits II*, 372.

⁶ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," in *Dits et écrits II*.

⁷ Michel Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), 1-193.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 195-213.

⁹ Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques."

reanalyzes part of those lectures given at the Collège de France in 1970-1971.¹⁰ In none of these texts does Foucault deal with Nietzsche's view of power thematically, but in the background of arguments these questions of power emerge in significant ways and so we can recognize fragmentary descriptions here and there. Thus, by carefully gathering those fragmentary descriptions and consistently reading them together, we can certainly describe a coherent view of power.

According to Foucault, in Nietzsche's view of power, force is situated as something like the fundamental element of the world.¹¹ What is force then? It is above all omnipresent in the world and existent not only through humans but also through all other things like animals, vegetables and minerals. Moreover, it has different modes of existence, and when humans are involved it can basically be expressed in a series terms like: "instinct" (*instinct*), "drive" (*pulsion*), "passion" (*passion*) ("laughter," "complaint," "hatred"), "desire" (*désir*), "interest" (*intérêt*), "life" (*vie*), "will" (*volonté*), etc.¹² Moreover, the world is filled with a countless number of these forces that "fight against one another"¹³ to become more intense and to dominate other forces. This fight occurs not only between individuals but also within an individual (for example, as it will be examined later, a conflict of passions within an individual) and occurs on both a micro and macro scale. Moreover, the fight between forces always changes the situations of conflicts, according to which *relationships of forces* are established everywhere.

Foucault understands this relationship of forces as an event (*événement*). He says that an event is "a relationship of forces which is reversed, a confiscated power, a vocabulary appropriated and returned against its user, a domination which weakens, relaxes and poisons

¹⁰ By the way, Foucault published another text on Nietzsche, before those four, in 1964: Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," in *Dits et écrits I*. And also, according to D. Defert's report, Foucault wrote another essay on Nietzsche in 1954 but did not publish it: cf. Daniel Defert, "Chronologie," in *Dits et écrits I*, 20.

¹¹ Insofar as Nietzsche understood force as something like the fundamental element of the world, it seems that Foucault's studies resemble Heidegger's or Deleuze's studies of Nietzsche. Heidegger gave a series of lectures on Nietzsche in the second half of the 1930's and, after certain revisions, published it as *Nietzsche* in 1961. (Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 2Bde, (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961)) P. Klossowski translated it to French in 1971. Although Foucault's studies on Nietzsche do not refer to Heidegger's work directly, we must not forget that they were contemporary with the acceptance of Heidegger's work in French. In addition, Deleuze organized a symposium on Nietzsche in Royaumont in 1964 which became an occasion to re-evaluate Nietzsche in contemporary French philosophy, and he invited Foucault to it. Moreover, this opportunity enabled the two to work together as member of the French editorial staff for the new version of the complete works of Nietzsche. Although Foucault's studies of Nietzsche do not refer to Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche (Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris: PUF, 1962); Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche* (Paris: PUF, 1965)), we must remember that they had some philosophical sympathies concerning the interpretation of Nietzsche. For more information about Foucault's and Deleuze's contributions in re-evaluating Nietzsche in contemporary French philosophy, see Jacques Le Rider, *Nietzsche en France. De la fin du XIX^e siècle au temps présent* (Paris: PUF, 1999), 205-217.

¹² Regarding the instincts, see e.g. Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," 545; about the drive, e.g. *ibid.*, 548; about the passion, e.g. *ibid.*; about the desire, e.g. Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir*, 219; about the interest, e.g. *ibid.*, 220; about the life, e.g. Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," 153; about the will, e.g. *ibid.*, 151.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 143.

itself, a masked other which makes an entrance."¹⁴ All these situations indicate a fluctuations or a change of the relationship of forces, therefore the establishment of new relationships of forces. The event and the relationship of forces is, after all, the same thing.

If the event can be described as a relationship of forces, by definition, the event is not provoked by any single force. In other words, it is not provoked by "the energy of the strong" or by "the reaction of the weak."¹⁵ This is because the event is in itself a relationship of forces, which contains both "the energy of the strong" and "the reaction of the weak." The event is provoked by both, or to be precise, by their encounter. Accordingly, the event is "that scene where they [the strong and the weak] are displayed superimposed or face to face," "the space that divides them and is dug between them," "the void through which they exchange their threats and their words," and finally, "a place of confrontation."¹⁶ Thus, the event essentially signifies the relationship between two forces.

As to the event, one can point out three general characteristics concerning its relationships of force. Firstly, the event is "a pure distance" between one force and another force. According to Foucault, there is an abyss between one force and another, which is impossible to cross. Therefore, he says, although the event is "a place of confrontation," it is fundamentally different from places where we ordinarily suppose fights occur. Let us take a martial arts ring as an example of a place where we ordinarily suppose fights occur. In them, there is a certain area enclosed for the fight where certain rules of competition are applied and the equality of the adversaries is ensured by the referee. Such a place of confrontation would presuppose, before the relationship of the adversaries, the existence of forces stronger than the athletes, such as an association of athletes or competition organizers. These pre-existing forces make possible a place of confrontation for the fight, namely a relationship of adversaries, and dominate it fundamentally. On the contrary, in "a place of confrontation" mentioned by Foucault, there are no forces, which make a confrontation simultaneously possible and determined. There is no transcendent which sustains, regulates, or referees that confrontation in the background. Without any transcendent mediation, the forces in question immediately confront each other. It is finally "a pure distance or the fact that the adversaries don't belong to the same space."¹⁷ They may give their opponent a blow without pulling on their gloves, and they may even plunge a knife into the opponent's heart; on the contrary, they may even turn the other cheek like Jesus Christ. Consequently, Foucault qualifies this "place of confrontation," paradoxically, as a "non-place" (*non-lieu*).¹⁸ Firstly, because the "place of confrontation" indicates an area existing before the popular places of fight are established—it is thusly a "non-place." And secondly, because the "place of confrontation" has no transcendent which mediates the confrontation; consequently, no person can be determined as the party responsible for the confrontation, it is a "dismissal of case" (*non-lieu*). In brief, "no one is [...] responsible for

¹⁴ Ibid., 148.

¹⁵ Ibid., 144. Although what is questioned here is the "emergence," it is an event or at least a series of events. After this, the argument about the general characteristics of the event is based on descriptions about the "emergence."

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

an emergence [confrontation], no one can glory in it."¹⁹ Therefore, the event is a "place of confrontation" as a "non-place," and it is exactly "a pure distance" between one force and another.²⁰

Secondly, the event is an interminable "relation of domination"²¹ between one force and another force. Concerning this point, Foucault says frankly: "in a sense, the drama performed at the theatre without a place is always the same: it is one which the dominator and the dominated interminably repeat."²² The relationship of forces is never an equal relationship, but an unequal relationship, that is to say, a "relation of domination." There, each of the forces are distributed among the dominator and the dominated, or to the master and to the slave; however, the master and the slave are not surmounted dialectically and united in the Absolute Geist someday like in Hegelian philosophy. The master and the slave continue to exist eternally. This means neither that a certain master gains an absolute victory and establishes perpetual domination, nor that a certain slave suffers an absolute defeat and accepts perpetual subordination. The master and the slave are in a state of never-ending confrontation. According to the course of the fight, the master lowers himself to the status of slave and the slave heightens himself to that of master. The master and the slave, according to the course of a fight, continue to exchange roles. From this perspective, all masters can only keep relative superiority temporarily, and all slaves can only be relegated to relative inferiority temporarily. Without Heaven or Hell, what exists is a world of perpetual conflict. That is why the event is an interminable relation of domination between one force and another.

Thirdly, the event is a connection by a "rule" between one force and another force. According to Foucault, when relationships of force between humans are questioned, those forces are connected mutually by a rule, which fixes their relationship. This is because the relationship of forces or of domination in itself, strictly speaking, is not "a relationship any more than the place where it is exercised is a place."²³ Consequently, a rule is produced to connect forces and to set their relation of domination as a relationship. Rules finally constitute all laws and all systems, for example, in the form of "a ritual" or as "duties and rights."²⁴ As such, a rule "permits to relaunch the game of domination without cease; it puts a meticulously repeated violence on the stage."²⁵ By creating rules, domination "establishes marks, engraves memories on things and even on bodies."²⁶ Even what one calls "the laws of the civil peace" are no exceptions. Indeed, "the desire for peace, the serenity of compromise, the tacit acceptance of the law,"²⁷ etc., which are accompanied by those laws, may at first seem to be respectable human feelings, but in reality, they are no more than the result of the fact that the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Dreyfus and Rabinow point out that Foucault attempted to read, in this "pure distance," something like the "clearing" (*Lichtung*) of Heidegger: cf. Dreyfus & Rabinow, 104.

²¹ Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," 145.

²² Ibid., 144-145.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

rule of domination has been established. This is because, if the rule of domination has been firmly established—whereby the dominated forgets that he/she is dominated—one gets to voluntarily accept the law of domination, which looks like a law of peace. Therefore, the rule connects one force and another force, and fixes their relation of domination. This is why the event, as far as relations between humans are concerned, is a connection between one force and another by a rule.

From this characteristic of the relationship of forces concerning the rule, another complementary characteristic can be derived: the event is an “interpretation”²⁸ of a rule concerning one force and another force. As previously stated, the event is a connection by a rule between one force and another, but of course, this connection cannot be perpetual. Therefore, a relation of domination connected by the rule can change in different ways. How can this happen? According to Foucault, it happens, ironically, by the same rule. He says: “in themselves, rules are empty, violent, unfinalized; they are made to serve this or that; they can be bent to such and such a liking.”²⁹ That is to say, although the rule is made in the dominator’s favor by the dominator, it is in itself a neutral instrument. Consequently, even if the dominator imposes the rule on the dominated, the dominated can seize it, interpret it in his/her own favor, and return it to the dominator—the dominated can interpret the rule anew. This means that the relation of domination can be reversed by interpretation. Therefore, the event, as far as relations between humans are concerned, is an interpretation of a rule about two forces.³⁰

As we have seen above, in Foucault’s reading of Nietzsche, countless forces are in a constant state of conflict, and various relationships of forces are established as an event everywhere. In the event forces mutually encounter, purely oppose, and interminably change their relation of domination. Above all, insofar as a relation between humans is concerned, the relation of domination is fixed by the rule and is further reversible by its interpretation. Incidentally, as we have already seen, this event “establishes marks, engraves memories on things and even on bodies.” That is to say, the event is impressed on the “body” (*corps*). In fact, Foucault says briefly that the body is a “surface of inscription of events,”³¹ and one can say that it plays an important part in relation to the event. Therefore, in order to make clearer the characteristics of the event or of the force, we have to examine the problem of the body in Foucault’s reading of Nietzsche.

2. Body, History

What is the body? According to Foucault’s reading of Nietzsche, the body does not signify only the flesh of an individual. It signifies a much larger existence in the temporal sense as well as in the spatial sense. On the one hand, in terms of time, the body has an existence, which runs through the individual and even extends further to his/her “ancestors.”³² The

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 146.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

³⁰ Concerning the texts in which Foucault treats the problem of interpretation in Nietzsche, see particularly “Nietzsche, Freud, Marx.” There, he analyzes the episteme of the modern hermeneutics in relation to those three thinkers.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

³² *Ibid.*, 142.

body covers—through chains of individuals—all time from the past to the future. On the other hand, in terms of space, the body has an existence which runs through the flesh of an individual and even extends further to the environment which sustains that flesh; namely, “everything that touches the body: food, climate, soil.”³³ The body covers all space through the individual’s environment. Thus, the body would cover the whole world or all of history. One can say actually that this means that the extension of body is identical to the extension of material existence. Or, one can say actually that there is no material existence, and that the only existing thing is the body as a living. In fact, by extending the domain of the body to the extreme, Foucault says the following: “history, with its moments of intensity, its lapses, its secret fits, its big feverish agitations and its fainting spells, is the very body of the becoming [*devenir*].”³⁴ Finally, the body is history or, to be more precise, the becoming that covers all history.

In terms of the body as becoming, there are probably three general characteristics of interest. First, the body is plastic. One normally assumes that the body obeys the universal law of physiology; consequently, one thinks that, if individuals of the same genus are considered, the same type of body is found universally. Additionally, one thinks that if only one individual is considered, an identical body is always found. In either case, the body is viewed as an immobile substance possessing invariable attributes in the physiological sense. However, according to Foucault, this general idea is in fact wrong. As mentioned above, the body is the becoming of history and is historically variable. Foucault says:

We think in any case that the body, itself, does not have any other laws than those of its physiology and that it escapes from history, but this too is false. The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it gets used to the rhythms of work, rest and holidays; it is intoxicated by poisons—food or values, eating habits and moral laws all together; it constructs resistances.³⁵

Therefore, the body too has a history. It too is formed differently according to historical conditions. In view of this, the body has the characteristic of plasticity.

Secondly, the body is, as is aforementioned, a “surface of inscription of events.” The plastic nature of the body, when different events are inscribed on it, solidifies into a certain figure. This process of inscription of events is as follows. First of all, events are impressed on the body. These impressions or marks, without disappearing instantly, continue to exist for a certain period; consequently, the body comes to accumulate marks of “a thousand events.”³⁶ These marks of events do not remain in a latent state on the body, as harmless memories, but exercise a certain influence on future activities. Foucault says that in the body, past events “are knotted and suddenly expressed, but they are also unknotted in it, enter into a fight, efface each other and pursue their insurmountable conflict.”³⁷ The mark of the event keeps exercising an influence on the body, and acts reciprocally with influences of other marks. In

³³ *Ibid.*, 142-143.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 141.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 143.

these reciprocal actions, if these marks are knotted and reinforce their influence, they gain manifest expression. However, they are eventually unknotted and regain reciprocally tense relationships as before. In short, the event continues to exist as a mark on the body and continues to exercise an influence on the body. For example, someone who committed a grave error in the past continues to carry the event where he committed that error as a mark on his body, and he continues to suffer sanctions from the event, even across generations to his remotest descendants. Concerning this point, Foucault says the following: "it is the body that carries, in its life and its death, in its force and its weakness, the sanction of all truth and all error, as the body also, and inversely, carries the origin—descent [namely the mark of the event]." ³⁸ Therefore, in the process of the inscription countless events are impressed on the body, accumulated, and put in reciprocal relation for a certain period of time. Through this process, the body lets its figure become another figure. In this way, the body has the characteristics of a surface for the inscription of events.

Thirdly, the body is a place where the soul is born and where it dies. This is a characteristic, which can be seen only as far as humans are concerned. As previously stated, the body, in general, keeps marks of countless events on itself. These marks are what solidify the body into a certain figure. Therefore, it can be said that the body keeps marks from countless events as multiple lines of descent or multiple identities. When considering the case of human beings, the body cannot endure a situation of carrying countless descents or countless identities in itself; consequently, it tries to control this mixture of events, descents, or identities. Foucault says the following: "the soul pretends to unify itself", and "the Self invents an identity or a coherence for itself." ³⁹ After all, the "empty synthesis" ⁴⁰ of the Self is born here—on the body.

Nevertheless, this "empty synthesis" is never firm; marks of countless events squirm under this synthesis. There is no single origin of the Self but "countless beginnings whose faint traces and hints of color are readily seen by a historical eye." ⁴¹ As we have already seen, these beginnings or these marks are often knotted which reinforces their influence. This means that they let a crack appear in the "empty synthesis" and thus become manifest. Foucault calls those marks of the events the "dangerous heritage." ⁴² Foucault understands that "this heritage is not at all an acquisition, a possession that accumulates and solidifies; rather, it is a whole of cracks, fissures, heterogeneous layers that make the acquisition or the possession unstable and, from the inside or from the bottom, menace the fragile heir." ⁴³ The body conserves that "dangerous heritage" which in turn dissociates the "empty synthesis." The body is therefore a "place of dissociation of the Self (to which [the body] tries to lend the chimera of a substantial unity), a volume in perpetual weathering." ⁴⁴ In this way, the body, which conserves in itself marks of countless events, invents the Self to control them on the one hand, but

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 142.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 141-142.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

the Self is always menaced by its “dangerous heritage” on the other. Therefore, the body, as far as humans are concerned, has the characteristic of a place of birth and of death of the soul.

It follows that the body, as the becoming which covers all of history, is: (1) plastic, (2) a surface of inscription of events, and (3) the place for the birth and death of the soul. However, can the body ultimately be reduced to forces? It seems that the body can be thoroughly explained by the notion of force in Foucault’s reading of Nietzsche; more strongly, it seems that the body is not what can be essentially distinguished from forces but what, in itself, is constituted by forces. In brief, it seems that the body is the ensemble of the relationships of forces. What is the ensemble of the relationships of forces like? To begin with, as we can easily imagine from what has already been shown about the characteristics of the relationship of forces, it would not be an absolutely stable structure, which does not change forever; it would consist of a relatively stable economy, which is established in a temporary present. One can say that it is not unchanging but plastic; thus, in the ensemble of relationships of forces, new relationships can occur as events at any moment. Instead of being dissolved instantly the event would be, in the ensemble of the relationships of forces, impressed, accumulated, and put in reciprocal relationship with other events. To that end, the ensemble of relationships of forces would let its current configuration become modified into another configuration. Therefore, one can say, once again, that it is a surface of inscription for events. In the ensemble of relationships of force the mixture of different (old or new) events can occur; accordingly, in order to control them the soul or the Self would be invented sporadically here and there. Therefore, one can say that the ensemble of the relationships of forces is a place of birth and death for the soul. In this way, also, when the body is understood as the ensemble of the relationships of forces, all its characteristics can be explained just as they are, and it seems that the body can be reduced to the element of force.⁴⁵

Through the existence of the body, we can now explain more clearly the characteristics of events, of the relationship of forces, and generally speaking, the situations in which forces exist. What exists before our eyes are countless forces filling the world, countless relationships of forces constituting events, or the ensemble of the relationships of forces as a body. That being so can one say how this ensemble of relationships of force develop history by changing or becoming as the above? That is to say, we must now clarify what is meant by a *history of forces*.

Concerning the history of forces in Nietzsche, Foucault says the following:

The forces which are at play in history obeyed neither a destination nor a mechanism, but the chance of the fight. They are not manifest as the successive forms of a primordial intention; they don’t take the pace of a result, either. They always appear through the singular fortuity of events.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche, too, contains the idea that the body is what can be reduced to forces or what is constituted of forces: “what defines a body is this relationship between dominating forces and dominated forces. All relationship of forces constitutes a body: chemical, biological, social, political. Any two forces, which are unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter in a relationship”; “the body is a multiple phenomenon, being composed of a plurality of irreducible forces.” (Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, 45)

⁴⁶ Foucault, “Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire,” 148.

The history of forces is not a process where “a primordial intention” leads to “a destination”. It is not one where causes provoked “effects” by “a mechanism” either. It is neither a subjective necessity of the original consciousness, nor an objective necessity of natural causality. The history of forces is a “chance of the fight” without origin or end; the forces are always in a state of conflict, which is in essence contingent. According to “the chance of the fight,” involved forces establish different relationships. Consequently, the event, too, which is none other than a relationship of forces, has as a characteristic “the singular fortuity.” The events do not obey any “ideal continuity—teleological movement or natural chain,”⁴⁷ but disperse everywhere in their “singular fortuity,”⁴⁸ so to speak, in a positive discontinuity. The history of forces consists in the appearance of events or of the establishment of relationships of forces, and in this respect, Foucault, citing Nietzsche, explains:

[...] there is neither providence nor final cause, but only ‘the iron hand of necessity which shakes the dice box of chance.’ Yet, we must not understand this chance as a simple drawing of lots, but as the always relaunched risk of the will to power which, against all result of chance, opposes the risk of an even greater chance to control it.⁴⁹

Force is not dominated by necessity, such as “providence” or the “final cause,” but by chance. However, this chance is not a chance opposed simply to necessity, namely chance as “a simple drawing of lots.” It is a chance which surpasses the ideal opposition between necessity and chance, namely a chance which paradoxically has necessity. In brief, force is dominated by “the iron hand of necessity which shakes the dice box of chance.” What is “the iron hand of necessity”? It is strong reciprocal determinations in the immense and complex ensemble of the relationships of forces. A force has close relationships with many environmental forces, and there is a bundle of strong reciprocal determinations. Since a bundle of reciprocal determinations is too strong, the force is moved in an almost necessary manner. That is just a restriction of iron. What is “the dice box of chance”? It is an overall fight in the immense and complex ensemble of the relationships of forces. While force is moved in an almost necessary manner by a bundle of reciprocal determinations, it always fights to add modifications to that bundle. In a case where the force has a dominant position in a determination it fights to reinforce its domination, on the contrary, in a case where the force has a dominated position it fights to reverse that domination. This fight between forces may seem—in the face of strong determination by environmental forces—to be merely a vain conflict; however, since in reality all forces are in conflict, the bundle of relationships of forces are stirred in an almost contingent manner. That is just a caprice of the dice box. In short, while the history of forces is conditioned by strong reciprocal determinations in the immense and complex ensemble of the relationships of forces, it is simultaneously liberated from those determinations by an overall conflict in that ensemble.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

In other words, the history of forces means that “the will to power” commits against “all result of chance” “the risk of an even greater chance.” First, the strong reciprocal determinations in the ensemble of the relationships of forces themselves were, on an earlier occasion, formed through chance in an overall fight, and so they are “all result of chance.” The force, instead of contenting itself with that result, wills to expand its own power, so it fights; consequently, it is none other than “the will to power.”⁵⁰ In order to dominate “all result of chance” this will engages in an overall fight again it and commits to “the risk of an ever greater chance.” In brief, the history of forces develops between necessity and chance, between strong reciprocal determinations and overall fight, or between “all result of chance” and “the risk of an ever-greater chance,” and thereby it forms a “destiny” without an origin or end.

Thus, beginning with the notion of force, we could now clarify a series of related notions like event or body, and elucidate all the dynamism of the history of forces. This is just the first stage or the basic element of the view of power in Foucault’s reading of Nietzsche, or more precisely what should be called *the ontology of force*. Incidentally, this ontology of force is what applies to the world in general, which includes not only humans but also animals, vegetables, and minerals. However, humans hold a special position, which distinguishes them from other beings; humans use language and know the world. Of course, the human activity of knowing also essentially has as its base the ontology of force and unfolds therein. So, how can knowledge be reinterpreted here? Although this paper has already mentioned the case proper to humans occasionally, in the next section, we have to examine this point in more detail.

3. Knowledge

What is “knowledge” (*connaissance, Erkenntnis*)? According to Foucault, in the tradition of Western philosophy since Plato, knowledge was generally considered as the essential faculty founded on human nature, or as an activity observed in the whole world throughout the history of humanity.⁵¹ Particularly in modern philosophy of knowledge since Descartes or Kant, the question of finding the human “faculty” and “universal structure” of knowledge became of great philosophical interest.⁵² However, when it comes to Nietzsche, knowledge is no longer natural and essential for humans, or universal and transhistorical for humans. It is only a thing produced accidentally in one day and one place in the history of forces. Foucault cites Nietzsche’s aphorism as follows: “at the detour of some corner of the universe flooded with the fires of countless solar systems, there once was a planet where intellectual animals invented knowledge. That was the most arrogant and most mendacious minute of ‘universal histo-

⁵⁰ Heidegger, thinking that force is none other than the will to power, says this: “what Nietzsche calls force becomes clear to him in the next years [after *the Gay Science*] as the will to power.” (Heidegger, 344) Deleuze, too, says that, though force is not exactly identical to the will to power, it is inseparable from the will to power, and he argues that force holds the will to power to be internal: “the will to power is thus attributed to force”; “it [the will to power] is a complement of force *and* something internal at the same time.” (Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, 56)

⁵¹ Cf. Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir*, 6-28, 218, 219; Foucault, “La vérité et les formes juridiques,” 549.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 551.

ry’.”⁵³ Knowledge is an “invention” produced in a state of fight between forces, or an “instrument”⁵⁴ used by it for itself; in other words, it is “an event or at least a series of events”⁵⁵ in that state of fight. In brief, knowledge is a “result” or an “effect” of the fight of forces.⁵⁶ Consequently, in order to understand how knowledge appears as an “effect” in the fight of the forces, we have to clarify its mechanism.

To explain this mechanism, Foucault focuses his reading on an aphorism titled “The Meaning of Knowing” from Nietzsche’s *The Gay Science*.⁵⁷ There, Nietzsche expresses his own position on knowledge through a critique of Spinoza’s theory of knowledge. For Spinoza, in order to understand things in their essences, one must not laugh at them, deplore them, or detest them. It is not until these “passions” disappear that one is able to understand them. For Nietzsche the case is just the opposite, where to understand things can only result from laughing at them, of deploring them, or of detesting them. That is to say, understanding or knowledge is a result of the “interplay and the fight of those three instincts, of those three mechanisms, or of those three passions that are expressed by laughter, complaint and hatred.”⁵⁸ It is, finally, an effect of the fight of these forces.

In the mechanism of knowledge expounded in that aphorism, it seems that Foucault recognizes two aspects of the fight of forces. One concerns the fight between *the knowing human and the known thing* (including humans). In this fight, how does the knowing human or his/her passions act on the known thing? Foucault comments on this point in the following fashion:

These three passions, or these three drives—laughing, deploring, detesting—, have one common feature; they are all ways not of getting close to the object or identifying itself with it but, on the contrary, of keeping the object at a distance, differentiating oneself from it or marking one’s separation from it, protecting oneself from it by laughter, devalorizing it by complaint, removing it and possibly destroying it by hatred.⁵⁹

Thus, passions act on the known object in the manner of repelling it and of ultimately destroying it. Consequently, these three passions are generally “on the order of the bad relations”⁶⁰ toward the known object. It is because they are not “a sort of affection, drive or passion that makes us love the object to be known, but rather drives that place us in a position of hatred, contempt or fear before things that are menacing and presumptuous.”⁶¹ That is to say, the knowing human fights, through these passions, against the known object.

A necessary consequence arises from this fight: knowledge, which is formed within the context of those passions, doesn’t essentially correspond to the world to be known. In fact,

⁵³ Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir*, 195; Foucault, “La vérité et les formes juridiques,” 542-543.

⁵⁴ Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir*, 219, 220.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁵⁶ Foucault, “La vérité et les formes juridiques,” 545.

⁵⁷ Cf. Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir*, 197; Foucault, “La vérité et les formes juridiques,” 548, 549.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 548.

⁵⁹ Cf. Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir*, 197.

⁶⁰ Foucault, “La vérité et les formes juridiques,” 549.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Foucault says the following: “according to Nietzsche, there is not any resemblance [or] any prior affinity between knowledge and the things to be known.”⁶² If we look at this Nietzschean position on knowledge against the background of the tradition of Kant’s philosophy, its peculiarity would stand out all the more. According to Nietzsche’s position on knowledge, “in more rigorously Kantian terms, one should say that the conditions of experience and the conditions of the object of experience are completely heterogeneous.”⁶³ As is generally known, Kant was “the first to say explicitly that the conditions of experience and those of the object of experience were identical,”⁶⁴ but Nietzsche radically reverses this thesis.

The reason why knowledge does not correspond to the world to be known is, of course that those passions are in a relation of fight with the world to be known. Incidentally, what is the world to be known? In this regard, Foucault again focuses on an aphorism from *The Gay Science*: “the character of the ensemble of the world is chaos for all eternity, in the sense not of a lack of necessity, but of a lack of order, articulation, form, beauty, wisdom.”⁶⁵ In this aphorism Nietzsche states clearly that the world is essentially chaos and does not have any absolute content to be known. Since the world is chaos, it presents itself as “menacing and presumptuous” for us; therefore, the knowing human must violate this chaos, oppress it and dominate it by knowledge. On this point Foucault says:

There can be no relation of natural continuity between knowledge and the things that the knowledge must know. There can only be a relation of violence, domination, power and force, a relation of violation. Knowledge can only be a violation of the things to be known, and not a perception, a recognition, an identification of or with those things.⁶⁶

Between knowledge and the things to be known there is no natural continuity, but a fundamental rupture; there is no relation of transparent correspondence, but a relation of entangled fight. Consequently, in order to triumph in the fight against the things to be known, namely chaos, knowledge falsifies and imposes some essence to this chaos. Thus, it tries to order chaos and to transform it into an inoffensive world. Foucault says: “knowledge schematizes, ignores the differences, assimilates things between them, and it is so without any foundation in truth. From this fact, knowledge is always misknowledge.”⁶⁷

Thus, the thing to be known starts to exist as if it had an essence in reality. Indeed, it is in itself chaos and does not originally have any essence; however, knowledge falsifies and imposes some essence to this chaos, and thereby transforms it into inoffensive things. At that time, the thing is not necessarily transformed as it corresponds precisely to the falsified essence. What can be said for sure is that at the level of knowledge, one pretends that the thing to be known has an essence and that the thing is transformed into existence which cannot re-

⁶² Ibid., 545-546.

⁶³ Ibid., 546.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir*, 197; Foucault, “La vérité et les formes juridiques,” 546.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 552.

sist this pretension. As a result, although the thing to be known does not originally have any essence, by the mechanism of knowledge, it starts to exist as if it had an essence in reality.

Such is the first aspect of the fight of the forces, which can be recognized in the mechanism of knowledge; namely, the fight between the knowing human and the known thing. The other aspect concerns the fight on the inside of the knowing human, which is the fight between passions or instincts. As discussed above, in the knowing human, there are passions that exist against the known thing such as laughter, complaint, and hatred. All these passions act on the known thing in the manner of repelling or possibly destroying it. Although they are similar actions, they do not help each other on the scene where they actually act. Because they act on the known thing in each manner aggressively, a fight occurs between them. This is the second aspect of the fight of the forces in the mechanism of knowledge.

That being so, we must ask of the second aspect: what is the fight of the forces like? How do passions in the state of fight produce knowledge? According to Foucault, the answer lies not in the reconciliation of passions as in Spinoza, but on the contrary in the “compromise”⁶⁸ between the passions. It is not that passions, in a sequel of reciprocal fight, unify under a definitive reconciliation and, in this way, produce knowledge. It is that passions, instead of converging on definitive peace, continue to fight ceaselessly and without limit. The reason knowledge is produced is that the passions “are in the state of war, in a momentary stabilization of that state of war.”⁶⁹ Moreover, Foucault says the following: “knowledge is simply the result of the interplay, the confrontation, the junction, the fight and the compromise between the instincts. Something is produced because the instincts encounter, beat one another and at the end of their battle finally reach to a compromise. That something is knowledge.”⁷⁰

From this second aspect of the fight of forces—the fight between the passions—a necessary consequence arises: knowledge itself is never a human instinct. In other words, knowledge is not previously inscribed on human nature; the continuous development of human nature or the natural flowering of instincts and passions does not produce it. Instincts or passions in themselves do not contain any elements of knowledge; however, as those instincts or those passions fight with each other, knowledge is produced as an accidental effect or as an unintended result. In this regard, recalling an impressive phrase by Nietzsche, Foucault says: knowledge is “like ‘a spark between two swords’, but which is not made of the same iron.”⁷¹ Foucault concludes:

Knowledge doesn’t really form part of human nature. It is fight, combat, the result of the combat, and it is consequently risk and chance that give rise to knowledge. Knowledge is not instinctive, it is counter-instinctive; in the same way as it is not natural, it is counter-natural.⁷²

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 545.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 549.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 545.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

This is why knowledge itself is not an instinct. Indeed, one can say that knowledge is produced from the instincts; however, it is not produced from the interior program of the instincts, but from the exterior accidental fight of the instincts. In short, there is no natural continuity between knowledge and the instincts, but a fundamental rupture.

As shown above, in the mechanism of knowledge explored in Foucault's reading of Nietzsche there are two aspects regarding the fight of forces: the fight between the knowing human and the known thing, and the fight inside of the knowing human. The fact that knowledge is produced suggests that the knowing human, first of all, holds aggressive passions against the known thing, and that those passions subsequently fight each other and arrive at a compromise. Knowledge is produced as an effect of those two sorts of fights between forces. After re-analyzing knowledge from the perspective of the fight of the forces, Foucault finally calls knowledge (*connaissance*) knowledge (*savoir*).⁷³ This knowledge (*savoir*) basically corresponds to the concept of knowledge (*savoir*) in Foucault himself. In addition, he calls the fight of the forces "will to knowledge" (*volonté de savoir*).⁷⁴

Now, we have explained by what mechanism knowledge operates in Foucault's reading of Nietzsche, but the question remains: what sort of significance does the Nietzschean perspective on knowledge have in the history of Western philosophy? In this regard, Foucault focuses, once more, on two ruptures proper to Nietzsche's theory of knowledge: (1) the fundamental rupture between knowledge and the known thing, and (2) the fundamental rupture between knowledge and the instincts. He remembers, be it reticently, two significant moments in the history of philosophy, which correspond to those two ruptures.

The first significant moment is *the death of God*. The rupture corresponding to this is the fundamental rupture between knowledge and the known thing. Generally speaking, in the tradition of Western philosophy, knowledge and the known thing have had to be placed in a relation of natural continuity and, according to Foucault, it is precisely God that guaranteed that natural continuity. Foucault says: "of course, from Descartes, to go back no further than that, and still even in Kant, God is the principle that ensures that there is a harmony between knowledge and the things to be known. To demonstrate that knowledge was really based in

⁷³ Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir*, 205.

⁷⁴ According to Foucault, the "will to knowledge" is none other than the "instinct, passion, inquisitive fury, cruel refinement, malice" which exist behind knowledge. (Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," 155) When this will to knowledge relates not to simple knowledge but to the special form of knowledge, namely truth, one can call it the "will to truth." What is truth? It is, according to Foucault, what is produced by the "game of a first and always renewed falsification which poses the distinction of true and of false." (Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir*, 220) In consequence, truth is neither natural and essential for the human, nor universal and transhistorical for the human. This is because the distinction of true or false, itself, is falsified historically. As far as the distinction itself is a historical falsification, true and false distributed by that distinction are none other than simple effects of that falsification; therefore, they can be neither universal and transhistorical for the human, nor natural and essential for the human. According to Foucault, the point where such a falsification of the distinction of true or false was effected for the first time was in Plato. Foucault says: "between Hesiod and Plato a certain division was established, separating true discourse and false discourse." (Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 17) Since then, the falsification of the distinction of true or false continued to be renewed traditionally. Concerning the analysis of Foucault's concept of "will to truth," Han's study cited above is fertile.

the things of the world, Descartes had to affirm the existence of God."⁷⁵ However, Nietzsche's thoughts concerning knowledge clarifies that the known thing is placed not in a relation of natural continuity, but in the state of fundamental rupture. It follows that "the existence of God at the center of the system of knowledge is no longer indispensable."⁷⁶ This is why the fundamental rupture between knowledge and the known thing signifies the death of God.

The second significant moment is *the death of man*. This corresponds to the other rupture, namely the fundamental rupture between knowledge and the instincts. Generally in the tradition of Western philosophy, knowledge and the instincts have been placed in a relation of natural continuity. As result, the subject could be seen to exist "in his unity and his sovereignty."⁷⁷ In this respect, Foucault says the following: "going back to the philosophical tradition starting from Descartes, to go no further than that, one sees that the unity of the human subject is ensured by the continuity running from desire to knowledge, from the instincts to knowledge, from the body to truth."⁷⁸ Nietzsche's theory of knowledge makes it clear that knowledge and the instincts are not placed in a relation of natural continuity, but in the state of fundamental rupture. It follows that the human subject can no longer exist "in his unity and his sovereignty." Foucault says that now "we can admit subjects, or we can admit that the subject does not exist."⁷⁹ This is why the fundamental rupture between knowledge and the instincts signifies the death of man.

Thus, according to Foucault, in Nietzsche's theory of knowledge, there are two significant moments in the history of philosophy: the death of God and the death of man. These two significant moments correspond to the two great ruptures in the theory of knowledge, and these two ruptures are none other than the consequence of recognizing the perpetual fight of the forces behind knowledge.

Conclusion

Foucault recognizes the uniqueness of Nietzsche's writings on power. He thinks that this perspective is organized around the notion of force. Forces, as a fundamental element of the world, fill the world, and exist in a perpetual state of fight. As result, diverse relationships of forces, as event, are established everywhere. These events are inscribed on the existing body, namely the existing ensemble of the relationships of forces. Thereby, this ensemble of relationships of forces, through its own plasticity, lets its configuration change. The soul is none other than the instrument, which is invented to control the entangled game of forces that comprise events. Thus, in the world, there is an immense and complex ensemble of relationships of forces that become formed by way of the paradoxical necessity of chance, which develops a history of forces. It is this dynamism of force that can be called the ontology of force as understood in Foucault's works under review here. This ontology of force or the fierce fight of the forces is not something that the human activity of knowledge can dissolve or reconcile by love of truth or enjoyment of knowledge. On the contrary, the human activity of knowledge must

⁷⁵ Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," 547.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

be reinterpreted, from the perspective of fights of forces, as an instrument that contributes to the fight. Behind knowledge there are the knowing human's bad passions, which on the one hand fight against the known thing, and on the other hand fight between each other. It is an accidental effect of that double fight that knowledge appears. In this mechanism of knowledge, there is a rupture between knowledge and the known thing, which leads to the death of God. There is also a rupture between knowledge and the instincts, which leads to the death of man. It is these two deaths that emerge as the philosophical consequences of the idea that knowledge is founded on the ontology of force. We can say that this is Nietzsche's view of power that Foucault latently understood.

Thereafter, by inheriting Nietzsche's view, Foucault develops his own distinct theory of power⁸⁰. In fact, by relying upon Nietzsche's notion of "force" (*force, Kraft*), he would call the relationship between one force and another force "power" (*pouvoir, Macht*). And he would finally take up the dualism of force and knowledge (or strictly speaking, of human intellectual activities including knowledge) in Nietzsche's view of power, as the dualism of power and knowledge. However, there are nevertheless some differences between Nietzsche (interpreted by Foucault) and Foucault himself. In Nietzsche, it is fundamentally important that the fight of the forces makes knowledge possible, and therefore the level of force is given primordial status. By contrast, Foucault would emphasize not only that power makes knowledge possible, but also that, on the contrary, knowledge makes power possible, too; therefore, the levels of power and knowledge would be mutually placed in a tense relationship. Consequently, now that Nietzsche's view of power interpreted by Foucault has been clarified, we need to re-examine Foucault's thoughts on power in relation to it.

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⁸⁰ Cf. Michel Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 1997), 13-18, 25-30.