

## ARTICLE

### **Foucault and Deleuze: Making a Difference with Nietzsche**

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**ABSTRACT:** Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze are regarded as French “Nietzscheans” *par excellence*. By drawing attention to the articulation of “difference” in contemporary thought, this paper attempts to go beyond the label ‘Nietzschean’ in an effort to discern two distinct philosophical trajectories inspired by Nietzsche. I suggest that Deleuze reads Nietzsche as an empiricist whose philosophy of nature critically undermines representational modes of thought from Plato to Hegel and beyond. Difference is therefore given in itself. Foucault, on the other hand, reads Nietzsche primarily as a historian of culture, whose radical reflection on language pushes philosophy into new interpretative forms of analysis that seriously confronts the role of political power in the production of truth. Difference is thus *invented* and only known within the contours of these fabrications. While no judgement is made about the accuracy or otherwise of their respective interpretations of Nietzsche, this paper implicitly asks whether a Nietzschean genealogical ethos can inform those political struggles today for which the meaning of difference is contested.

**Keywords:** Foucault, Deleuze, Nietzsche, Difference, Power, Force

“It was Nietzsche who specified the power relation  
as the general focus, shall we say, of philosophical discourse—  
whereas for Marx it was the production relation.  
Nietzsche is the philosopher of power,  
a philosopher who managed to think of power  
without having to confine himself  
within a political theory in order to do so.”  
Foucault.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault [1975], “Entretien sur la prison: le livre et sa méthode,” *Dits et écrits*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard Quarto, 2001), vol. I. 1954-1975: 1621, hereafter cited in footnotes as *DE*; trans. Colin Gordon under the title “Prison Talk,” in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 53.

“It was Nietzsche who extricated me from [the French university system].  
 Because you just can’t deal with him in the same sort of way.  
 He gets up to all sorts of things behind *your* back.  
 He gives you a perverse taste—certainly something neither  
 Marx nor Freud ever gave anyone—for saying simple things in your own way,  
 in affects, intensities, experiences, experiments.”  
 Deleuze.<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

In his fine study of Nietzsche in France from 1872-1972, Douglas Smith draws attention to a letter of 1882, where Nietzsche described himself as “more a battlefield than a human being.”<sup>3</sup> Little did he know how posthumously robust the shrapnel would prove to be—thinking himself lucky in 1887 at having scored “two readers” in Europe (but “*such*” readers as Hyppolyte Taine in Paris and Jacob Burckhardt in Basel).<sup>4</sup> Today, in addition to countless “readers,” Nietzsche *Rezeptionsgeschichte* has become an international field of research in its own right. France occupies a singular position in these debates,<sup>5</sup> perhaps because this country featured prominently in Nietzsche’s life and works itself: “I believe only in French culture.”<sup>6</sup> Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, “Nietzscheans” *par excellence*, were therefore beneficiaries of a strong tradition of French-language commentary going back to the nineteenth century,<sup>7</sup> and both were active participants in a general philosophical rehabilitation of Nietzsche in the

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<sup>2</sup> See Gilles Deleuze [1973], “Letter to a Harsh Critic,” in *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 6. Deleuze wrote a major study, *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris: PUF, 1962), trans. Hugh Tomlinson under the title *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (London: Athlone Press, 1983), as well as a pocket introductory text with a glossary of Nietzschean “characters” and excerpts from his writings: Deleuze, *Nietzsche* (Paris: PUF, 1965).

<sup>3</sup> Douglas Smith, *Transvaluations: Nietzsche in France, 1872-1972* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 34.

<sup>4</sup> Nietzsche [1887], “(Letter 952) Brief an Jacob Burckhardt,” 14<sup>th</sup> November 1887, [www.nietzschesource.org](http://www.nietzschesource.org) ed. Paulo D’Iorio.

<sup>5</sup> Along with Smith, *Transvaluations*, see Jacques Le Rider, *Nietzsche en France: De la fin du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle au temps présent* (Paris: PUF, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche [1888], *Ecce Homo*, “Warum ich so klug bin,” § 3 <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/EH-Klug-3>

<sup>7</sup> The bibliography in Genéviève Bianquis, *Nietzsche en France: L’influence de Nietzsche sur la pensée française* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1929) gives an indication of Nietzsche’s popularity in France even in the early twentieth century. The highlight of this period is Henri Lichtenberger, *La philosophie de Nietzsche* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1898). See Hans Manfred Bock, “Henri Lichtenberger, père fondateur de la germanistique française et médiateur entre la France et l’Allemagne,” *Histoire des études germaniques en France (1900-1970)*, ed. Michel Espagne and Michael Werner (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1994), 155-69. Significant amongst French readings in the 1920s and 1930s were Henri Lefebvre’s interesting anti-fascist refusal to oppose Nietzsche and Marx (« le surhumaine de Nietzsche, c’est l’humaine »), and the powerful de-Nazification of Nietzsche associated with Georges Bataille and Pierre Klossowski: « fascisme et nietzschéisme s’excluent, s’excluent même avec violence ». See Michel Trébitsch, “Préface: Henri Lefebvre et le « Don Juan de la connaissance »” in Lefebvre, *Frédéric Nietzsche* (Paris: Éditions Syllepse, 2003), 5-19; Smith, *Transvaluations*, 68-101; Le Rider, *Nietzsche en France*, 153-80.

1960s—aptly symbolized by a French rather than German conference: the *Colloque de Royaumont* in July 1964.<sup>8</sup>

What does the label ‘Nietzschean’ really mean though? Is it useful or misleading for understanding the respective trajectories of Foucault and Deleuze?<sup>9</sup> I have argued elsewhere that Foucault’s work is too readily conflated with that of Deleuze, to the detriment of a non-Freudian account of sexed reproduction and pleasure inaugurated in the text *La volonté de savoir* of 1976.<sup>10</sup> However, the issue of Nietzscheanism was left unexplored. In this paper, I would like to return to the common ground of the 1960s in an attempt to identify two distinct philosophical approaches inspired by Nietzsche, drawing attention to the nebulous concept of *difference* as a mark of that divergence. My aim is to open a debate rather than provide a definitive argument. As noted by Todd May in his valuable excursus, French thought has tended to “converge” on the problem of difference and the question of how to “valorize” it adequately.<sup>11</sup> This being said, certain themes relating to difference, such as power, remain obscure; and while the impossibility of reconciling Deleuze and Derrida is often acknowledged,<sup>12</sup> it would seem that this is only the beginning. For neither Deleuze nor Foucault supported, for example, the quasi-psychoanalytic valorisation of “*différance*” and the concomitant “phallogocentrism” central to Derrida and certain feminisms, much less the idea that this system is somehow constitutive of philosophical thought itself. Moreover, given that “difference” did not

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<sup>8</sup> Nietzsche: *Colloque de Royaumont, 4-8 July 1964* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967).

<sup>9</sup> Foremost in analyses of Nietzsche’s legacy in French poststructuralism is Alan D. Schrift, *Nietzsche’s French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995); Schrift, *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 1990), esp. 77-119; and Schrift, “Foucault and Derrida on Nietzsche and the End(s) of Man,” in *Exceedingly Nietzsche: Aspects of Contemporary Nietzsche Interpretation*, ed. David Farrell Krell & David Wood (London and New York: Routledge, 1988): 131-49. See also Smith, *Transvaluations*, 140-184; Paul Patton, “Activism, Philosophy and Actuality in Deleuze and Foucault,” *Deleuze Studies*, 4 (supplement) (2010): 84-103; Petra Perry, “Deleuze’s Nietzsche,” *boundary 2*, 20:1 (Spring, 1993): 174-191; Vincent P. Pecora, “Deleuze’s Nietzsche and Post-Structuralist Thought,” *SubStance*, 14:3 (1986): 34-50; Ronald Bogue, Chapter 1: “Deleuze’s Nietzsche: Thought, Will to Power, and Eternal Return,” in *Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 1989), 15-34; Keith Ansell-Pearson, “The Significance of Michel Foucault’s Reading of Nietzsche: Power, the Subject and Political Theory,” *Nietzsche-Studien*, 20 (1991): 267-83. Also valuable is the discussion of Deleuze in Daniel Breazeale, “The Hegel-Nietzsche Problem,” *Nietzsche-Studien*, 4 (1975): 146-164, esp. 153-62; and the review of Deleuze by Jean Wahl, “Nietzsche et la philosophie,” *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 68:3 (July-Sept., 1963): 352-79.

<sup>10</sup> Grace, “*Faux Amis*: Foucault and Deleuze on Sexuality and Desire,” *Critical Inquiry*, 36:1 (Autumn, 2009): 52-75.

<sup>11</sup> See May, *Reconsidering Difference: Nancy, Derrida, Levinas and Deleuze* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 2.

<sup>12</sup> May, *Reconsidering Difference*, 15; Schrift, *Nietzsche’s French Legacy*, 62-63; and Daniel W. Smith, “Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence: Two Directions in Recent French Thought,” *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 271-286.

have any privileged status in Nietzsche's work, yet is vital to Deleuze's appropriation of him,<sup>13</sup> there remains much scope for analysing its centrality in poststructuralist thought.<sup>14</sup>

With these difficulties in mind, I suggest that Deleuze reads Nietzsche as an empiricist whose philosophy of nature and the body can be linked both to Spinoza and a pre-Oedipal Freud in an effort to challenge representational modes of thought, foremost the Hegelian dialectic. Through Nietzsche, Deleuze promotes an experimental style of transcendental empiricism he later called "nomadic",<sup>15</sup> a method suspicious of all historicism and hermeneutic analysis. Deleuze considered philosophical thought to be pure creation, quite distinct from knowledge generated in other disciplines. He therefore plays down Nietzsche's extra-philosophical preoccupations (philology, for example) and would disagree with one Nietzschean statement at least: that the natural role of the philosopher is to "keep company" with language.<sup>16</sup> The result is difference *in itself*. Moreover, as difference in Deleuze is shaped by *forces* connecting the physical, metaphysical, and ethical worlds, there is no need to travel beyond the philosophical universe and the sunny question: what am I?

Nietzsche's *power*, by contrast, especially in Foucault's hands, suggests extra-philosophical black holes of a political and ethical nature: who are *we*? While difference is not a central concern *per se* in Foucault, his genealogical analyses demand difference with *history*. This method distrusts empiricism because differences and their potentials are already saturated in truth from birth, the historical sources of which have to be tracked down through various *ethnographic* (not psychological) interpretative strategies. Overcoming Hegel did not mean forgetting history: Nietzsche promoted a new historicism in terms of "invention" rather than origins, and a concomitant style of philosophizing that enabled one to "diagnose" the present. In contrast to Deleuze, this method considers Nietzsche's "radical reflection" on language vital for elaborating a new analytics of truth that seriously confronts the role of power embedded within the production of knowledge. While no judgement is put forward about the "correct" interpretation of Nietzsche, an implicit question informs this paper: through which approach can a Nietzschean genealogical ethos continue to inform political struggles, where the meaning of difference is contested, and often through concepts—sex, race, class and so forth—that originate *not* in philosophy, but in sciences such as medicine.

<sup>13</sup> See the discussion in Pecora, "Deleuze's Nietzsche," 39; and the very interesting discussions of Deleuze's "difference" in Giuseppe Bianco, "Jean Hyppolite et Ferdinand Alquié," *Aux sources de la pensée Gilles Deleuze 1*, ed Stéfan Leclercq (Sils Maria: Vrin, 2005), 91-101, esp. 98-9; and Catharine Malabou, "The Eternal Return and the Phantom of Difference," *Parrhesia*, 10 (2010): 21-29.

<sup>14</sup> An early challenge to the sexualization of "difference" in Derrida is found in Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality and the Field of Vision* (London: Verso, 1986), 17-23. See also Juliana De Nooy, *Derrida, Kristeva, and the dividing line: an articulation of two theories of difference* (New York: Garland, 1998). For a reading that presents Foucault as indebted to Deleuze's account of difference, see Judith Revel, "Foucault lecteur de Deleuze: de l'écart à la différence," *Critique*, 52:591/592 (August-September, 1996): 727-35.

<sup>15</sup> Deleuze, "Pensée nomade," *L'Île Déserte: Textes et entretiens 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> According to Nietzsche: "language is the most common thing; whoever keeps its company must be a philosopher." Cited and trans. Breazeale, "The Word, the World, and Nietzsche," *The Philosophical Forum*, VI: 2-3 (1975): 301.

## French Difference

Before looking at the respective interpretations of Nietzsche, a few comments relating to the French context may be useful. Vincent Descombes's book *Le Même et l'autre* remains indispensable if not unsurpassed for situating major players of post-war French philosophy, despite a dubious account of Foucault as a "nihilist."<sup>17</sup> He presents Foucault and Deleuze emerging in the 1960s from a university system dominated by Hegel and Hegelian understandings of philosophical issues.<sup>18</sup> But neither Foucault nor Deleuze embraced just any 'anti-Hegelianism'. Althusserian structural Marxism was an obvious no-go area. By presenting an analysis of value in terms of labour, Marxism—in Foucault's view—showed "no real discontinuity" with nineteenth-century economics.<sup>19</sup> Likewise for Deleuze, it was Nietzsche more so than Marx or Freud who avoided codification by dominant forces.<sup>20</sup>

Another approach to be rejected was semiotics, along with the various Marx-Freud syntheses it engendered. Nietzsche was, as Alan Schrift has shown well, crucial to that generation's awareness that the "sign" should be subordinated the more important "activity of interpretation."<sup>21</sup> For Nietzsche, "truth" itself is little more than "a mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms."<sup>22</sup> While Derrida used this insight to develop a radical critique of phenomenology in terms of "*différance*" or "interpretation as infinite play;"<sup>23</sup> and Deleuze's transcendental empiricism strove to surpass all forms of textual analysis, hermeneutics, and semiotics; in the original preface to *History of Madness*, Foucault moved towards a historical-interpretative or ethnographic method based on Nietzsche. This would subsequently infuse all his work, notwithstanding changes in terminology and apparent abrupt shifts.<sup>24</sup>

Briefly, for the majority of historians, the object of knowledge was an external sign that pre-existed the investigation. So, one assumed that madness "was content to sit locked up in its immutable identity, waiting for psychiatry to perfect its art, before it emerged blinking

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<sup>17</sup> Vincent Descombes, *Le Même et l'autre: Quarante-cinq ans de philosophie française 1933-1978* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979), pp. 131-139; trans. L. Scott-Fox and J. M. Harding under the title *Modern French Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

<sup>18</sup> See the respective quotes from Deleuze, Foucault, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty cited in Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> See Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith under the title *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (London: Tavistock, 1970), 261.

<sup>20</sup> Deleuze, "Pensée nomade," 352. And it is interesting that Deleuze was one of the very few French intellectuals during this period to have evaded the two institutional rites of passage marking a true leftist: allegiance to Marx through membership of the PCF and loyalty to Freud by submitting to an interminable "analysis." See Deleuze, "Je me souviens" (with Didier Eribon), *Le Nouvel Observateur*, n°1619 (16-22 November, 1995): 51.

<sup>21</sup> Schrift, *Nietzsche*, 78. See also Chapter 5, "Language, Metaphor, Rhetoric," *Nietzsche*, 123-143.

<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche [1873], "Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne," § 1, [www.nietzschesource.org](http://www.nietzschesource.org) ed. Paulo D'Iorio.

<sup>23</sup> See Schrift, *Nietzsche*, 95-119; Schrift, *Nietzsche's French Legacy*, 9-32; Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, 136-52.

<sup>24</sup> Foucault [1960/61], "Préface," *DE*, I. 1954-1975: 187-195; Foucault, *History of Madness*, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa, ed. Jean Khalfa (London: Routledge, 2006), xxvii-xxxvi.

from the shadows into the blinding light of truth.”<sup>25</sup> What Foucault argues instead, is that the understanding of madness was intimately linked to the practice of confinement in Western civilization—an “invention” both economic and moral, which arose quite suddenly in the seventeenth century, and was “truly European in its dimensions.”<sup>26</sup> Confinement was then “re-structured” at the close of the eighteenth century to become the forerunner of today’s “asylum.”<sup>27</sup> Foucauldian analysis therefore proceeds from the hypothesis that there is an ethnographic network of multiple differences to be *interpreted*. As we will try to explicate in more detail later, this is an ontology of *culture*, not of *being*. Importantly, Foucault does not accept that philosophy has any special insight into the constitution of this culture of multiple differences, nor a privileged status in relation to other systems of knowledge: “The history of philosophy should not be confused with an archaeology of thought.”<sup>28</sup> He dismissed Derrida’s style of analysis that hunts down textual “faults” against philosophy—something between “Freudian slip and Christian sin”—supposedly unmasking the latent face of any cultural artefact, and therefore the wider culture as well.<sup>29</sup> According to Nietzsche, truth is “a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people.”<sup>30</sup> The hermeneutic circle in Foucault’s hands therefore spirals ever *outwards* from the text to capture those enhancements, embellishments, and transpositions that are discursive events in their own right, and thus cannot be reduced to primary texts, universal “signifiers,” or language conventions. The spiral does *not* converge inwards to the “true” psycho-biographical etchings behind the words.

A final non-Hegelian alternative in the French context of the 1950s and 1960s that we will mention, because both Foucault and Deleuze negotiated it only to sidestep it again, was the Heideggerian conception of difference as “ontological difference.” In contrast to existential and psychoanalytic theory during these years, Heidegger’s ontological difference strove, unsuccessfully of course,<sup>31</sup> to be immune to differential categories such as class, race, or sex.<sup>32</sup> Heidegger’s role in post-war French philosophy, let alone his *work*, cannot be addressed properly here; suffice it for our purposes that the publication in 1961 of his lectures on Nie-

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<sup>25</sup> Foucault, *History of Madness*, 79.

<sup>26</sup> Foucault, *History of Madness*, 52-55.

<sup>27</sup> Foucault, *History of Madness*, 463-511.

<sup>28</sup> Foucault, “Nietzsche, Freud, Marx,” *DE I*, 603.

<sup>29</sup> Foucault [1972], “Appendix III: Reply to Derrida,” *History of Madness*, 576.

<sup>30</sup> Nietzsche, cited and trans. Schrift, *Nietzsche*, 127.

<sup>31</sup> Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933-1935*; Yale University Press, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> According to Heidegger: “The particular neutrality of the term ‘Dasein’ is essential, because the interpretation of this being must be carried out prior to every factual concretion. This neutrality also indicates that Dasein is neither of the two sexes.” See Heidegger [1978], *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 136. In Derrida’s view, this may be the one and only instance where Heidegger acknowledges male-female differences. See Derrida, “*Geschlecht I: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference*,” trans. Ruben Bevezdivin and Elizabeth Rottenberg, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other* vol II, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1988), 10.

tzsche from the 1930s must have ignited intense debate in France.<sup>33</sup> Foucault mentioned “tonnes” of notes generated by the “shock” of Heidegger’s presentation;<sup>34</sup> and many have attempted to rescue Nietzsche from Heidegger’s straightjacketing of him as the “last metaphysician.”<sup>35</sup> Indeed, Heidegger is one of the few contemporary philosophers, if not the only one, with whom Deleuze vigorously and explicitly takes issue in *Nietzsche et la philosophie*.<sup>36</sup> The Heideggerian theme that “we no longer think” comes straight from the pages of Nietzsche, Deleuze reminds us.<sup>37</sup>

In summing up the colloquium at *Royaumont* in 1964, Deleuze reiterated that it was concepts “hardly introduced” by Nietzsche that were actually his “most fundamental”—the Eternal Return and the Will to Power, two themes important to Heidegger’s interpretation also.<sup>38</sup> In addition, Deleuze like Heidegger was keen to retrieve Nietzsche from philosophical disqualification, placing him as canonically vital. But for Deleuze, Nietzsche exceeds the modern critical tradition because he supplies what was lacking in Kant—namely, a genuine critique of truth and of morality—through the double intervention of “interpretation” and “evaluation”: the first determines the layers and masks attending any “thing-in-itself” in order to expose their fragmentary and partial nature; the second conducts a genealogical determination of their place in a hierarchical order of values.<sup>39</sup> It is precisely the counter-philosophy of Nietzsche through such gifts as the aphorism and the poem that radically restores pre-Socratic force, offering the possibility that thought and life could be reunited again in a future philosophy.<sup>40</sup> To look below the heights of German idealism personified by Kant and Hegel, Nietzsche becomes in Deleuze’s hands a foremost exponent of empiricism in the lineage of Lucretius and Spinoza.<sup>41</sup> It is therefore impossible to speak of Being in *general*, when the becoming of empirical, singular entities is the main concern.

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<sup>33</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (1961), trans. with notes David Farrell Krell (San Francisco, 1979-1987), 4 vols. See Smith, *Transvaluations*, 187-8; Schrift, *Neitzsche*, 113-119; Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, “Obliteration,” trans. Thomas Trezise, *The Subject of Philosophy*, ed. Trezise (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 58.

<sup>34</sup> Foucault [1984], “Le retour de la morale,” *DE II*, 1522.

<sup>35</sup> In the view of Schrift, who gives his own interesting “ludic” alternative, while Heidegger’s account is certainly essential and determining, his metaphysical reductionism fits “neither with the spirit or the letter of Nietzsche’s philosophical project,” and fails to attend to “the genealogical character of Nietzsche’s remarks.” See Schrift, *Nietzsche*, 54. For an alternative reading that questions the “anti-Heideggerian” approaches to Nietzsche, see Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Subject of Philosophy*, 57-98.

<sup>36</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 194, 211, note 1. See also Deleuze, “Note on Heidegger’s Philosophy of Difference,” in *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone Press, 1994), 64-6.

<sup>37</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and philosophy*, 123.

<sup>38</sup> Deleuze, “Conclusions sur la volonté de puissance et l’éternel retour,” *L’Île Déserte: Textes et entretiens 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002): 164.

<sup>39</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and philosophy*, 91-99; Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, 17.

<sup>40</sup> “If Nietzsche does not belong to philosophy, it’s perhaps that he is the first to conceive of another type of discourse as a counter-philosophy.” See Deleuze, “Pensée nomade,” *L’Île déserte*, 361; Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, 17-23, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 75, 106-108.

<sup>41</sup> Deleuze [1968], “Sur Nietzsche et l’image de la pensée,” *L’Île déserte*, 191.

### Deleuze: Nietzsche and Difference

If we currently take a Nietzschean trend in French thought for granted, this is due—in no small measure—to Deleuze. Although the biographical details are sketchy, it appears that Deleuze was introduced to Nietzsche's writings through extra-university channels, particularly social engagement with Pierre Klossowski in the 1950s.<sup>42</sup> Another major influence from the same social circle was the existentialist philosopher Jean Wahl. While Sartre provided a "breath of fresh air" from the backyard, in stark contrast to Jean Hyppolyte's rendition of Hegel and Ferdinand Alquié's teaching of Descartes,<sup>43</sup> it was Wahl "who led the reaction against the dialectic when Hegel was in full vogue in the university."<sup>44</sup> From as early as the 1920s, in fact, Wahl had begun an engagement with Nietzsche's thought that would endure for decades,<sup>45</sup> while his introduction of Anglo-American philosophers relatively unknown in France provided a "profound meditation" on the "poetic, free and wild nature" of empiricism for Deleuze.<sup>46</sup> From here, Deleuze flourished: he stressed that empiricism is not a valorisation of the particular at the expense of the universal, nor a "reaction against concepts," much less "an appeal to lived experience"; it was actually "the most insane creation of concepts ever seen or heard."<sup>47</sup> While the dialectic is *work*, empiricism is "joy" (*jouissance*).<sup>48</sup>

It required a degree of "work", however, to promote Nietzsche as an empiricist. Contemporary thought had used his "fulgurations" as merely a kind of spice thrown into, either Christian spiritualism, Hegelianism, or phenomenology—or perhaps all of the above simultaneously. Most importantly, Deleuze set his face against a compromise between Nietzsche and Hegel, because Nietzsche's philosophy is "absolutely anti-dialectical"<sup>49</sup> The pleasure to know oneself as different; the "bliss" (*jouissance*) of difference, is precisely the "new, aggressive and lofty conceptual element" that empiricism introduces into modern philosophy, channelled largely through the writings of Nietzsche.<sup>50</sup> In this conception of difference, one need not denigrate or negate what is other in order to assert oneself; no detour through the "not-I" to arrive

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<sup>42</sup> François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives*, trans. Deborah Glassman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 92. On Klossowski, see Daniel Smith, "Translator's Preface," in Pierre Klossowski [1969], *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (London: Althone, 1997), vii-xiii; see also D. Smith, *Transvaluations*, 150-64.

<sup>43</sup> Deleuze and Claire Parnet [1977], *Dialogues*, trans Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 12.

<sup>44</sup> Deleuze [1972], cited in Dosse, *Intersecting Lives*, 110.

<sup>45</sup> Wahl contributed to the special edition of Bataille's *Acéphale* devoted to Nietzsche in 1936-37; gave courses on Nietzsche in the late 1950s; was honorary president of the *Société française d'études nietzschéennes* (founded in 1946) from 1963 to 1965; wrote an extensive review of Deleuze's book in 1963, and presented a paper at *Royaumont* in 1964. See Wahl, "Ordre et désordre dans la pensée de Nietzsche," *Colloque de Royaumont*: 85-102; and Le Rider, *Nietzsche en France*, 183-187.

<sup>46</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968), trans. Paul Patton under the title *Difference and Repetition* (London: Athlone Press, 1968), 311, note 18.

<sup>47</sup> Deleuze, "Preface," *Difference and Repetition*, xx.

<sup>48</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 195.

<sup>50</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, 10; *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 9 (trans. modified).



at the “I” is necessary. Instead, one *differentiates* oneself. We will see later that Foucault’s attachment to “effective history” demands an alternative surmounting of Hegel to what we find here in Deleuze’s more strictly philosophical reading. Nevertheless, Foucault would agree that, in contrast to Hegelian contradiction, Nietzschean difference can never be equalized, overcome, reconciled, or erased. Power relations would lack power were it not for these differentials: “In so far as power relations are an unequal and relatively stable relation of forces, it is clear that this implies an above and a below, a difference of potentials.”<sup>51</sup> Nietzschean difference must therefore replace the opposition, contradiction and negativity of the Hegelian dialectic—that “ideology of *ressentiment*”<sup>52</sup>—all the while, in Deleuze’s case at least, respecting the parameters of philosophy and the general ontological proposition running “from Parmenides to Heidegger” that being is univocal.<sup>53</sup> This endeavour may have begun as early as 1954, and perhaps—triggered by the impact of reading Nietzsche—when Deleuze defied his principle philosophical *maître*, Hyppolite, with the question: “Can we create an ontology of difference that stops short of contradiction?”<sup>54</sup>

However, what Deleuze extracts from Nietzsche to create his account of difference is essentially a philosophy of *nature*, and this is the key to his methodological and philosophical divergence from Foucault. For Deleuze, *unlike* Foucault, there is a field of intensities more real than political or social identity, described as “*pre-individual singularities*” and “*impersonal individuations*,” which are actually the source of creativity and thought.<sup>55</sup> The “I and the self” must be overturned, only to be multiplied by further division: one becomes a “fish in water” and not the whole tank.<sup>56</sup> In relation to Nietzsche, Deleuze presents *forces* as the major ingredient of his empiricism. The concept of forces becomes the basis of an interconnected metaphysical and ethical world. While the ancient empiricists had conceived of mutable materiality in terms of atoms, Nietzsche placed instead mobile forces. Unlike atoms, forces are by necessity *related* and *differentiated*. It would be impossible to think of a force as *unrelated* to something else, just as multiple relations of forces are distinguished by means of quantity and quality. Under no circumstances should one reduce the quality of a force to its quantity; but in a decisive passage difficult to interpret, Deleuze states: “difference in quantity is the essence of force,” while “quality is nothing other than difference in quantity and corresponds to it each time forces enter into relation.”<sup>57</sup> In other words, quantitative differences are something fundamentally distinct from quantity itself, and this produces *qualitative* differences that can no longer be reduced one to another.

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<sup>51</sup> Foucault [1977], “Le jeu de Michel Foucault,” *DE* II: 298-329, 304, trans. Colin Gordon under the title “The Confession of the Flesh,” *Power/Knowledge*, 200.

<sup>52</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 10, 121.

<sup>53</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 35. He continues (36): “[There is] a single ‘voice’ of Being which includes all its modes ... the most varied, the most differentiated.”

<sup>54</sup> Deleuze [1954], “Jean Hyppolite, Logique et existence,” *L’Île déserte*, 23.

<sup>55</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 258-9.

<sup>56</sup> Deleuze [1968], “Sur Nietzsche et l’image de la pensée,” *L’Île déserte*, 192.

<sup>57</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 44.

Empirical reality for Deleuze therefore consists of a hierarchically ordered distribution or play of *forces*, each affirming its distinct singularity, its base or noble rank, only against another *force*—in a series or combination of forces, or a particular event where one force confronts another force. Essentially, there are two types of force, active and reactive, and these enter into relations by chance encounters and random thoughts: “throws of the dice”. In Nietzschean terms, this plurality of multiple and unpredictable forces becomes equivalent to what Arthur Schopenhauer conceived as unitary and monotonous *Wille* (will). Schopenhauer overlooked the fact that will, blind as it may be, always acts on another will. So there is not just one *Wille* acting indiscriminately, but a natural and social structure of “wills” here commanding, there obeying. In what could be described as the culmination of Nietzsche’s rebuttals of his teacher, Schopenhauer’s will is transformed into individualized “will to power.” Force is central to this overturning. As Nietzsche states: “The victorious concept ‘force’ [*Kraft*] by means of which our physicists have created God and the world, still needs to be completed: an inner will must be ascribed to it, which I designate as ‘will to power.’”<sup>58</sup> But will to power, Deleuze adds, is not what Nietzsche’s commentators have generally portrayed it to be. It is by no means a grasping for power in a simplistic political sense; nor does it strive for a goal or an object. Rather, will to power is the “internal element” of the production of forces, never separable from the quantities, qualities, determinations, and directions of forces. Also, it is through the will to power that “one force prevails over others and dominates and commands them.”<sup>59</sup> We could add for our purposes that the will to power is the affirmation of one’s *difference*.

Moreover, as the internal production of forces, the will to power supplies for Deleuze the raw material for a unique philosophical theory of the body. One could say that Sartre’s existentialism seriously lacked such a theory, even with de Beauvoir’s contributions, because, by drawing their inspiration exclusively from the dialectic of self and other, they ultimately subordinated flesh to consciousness. De Beauvoir’s notorious castigation of pregnancy as a hindrance to women’s full “humanity,” when in fact it is the legal and social institutions that have never recognised a pregnant citizen, is a good case in point.<sup>60</sup> Deleuze by contrast delves into a body *pre-vecu* and claims that it is made up of quantities of force “in mutual relations of tension.”<sup>61</sup> In a significant move, Deleuze links the Nietzschean body to both Spinoza and Freud in his quest to affirm a philosophical body: philosophers must realize as Spinoza did that consciousness is only a symptom of a deeper transformation at the physiological and molecular level. While we forever chatter on about consciousness and spirit, “we do not know what a body is capable of, what forces belong to it, or what they are preparing for.”<sup>62</sup> Deleuze enlists Freudian theory as further support, at least in its pre-Oedipal version, positing the unconscious as the site of *active* vital forces, and relegating consciousness to the role of housing *reactive* forces. This means that “will to power” not only equates to the manifestation of active

<sup>58</sup> Nietzsche cited in Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 49.

<sup>59</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 51.

<sup>60</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H.M. Parshley (London: Jonathon Cape, 1953), 512-13.

<sup>61</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 40.

<sup>62</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 39.

forces, it is also the triumph of *unconscious* active forces against a reactive consciousness bowing down to the external world and to morality. The end result is Freudianism: consciousness itself comes into being due to a reactive sense of inferiority in relation to a superior being;<sup>63</sup> but what directly resists and counters this reaction is the activity of, "...necessarily unconscious forces."<sup>64</sup> That is, while consciousness is confined within "representation" and memory, the unconscious produces movements, affects, and traces that can be immediately apprehended and positively affirmed as creative difference.<sup>65</sup> This is why Deleuze has central importance in the "turn to affect" identified by Ruth Leys,<sup>66</sup> a movement "Deleuzian" in spirit or law that could equally claim, from this perspective, "Nietzschean" heritage. But they produce results very much at odds with Foucauldian genealogy.

Before broaching Foucault's account, we should note that Nietzsche's philosophy of nature or the body, as Deleuze presents it, is not of course intended to compete with what goes under the heading of "physics" or even "medicine" amongst sciences today. Nietzsche's concepts are limited to the philosophical domain. Deleuze insisted that philosophy has a distinct method not reducible either to science or to art. Together with his long-standing collaborator Félix Guattari, Deleuze offered a deceptively simple definition of philosophy's principle objectives: "the art of forming, inventing and fabricating concepts."<sup>67</sup> Philosophy is therefore the discipline that *creates* concepts, as opposed to producing formulas (science) or generating works (of art). Nietzsche created several "immense and intense concepts" including "forces."<sup>68</sup> However, representational modes of thought stand in the way. Representation "poisons philosophy."<sup>69</sup> It also "crucifies difference" because the world of representation is characterised by its inability to conceive difference "*in itself*"; what is offered is the "identical," the "similar," the "analogous" or the "opposed."<sup>70</sup> Deleuze's broader determination to "reverse Platonism"<sup>71</sup> is therefore designed, amongst other things, to restore difference "*in itself*." Whether or not this equates to Nietzsche's own objectives when he too expressed a determination to "invert Platonism"<sup>72</sup> does not really matter. Empiricism for Deleuze epitomizes the possibility of overcoming the complacency of representational thought by tapping into the pure univocal intensity of the "the fractured I and the dissolved self" and thus affirming pure difference "*in itself*." Using the 1972 Nietzsche conference to baptise this type of thought "no-

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<sup>63</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 39.

<sup>64</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 41-42.

<sup>65</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 134.

<sup>66</sup> Ruth Leys, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," *Critical Inquiry*, 37:3 (2011): 434-472; see also the review article by Todd Cronan, "Radically private and pretty uncoded," *Radical Philosophy*, 172 (March-April, 2012): 51-53.

<sup>67</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991) trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell under the title *What is Philosophy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 2.

<sup>68</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, 65.

<sup>69</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 81.

<sup>70</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 138.

<sup>71</sup> Deleuze [1966], "Reversing Platonism (Simulacra)," trans. Heath Massey, in Leonard Lawlor, *Thinking Through French Philosophy: The Being of the Question* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 163-177; see also Smith, "Platonism," *Essays on Deleuze*, 3-26.

<sup>72</sup> Nietzsche [1870], NF 1870, Group 7, <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB>

madic,” meaning “a perpetual displacement of intensities,”<sup>73</sup> Deleuze had earlier gestured in *Difference and Repetition* to a form of differentiation within univocal being that was consistent with this. It did not entail “division” from above or elsewhere, but a form of differentiation, in which beings “distribute themselves in an open space.”<sup>74</sup> This is “an “errant” and even “delirious” distribution, “without property, enclosure or measure,” where things “are deployed across the entire extensity of a univocal and undistributed Being.”<sup>75</sup>

Allied with Guattari, Deleuze would later incorporate this nomadic body into an anti-Oedipal theory of desire “without organs.” By contrast, and to anticipate the next phase of our discussion, Foucault’s elaboration of genealogical difference derived from a Nietzschean philosophy of culture has no recall to such a “body” —with or without organs. For Foucault, the classical split between reason and madness, for example, does not reflect an original physiological “difference” projected *this* way rather than potentially affirmed *that* way. Similarly, Foucault would *not* agree with Deleuzians that the Freudian unconscious can be implicitly equated to a bundle of “active forces”; rather, it more resembles an archive, or series of archives (“cultural unconsciousnesses”<sup>76</sup>)—perhaps even the Internet before its time: “Knowledge [*savoir*] in our societies is now something so large and so complex that it has become truly the unconscious of our societies. We don’t know what we know; we don’t know what are the effects of that knowledge.”<sup>77</sup> Thus, one need not resort to the body in order to challenge the traditionally limited philosophical view of consciousness. Instead, one rejects naïve accounts of language, interpretation, and culture held dear by philosophers and others; the body becomes somewhat beside the point. It could even be argued that, in relation to the notion of the unconscious, Deleuze and Guattari are not so much anti-Oedipus as *ante-Oedipus*, resurrecting the Freud of the *Project for a scientific psychology* of 1895 and ignoring Freud’s own contestation with that psychobiological model in *The Interpretation of Dreams* of 1900.<sup>78</sup> Were we to join Deleuze in speculating endlessly about the body and its capacities, we lose sight of the question at the heart of the humanities: what is a *culture*? What are those “poetic and rhetorical” enhancements, embellishments, and transpositions that manifest as discursive events in any social formation?

Moreover, even if we accept—for now—that Nietzsche philosophically “created” the concept of forces, questionable in itself, it is nonetheless the case that substituting forces for atoms leaves the empirical *physical* realm, however one may conceive this philosophically, to generate metaphysical difference through “will to power,” with the consequent social arrangements of multiple wills as an after-effect of this primary affirmation: “Every relationship

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<sup>73</sup> Deleuze, “Pensée nomade,” *L’Île déserte*, 358.

<sup>74</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36. See Smith, “Univocity,” *Essays on Deleuze*, 27-42; Paul Patton, “Introduction,” *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 1-17.

<sup>75</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36.

<sup>76</sup> Foucault, *Order of Things*, 380.

<sup>77</sup> Foucault [1978], “La scène de la philosophie” *DE II*. 1976-1988, 594-5.

<sup>78</sup> As argued by André Green, to my knowledge the only Freudian psychoanalyst to respond to Deleuze’s and Guattari’s book. See Green, “A quoi ça sert?” *Le Monde* (28 April, 1972) [Dossier: *L’Anti-Cedipe*].

of forces constitutes a body—whether it is chemical, biological, social, or political.”<sup>79</sup> Deleuze thus creates a continuum between the physical and the social world that, at its most extreme or careless would render all twentieth-century anthropology and sociology redundant. Let us say that it evades the difficulties of language and interpretation. As such, it could be said to be opposed to a Foucauldian approach to difference.

### Foucault: Nietzsche and Difference

If Deleuze found the means to revitalise empiricism and develop in its wake a philosophical method based on the creation of concepts, Foucault discovered instead a form of cultural historicism that we, for the sake of convenience, call “genealogy,”<sup>80</sup> and which entailed a type of philosophical activity concerned with “diagnosing the present” on the basis of this historicism. In an interview from 1967, Foucault said that he was engaged in “an analysis of the cultural facts comprising our culture ... something like an ethnology of the culture to which we belong.”<sup>81</sup> He made it clear on another occasion that the meaning of “culture” should not be restricted to literary or artistic products, but should be understood in a broad sense, including, equally, “political institutions, forms of social life, prohibitions and various constraints.”<sup>82</sup> In the 1980s, Foucault called it an “ontology of the present,” or a “critical ontology of ourselves.”<sup>83</sup> It reflected an “attitude,” or “ethos,” where “the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them.”<sup>84</sup> As his career evolved, Foucault increasingly identified this “ethos” not as his own innovation, but as integral to a tradition of modern thought in the wake of the French Revolution, and symbolized by Kant’s *Was ist Aufklärung?* The tradition ran “from Hegel to the Frankfurt School, passing through Nietzsche, Max Weber and so on.”<sup>85</sup> In an interesting contrast to Deleuze’s deep-seated antagonism, therefore, Hegel rests quite comfortably—if silently—in Foucault’s Pantheon.

What did this approach owe to Nietzsche specifically? There are some peculiarities about Foucault’s position in French Nietzscheanism that should be noted in this regard. For example, Foucault does not seem to have been associated with the *Société française d’études nietzschéennes*, when, under Wahl’s influence in the 1960s, other philosophers were attracted into

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<sup>79</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 40.

<sup>80</sup> For helpful discussions of the difficulties associated with this term, see Martin Saar, “Genealogy and Subjectivity,” *European Journal of Philosophy*, 10:2 (2002): 231-45; and Saar, “Understanding Genealogy: History, Power, and the Self,” *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 2 (2008): 295-314; and Thomas Flynn, “Foucault’s Mapping of History,” *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 29-48.

<sup>81</sup> Foucault, “Who are you?” *Religion and Culture*, 91.

<sup>82</sup> Foucault [1967], “La philosophie structuraliste permet de diagnostiquer ce qu’est aujourd’hui,” *DE*, I. 1954-1975, 610.

<sup>83</sup> Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?,” trans. Catherine Porter, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, (New York, 1984), 50.

<sup>84</sup> Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” 50.

<sup>85</sup> Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982-1983*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell, English ed. Arnold I. Davidson (New York: Palgrave, 2010), 21.

its fold—not least Deleuze and Derrida.<sup>86</sup> There is also no evidence that Foucault attended the ten-day colloquium at *Cerisy-la-Salle* in July 1972,<sup>87</sup> the event Descombes and others call the “high-point” of “French-style” Nietzscheanism.<sup>88</sup> Foucault’s absence would indicate an interesting *distance* from “Nietzsche’s French moment,” and he expressed this ambivalence in an interview from 1975: while Nietzsche’s presence in contemporary thought was certainly “important,” he regretted that people now studied him “only to produce the same kind of commentaries that are written on Hegel or Mallarmé.”<sup>89</sup>

Thus, like Deleuze, Foucault encountered Nietzsche through writers external to the university system, specifically in Foucault’s case Maurice Blanchot and George Bataille<sup>90</sup>—individuals who embodied that quintessentially French possibility of “intellectual.” Looking back in 1967, Foucault said he found it difficult to specify the actual affect Nietzsche provoked in him, but that he measured it as “profound.”<sup>91</sup> Later, in an interview conducted in 1982, he embellished the narrative quite passionately, revealing that reading Nietzsche for the first time (in 1953) caused a “rupture” in his life so powerful that he “quit his job” as a psychologist and left France.<sup>92</sup> A pivotal episode during the same period was the serendipitous discovery that Georges Canguilhem, the most influential historian of science at the time, was no stranger to Nietzsche and “thoroughly receptive” to Foucault’s ideas for a Nietzschean-inspired thesis on the history of madness.<sup>93</sup> It opened up to historical analysis those enigmatic epistemological statements so shocking to Heidegger, to wit: “truth is the kind of error without which a certain

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<sup>86</sup> See Le Rider, *Nietzsche en France*, 185.

<sup>87</sup> Published as a collection called *Nietzsche aujourd’hui*. 2 Vols. (Paris: Union Générale d’Éditions, 1972).

<sup>88</sup> Vincent Descombes, “Nietzsche’s French Moment,” in *Why we are not Nietzscheans*, ed. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, trans. Robert de Loaiza (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997): 70-91, 72. Le Rider too (*Nietzsche en France*, 232) claims that the conference united the “heavy-weights” [ « le Gotha » ] of Nietzscheanism.

<sup>89</sup> Foucault, “Prison Talk,” *Power/Knowledge*, 53.

<sup>90</sup> Foucault, “Structuralisme et poststructuralisme” (with G. Raulet), *DE II 1976-1988*: 1250-1276; trans. Jeremy Harding, rep. under the title “Critical Theory/Intellectual History,” *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and other writings, 1977-1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York, 1988): 17-46.

<sup>91</sup> Foucault, “Qui êtes-vous, professeur Foucault?” *DE, I 1954-1975*, 641, trans. Lucille Cairns, “Who are you, Professor Foucault?” *Religion and Culture by Michel Foucault*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (Manchester, 1999), 87-103. In 1984, he expressed it in the following way: “When you open *The Gay Science* after you have been trained in the great, time-honored university traditions – Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Husserl – and you come across these rather strange, witty, graceful texts ... [you say to yourself] I won’t just ignore this.” See Foucault, “Critical Theory/Intellectual History,” 23.

<sup>92</sup> Foucault [1982], “Vérité, pouvoir et soi,” *DE, II 1976-1988*, 1599.

<sup>93</sup> Foucault, “Critical Theory/Intellectual History,” 23. Nietzsche had had a minor place in Canguilhem’s study of the *Normal and the Pathological* of 1943; and in the devastating critique of psychology from 1958 that still reverberates today, Canguilhem had cited approvingly Nietzsche’s contempt for psychology’s search for the “origins” of moral feelings. See Georges Canguilhem, “Qu’est-ce que la Psychologie?” *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 63:1 (Jan-March, 1958): 12-25, 22; rep. *Études d’histoire et de philosophie des sciences* (Paris: Vrin, 1970): 365-381.

kind of living being would not be possible.”<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, when directed at Marxism, the Nietzschean perspective showed that Marxists had carefully separated in theory what in practice could never be parted: the intimate machinations of truth and power. In other words, profits are not generated by ideology: “we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place.”<sup>95</sup>

Another major channel facilitating Foucault’s work was Jean Hyppolite. He had shown that Hegelian assumptions lingered even in the most avowedly anti-Hegelian analyses.<sup>96</sup> Above all, abandoning Hegel did *not* mean forgetting history; this is to misunderstand Nietzsche’s arguments in the second of his *Untimely Meditations*. It misplaces the emphasis of Nietzsche’s work, underestimating his struggle to develop genealogy as “*wickliche Histoire*” in contra-distinction to traditional history.<sup>97</sup> This type of analysis would show, for example, that the concept of liberty is “an invention of the ruling class.”<sup>98</sup> For when Nietzsche speaks of “invention” [*Erfindung*], it is always in opposition to “origin” [*Ursprung*]. Hatreds, difficulties, problems, struggles, and the desire for domination are masked by stories of pure “origins.” Yet, “[t]he most intense point of lives,” says Foucault, “the point where their energy is concentrated, is there where they clash with power, struggle with it, attempt to use its forces and to escape its traps.”<sup>99</sup> And if Nietzsche asserted elsewhere that philosophers were “congenitally incapable” of a historical perspective,<sup>100</sup> so, conversely, was history far too important to be left to historians, who collect their memorabilia and antiquities in total disregard for the *culture* and type of thought that produced them; they believe that values, feelings, and instincts are timeless—even immortal. Hence, there must exist a critical philosophical elaboration of history keenly attuned to signs of *supra*-historicism: nature, desire, and reason—not to neglect those that are more prevalent today: “the feminine,” “phallogentrism,” the “post-human”.

Although commentators and critics invariably characterise Foucault’s work in terms of abrupt shifts and “crises,” and Deleuze himself maintained such a view,<sup>101</sup> a Nietzschean approach to history as effective antidote to supra-historical universals is a constant and consistent feature. In the original preface to *History of Madness* from 1961, Foucault presaged that “the following study will only be the first ... in a long line of inquiry ... beneath the sun of the

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<sup>94</sup> Nietzsche, cited in Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 3: 32. Heidegger analyses this fragment at length in this third volume of his lectures.

<sup>95</sup> Foucault, “Two Lectures,” *Power/Knowledge*, 93.

<sup>96</sup> Foucault, *L’Ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 74-5.

<sup>97</sup> Foucault [1971], “Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire,” *DE* 1: 1005-1024; trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon under the title “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977): 139-64, 152-3.

<sup>98</sup> Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 142.

<sup>99</sup> Foucault [1977], “La vie des hommes infâmes,” *DE*, II: 257-253, 241, trans. Hurley et al under the title “Lives of Infamous Men,” in *Power*, ed. James D Faubion (New York: New Press, 2000), 162.

<sup>100</sup> “The lack of historical sense is the congenital defect of all philosophers,” Nietzsche, “Von den ersten und letzten Dingen,” § 2, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches I* <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/MA-2>

<sup>101</sup> According to Deleuze, Foucault’s thought “always developed through crises,” which were the very marks of its “creativity,” and “consistency.” See Deleuze, “Breaking things open,” *Negotiations*, 83.

great Nietzschean quest."<sup>102</sup> That is, fifteen years before *Discipline and Punish*, he described these future projects as the study of "historical ensemble[s]" of "notions, institutions, judicial and police measures, scientific concepts" to expose the way in which experiences are held "captive" by arbitrary distributions.<sup>103</sup> Accounts of other divisions besides madness would include a history of "sexual prohibitions" no less—"one day"—that would document the "continually shifting yet obstinate forms of repression" within "our culture itself."<sup>104</sup> When later in his career he returned to the subject that had first propelled him, Foucault challenged his audience to suppose that universals like "madness" do not exist.<sup>105</sup> The history of this *non*-universal experience would arise from a method "exactly the inverse" of the historicism practiced by traditional histories: beginning from the choice "that universals have no existence," it would go on to ask "what type of history one can create" from those "different events" and "various practices" that apparently organize themselves into something resembling madness or sexuality.<sup>106</sup>

This then is the backdrop to "difference" in Foucault's sense: it never exists outside of an ethnographic network of multiple differences. There is no such thing as difference "in itself." We arrive here the other side of the Deleuzian philosophy of nature, where Foucault is concerned to present an ontology of culture, not of *being*. In this view, it is not a question of interpreting and evaluating a singular entity or dualistic relation whether in micro or macro form, but an ethnographic field, without which these entities and relations would not exist. For Deleuze, difference is *immediate* and independent of all forms of representation directed from the outside world; history progresses on the strength of "deciding problems and affirming difference." But in Foucault's approach, differences carry the weight of wider ethnographic interpretations: "relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated, nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse."<sup>107</sup> One could even say that Foucauldian genealogy is hostile to empiricism, insofar as the "local" nature of political struggles are distorted as soon as they are confused with original sensory experiences. Empiricism can easily get carried away, forgetting the manner in which discontinuous and fragmentary knowledge is filtered by an "arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects."<sup>108</sup> The sense of burden imposed by competing interpretations is thereby lost; one grows accustomed to carrying the weight of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms. These become "firm, canonical, and obligatory," like wearing clothes instead of going nude. Struggles in Foucault's genealogical sense do not therefore proceed via an empirical reality to be asserted, but by championing certain marginalized *interpretations* of

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<sup>102</sup> Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxx.

<sup>103</sup> Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxxiii.

<sup>104</sup> Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxx.

<sup>105</sup> Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell, English ed. Arnold I. Davidson (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 5.

<sup>106</sup> Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 5.

<sup>107</sup> Foucault, "Two Lectures," *Power/Knowledge*, 93.

<sup>108</sup> Foucault, "Two Lectures," *Power/Knowledge*, 93.



this experience against the claims of a unitary body of theory that would seek to disqualify and invalidate them.

In short, Foucault's concerns imply a different relationship to "philosophy" itself, with an accompanying different understanding of what the philosophical mission entails. Let us conclude our exploration of Nietzschean difference by briefly contrasting Foucault and Deleuze in one final and important way. Let us imagine how the two men would answer the question: what is the genealogy of Nietzsche himself? What does Nietzsche owe to the nineteenth-century cultural context? Deleuze's answer, in a nutshell, would be: "nothing." As we have detailed, Nietzsche for Deleuze belongs wholeheartedly within the history of philosophy and its creation of concepts. Philosophy's distinctive qualities rest exclusively with the more fundamental division between *thought* and *knowledge*, and only the former can be counted as pure "creation." It was after all Nietzsche, says Deleuze and Guattari, who made us understand that "thought is creation, not will to truth."<sup>109</sup> From this perspective, the creation of a concept always occurs as the function of a philosophical problem. And essentially, Nietzsche's novelty was the introduction of a new conception of 'will'; Schopenhauer's "unitary" *Wille* became "multiple".<sup>110</sup>

For Foucault, however, thought is not so much creation as "the spark between two swords."<sup>111</sup> If one were to reflect on the genealogy of Nietzsche in Foucault's terms, it would, at the very least, involve interrogating his concepts within a wider ethnographic network of difference and their interpretations. While Foucault's comments on Nietzsche's place in philosophy often sound very much like Deleuze or Heidegger ("contemporary philosophy can begin thinking again" in the wake of the "death of man" heralded by Nietzsche's death of God<sup>112</sup>), Foucault also considered that it was Nietzsche's "radical reflection" on language that opened up avenues in contemporary thought beyond philosophy in a restricted sense.<sup>113</sup> Thus, Nietzsche's 'extra'-philosophical position in the history of Western thought must be taken into account. For example, one could argue that Nietzsche exploited a new understanding of *Wille* initiated by Schopenhauer,<sup>114</sup> one which owes nothing to categories of "free will" as this manifested in English, French, and German philosophy<sup>115</sup> but one which derives from *non*-Western religious and philosophical categories, especially Buddhism.<sup>116</sup> This position was made possible of course due to nineteenth-century Western imperialist expansion into the "Orient" and its concomitant growth in knowledge of the languages, philosophies, social structures, texts

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<sup>109</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, 54.

<sup>110</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 83.

<sup>111</sup> Foucault [1974], "La vérité et les formes juridiques" *DE*, I. 1954-1975, 1413.

<sup>112</sup> Foucault, *Order of Things*, 342.

<sup>113</sup> Foucault, *Order of Things*, 305.

<sup>114</sup> See Foucault [1978], "Méthodologie pour la connaissance du monde: comment se débarrasser du marxisme," *DE*, II. 1976-1988, 604. For a valuable foray into the relationship between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, see *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's Educator*, ed. Christopher Janaway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>115</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The world as will and representation*, 2 vols., trans. ed. Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1: 302.

<sup>116</sup> Smith, *Transvaluations*, 31.

and geography of civilizations beyond Western Europe.<sup>117</sup> Amongst other things, Schopenhauer saw the historical and cultural specificity of Christian beliefs in Western philosophy,<sup>118</sup> without which Nietzsche's particular brand of atheism would not have been possible. One could argue further that Schopenhauer, also on the strength of non-Western philosophy, initiated a radical and unprecedented critique of bourgeois individualism by positing *Wille* as a *supra*-individual force beyond the control of any consciousness and knowledge, enabling Nietzsche's subsequent "will to truth" independent of subjectivity. One thing in any case is certain: Nietzsche's thought is not simply *his* creation according to an assigned place amongst an arbitrary selection of philosophical "predecessors" but arises from a certain Bourgeois panoramic horizon that could see further than philosophers in previous centuries.

Meanwhile, this society was expanding internally as well. While Nietzsche was composing his witty aphorisms, an ambitious army of German science on the other side of the mountain range was busy colonizing the traditional philosophical territory of involuntary "affects," "drives," "emotions," and claiming it as proper for medicine. Like it or not, force is a mechanical concept, connected in the seventeenth century to a new "dynamics of politics."<sup>119</sup> Its subsequent adoption into the life sciences and philosophy during this time of industrial expansion in the nineteenth century was hardly a neutral transposition. If Deleuze claims that Nietzsche created the concept of "forces," one would have to ask how he managed to secure a *philosophical* meaning for this concept in the midst of these *non*-philosophical discourses? Certainly not by toying with sexuality. On one occasion from the *Nachlass*, Nietzsche claims that the same "force" [*Kraft*] propels both the artistic creation and the sexual act: "There is only one type of force [*Kraft*]." <sup>120</sup> Not only does this suggest a very un-Nietzschean, pop Freudian, and reductive idea of art, it also unthinkingly casts masculine and feminine as one and the same "force."<sup>121</sup> We are indeed "trapped" in the net of language, as Nietzsche warned, and words *will* "seduce" the unwary ones.<sup>122</sup> But only on the strength of an ethnography of the present do these "mean and little" connections come to life.

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<sup>117</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 40-41.

<sup>118</sup> Schopenhauer, *Will and representation*, 1: 515-516.

<sup>119</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell, English ed. Arnold I. Davidson (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 296.

<sup>120</sup> Nietzsche (1888), NF 1888, Group 23 <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/VM-223>

<sup>121</sup> For the difference between *Trieb* and *Affect* in Nietzsche, see Christopher Janaway, "Nietzsche, the self, and Schopenhauer," in *Nietzsche and Modern German Thought*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson (London: Routledge, 1991), 119-142. See also Smith's discussion of Pierre Klossowski's choice of "impulse" to designate a whole range of German terms: Smith, "Translator's Preface," p. x.

<sup>122</sup> Nietzsche [1872], NF 1872, Group 19, <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/WL>