

## The Experience of Culture: Eurocentric Limits and Openings in Foucault

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With the relaunching of *Transeuropéennes* in its new form, the journal is squarely poised to engage a prolonged reflection on one of the key antagonisms of our times: the relation between translation and cultural regions. Although these two phenomenon constitute a part of everyday life at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our common sense understanding of them is largely informed by the notion of a static, virtually *a priori*, concept of culture. At the base of this concept invariably lies a host of presuppositions concerning the individuality of cultures, modelled on the premisses of English possessive individualism and condensed in the political formation of the nation-state and national language. What *Transeuropéennes* is bound to reveal, against the regime of common sense, is that, “everyday experience consists of encounters with objects that derive less from individual national cultures than from movements *between* cultures, and that, far more radically, such movements actually precede and are thus constitutive of these individual cultures themselves” (Calichman and Kim, 2010). In lieu of pursuing the relation between experience, translation, and regions in an exhaustive way—a job relocation from Taipei to Shanghai makes that work impossible for me now—I would like to share a line of interrogation that I recently developed in relation to a critique of Michel Foucault’s eurocentrism that may help shed peripheral light on some of the issues at stake.

### The geocultural area as a biopolitical device

If, as Michel Foucault contends in *The Order of Things*, Man is a creation or effect of the archaeological fold or amphibological confusion between the empirical and the transcendental, between experience and knowledge, then it follows that the ‘milieu’ in which this Man lives is a technology for managing the problems associated with this confusion.

First, let us summarize the predicament in which Foucault’s modern ‘Man’ lives: *The Order of Things* presents the aporetic relation between knowledge and experience as one of the defining ‘methodological horrors’ of the modern epoch. The root of this methodological aporia derives from the amphibological status of ‘Man’. Man is “a being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible” (Foucault 1966/1973, 329/318). It is not the attempt to make ‘Man’ into an object of science, to objectivize human existence, that is for Foucault the fundamental defining trait of the modern archaeological strata. It is rather the attempt to pair that effort with a parallel attempt to experience the limit of knowledge per se that defines the modern figure of man. Between these two efforts lies a constant tension between experience and knowledge that defines the anthropological situation of modernity. The attempt to

reveal “the conditions of knowledge on the basis of the empirical contents given in it” (Foucault 1966 (1997)/1973, 329/319) leads to a series of unavoidable yet irresolvable oscillations that the various different systems of modern thought, from positivism and empiricism to dialectical negativity and phenomenology, each try, without success, to master. These would be, in short order, the oscillation between the empirical contents of experience and the transcendental limits to knowledge; the oscillation between an analysis of the positivist type (“the truth of the object determines the truth of the discourse that describes its formation” (Foucault 1966/1973, 331/320)) and a discourse of the eschatological type (“the truth of the philosophical discourse constitutes the [promise of the] truth in formation” (Foucault 1966/1973, 331/320)); the oscillation between a nature (that determines experience) and a history (that determines knowledge); and finally the oscillation between an individual body and a collective culture. In the face of this series of fundamental oscillations, modern thought—excluding that alternative undercurrent to modern philosophy emblemized by Spinoza’s savage antinomies—is always looking for a mediating third term. Foucault proposes that this third term always takes the form of “actual experience”. The resort to actual experience, however, does not resolve the ambivalence or amphiboly that existed from the outset. “It is doing no more...than fulfilling with greater care the hasty demands laid down when the attempt was made to make the empirical, in man, stand in for the transcendental” (Foucault 1966/1973, 332/321). From a philosophical point of view, the upshot of this amphiboly is a constantly receding, infinite series of displacements in the ‘miniscule’ yet infinite difference that “resides in the ‘and’ of retreat and return, of thought and the unthought, of the empirical and the transcendental, of what belongs to the order of positivity and what belongs to the order of foundations” (Foucault 1966/1973, 351/340). The more modern thought resorts to the category of actual experience to mediate the weight of the oppositions it has gathered under the aegis of a contradictory singular point—the empirico-transcendental doublet that is Man, the more it must make an effort to repair the irreparable schism that constitutes Man from the very beginning. This accelerating circularity (a version of the “dog-chase-tail” syndrome) constitutes the main paradigm—and problem—of modernity as identified by the archaeological method.

It is my hypothesis that the concept of geocultural area or region has been one of the principal devices (*dispositifs*) by means of which the methodological horrors of the circular relation between experience and knowledge have been managed in the modern era. To put it in Foucaultian terms, I am suggesting an archaeological explanation for the biopolitical meaning of governmental technologies that concern the apparatus (*dispositif*) of geocultural areas.

## **Experience and Biopolitics**

Following Foucault’s Kantianism, which holds that an *episteme* cannot reflect its own proper conditions of possibility, I suspect that culturalism is in fact one of the foundational conditions necessary for the archaeological method and at the same time its principle biopolitical mode of operation. In other words, I suggest that culturalism—in the form of Eurocentrism—constitutes the ‘historical *a priori*’ of *The Order of Things*. Whereas the Kantian goal is to account for the formal dimensions of experience by

exploring the transcendental limits of knowledge, the Foucaultian project takes as its object the specific kinds of experience that are conditioned by the form of the experience itself. The problem of “restriction” that we have seen above turns out to play a pivotal role in the elaboration of the archaeological method, and, beyond that, the concept of *practice* that constitutes a central concern throughout Foucault’s *oeuvre*. I refer to the precise work of Marc Djaballah, who provides essential insight into the affinity between Kant and Foucault with regard to the concept of experience. If, as he summarizes, “[d]iscourse is made up of determinately formed practices that condition its existence at any given time and place on the basis of a modality of intelligibility that in abstraction falls between the semantic and the formal-logical” (Djaballah 2008, 227), then it will be of paramount importance to know how to define the *limit* of a discourse/practice/experience. The problematic nature of this limit was taken up Derrida in his widely-read critique of Foucault’s concept of madness as a totalizing—hence hegemonically rational—concept (Derrida 1978). My point in raising this Derridean critique is not to disqualify archaeology at a methodological level so much as to open it up to the perspective of indeterminacy and whateverness essential to the biopolitical perspective. Of course, the appeal to “a given cultural totality” (Djaballah 2008, 231 and 236) is, strictly speaking, at odds with the intent of Foucault’s methodological precautions against both the objectivization of experience and its phenomenological reduction. In Foucault’s research, the conditions of ‘real experience’ are not given as objects of discourse; it is rather “the structure of a practice that defines the forms of the experience it generates” (Djaballah 2008, 222). Yet if, in Wittgensteinian fashion, “the rules of a practice articulate the relations that constitute objects with in [sic] it” (Djaballah 2008, 231), we must ask what happens when the relations that condition a “given cultural reality” overlap with or are comprehended in those that condition the relations among various different “given cultural realities”? In other words, what if the recognized ‘givenness’ of culture in the form of discrete monads or countable nouns (Sakai 2009) is nothing but a norm that organizes—and naturalizes—cultural objects? Once this possibility can be admitted, it becomes imperative to explore the notion that discontinuities between cultures are not distinct to one particular culture but may in fact be managed through a common technique or practice. What if, in other words, there is a biopolitical technology at work behind the archaeological method?

Nevertheless, archaeology continues to remain important for the critique of eurocentrism on account of its profound rejection of a number of conventional philosophical positions concerning the status of objects and experience. It rejects the realist assumption that objects are given in and of themselves prior to experience; it equally rejects the idealist assumption that objects can only be understood in relation to the self of experience; finally, it further rejects the phenomenological assumption that both objects and experience can only be understood through a reduction to the originary intentionality (i.e., relationality) of consciousness. Biopolitics continues this methodological trend: the emergence of the object of population in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is a product of the discursive practices established by governmentality. In Foucault’s work on sexuality, which lies at the heart of his development of the concept of biopolitics, “experience [i.e., the experience of sexuality] is understood as the correlation, in a culture, between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity”

(Foucault 1984/1985 (1990), ??/4). This is all well and good until we begin to consider the problem that “culture” itself might be the name given to an as-yet-undetermined nexus between ‘a field of knowledge’, ‘a type of normativity’, and ‘a form of subjectivity’—i.e., that culture may itself be a discursive formation organizing the regular dispersion of statements, irregardless of the ‘cultures’ in which those statements take effect.

In lieu of directly entering into the thorny philosophical problems suscitated by this approach to experience<sup>1</sup>, I would like to call attention to the problematic relation between Foucault’s work on biopolitics in the late ‘70s and his biographical experience. Shortly after the period (early 1978) in which I have identified a transition away from biology towards political economy in Foucault’s lectures at the Collège de France, Foucault undertook a visit to Japan, including his famous visit to a Zen temple in April, and two visits to Iran, in September and November of the same year, to witness and report upon the Iranian revolution. Here we have two occasions on which Foucault involved himself in an experiential way with the non-West. Not surprisingly, in both instances a notion of experience beyond knowledge—for which spirituality was the inevitable figure—occupied a central place in his writings about those events. This is also the same year (1978) in which Foucault gave an interview (conducted at the end of the year) in which he characterizes his entire philosophical project in terms of the concept of experience (Foucault 2001, 860-914). 1978 was surely a moment in Foucault’s career when the question of experience becomes particularly experiential.

Equally acute, and surely related to the problematic of experience, was the Orientalism of this same period. It is seen initially in his visit to the Japanese Zen Temple, upon which I have commented at greater length (Sakai and Solomon, 2005), and begins to assume predictably alarming political proportions in the subsequent journeys to Iran. Although I do not feel any definitive conclusions can be reached based on such circumstantial evidence, I do feel that there is an intrinsic link between the abandonment of biological concerns in the work on biopolitics and Foucault’s vexing relation to the non-West on the one hand, and his archaeological concept of experience and the genealogy of biopolitics, on the other.

The crux between these two links can be found, I propose, in the figure of the intellectual as the nexus where the battle between experience and knowledge is staged. Normally the relation between these two concepts is organized in hierarchical and dialectical fashion, such that knowledge is born of experience while experience benefits from knowledge. Yet in Foucault’s view, this dialectic only serves to strengthen the role of mediation and appropriation, which is precisely the location of the state. The key to turning this battle occurs in the displacement of institutions, so that one looks at strategies instead of functions, refuses objects as given, and passes outside of institutions (even “within” them) in order to keep an eye on power=composition. In order to sketch out this configuration of concerns as quickly as possible, there may be no better point of reference in Foucault’s *oeuvres* than his reports on the Iranian Revolution. In spite of the breathtaking capitulation to Orientalism one finds in these reports (Robert Young calls attention to the Orientalist trope of an “absolutely collective

will”; Young 1995, 1), an interview<sup>2</sup> in Tehran on September 23, 1978, stands out for providing three precise clues for a critique of the intellectual as the body that mediates between experience and knowledge. The general context for these clues concerns the historical transformation of the role of the intellectual from what Foucault calls a “foreteller of the future society” to an engaged warrior “inside the pit” comprised by the political ramifications of “science, knowledge, techniques, and technologies” (Afary & Anderson 2005, 184).

First, Foucault identifies in the Iranian Revolution a rejection of the paradigm of mimetic modernization:

*A small detail that struck me the day before when I visited the bazaar...suddenly came back to me...These unfit-for-use Western objects, under the sign of an obsolete Orient, all bore the inscription: “Made in South Korea”. I then felt that I had understood that recent events did not signify a shrinking back in the face of modernization by extremely retrograde elements, but the rejection, by a whole culture and a whole people, of a modernization that was itself an archaism. (Afary & Anderson 2005, 195).*

Written at the beginning of an era of economic and political transformation that would only subsequently be called “globalization” and “postfordism”, Foucault precociously understood the anachronistic value of the tradition/modernity opposition essential to postwar American modernization theory. Any attempt to understand modernization through the scheme of a binary opposition between tradition and modernity becomes an anachronism once the question of origin and influence is displaced by that of subjective composition. Significantly, the revolutionary critique of modernization, is, in Foucault’s estimation, related to the question of class composition within Iran. In a series of reports on the class structure of Iran and the peculiar position of the Shah, Foucault shows that modernization is a technique of population management derived in the dialectic of expropriation between imperial and local elites constituted through the experience of quasi-colonization. The colonial power relation based on imitation and expropriation can be displaced by the event of composition..

Second, Foucault implicitly identifies the problem of the West in its relation to the non-West through the category of *indifference*.

*We have to construct another political thought, another political imagination, and teach anew the vision of the future. I am saying this so that you know that any Westerner, any Western intellectual with some integrity, cannot be indifferent to what she or he hears about Iran (Afary & Anderson 2005, 185).*

Foucault does not elaborate on the structure and operation of indifference (in fact, we have deep reservations about those moments when Foucault is apparently indifferent to the non-West—under the pretext of ‘competency’—all while adopting a position that constantly references the specificity of the “West”), so it is up to us to fill in the blanks. Clearly, indifference does not mean unrelated, since what one “hears about Iran” is

intrinsically connected to the creation of a new “vision of the future”. Note that the campaign against indifference is a pedagogic project whose goal is to create alternative futures. Foucault does not specify what kind of future this would be, but we can be sure that it minimally includes a redefinition of institutionalized relations (between the West and the non-West, between the intellectual and the society, between expropriation and the common, etc.) and a new type of experience (an experience that is not marked by indifference)<sup>3</sup>. Indifference to actual relations (of expropriation) constitutes a strategic subjective resource integral to modern post/colonial domination. For the moment, let us emphasize the crucial point of connection: Indifference must be distinguished from ignorance in that it is premised upon knowledge. In fact, knowledge—understood in disciplinary terms—is precisely the condition of possibility for indifference.

Third, Foucault cites two emblematic experiences of the relation between intellectuals and society that mark the history of what he calls in characteristic fashion “our culture” and “the West”.

*First, throughout the eighteenth century, philosophers—or it is better to say, intellectuals in France, England, and Germany—attempted to rethink society anew, according to the principles of good government as they perceived it...I do not want to say that the philosophers were responsible for this, but the truth is that their ideas had an impact on these transformations. More importantly, this monstrosity we call the state is to a great extent the fruit and result of their thinking. ...*

*The second painful experience is the one that emerged not between the philosopher and bourgeois society, but between revolutionary thinkers and the socialist states we know today. Out of the visions of Marx, the visions of socialists, from their thoughts and analyses, which were among the most objective, rational, and seemingly accurate thoughts and analyses, emerged in actuality political systems, social organizations, and economic mechanisms that today are condemned and ought to be discarded. (Afaray & Anderson 2005, 184-185).*

The role of rational thought as a public good (of liberation) is always threatened with appropriation by the state, acting in the name of universal humanity in the interests of an exclusive group (such as a nation or a party). The subject of experience is always confronted with the economy of appropriation, according to which experience becomes codified as disciplinary knowledge. The key challenge, we may extrapolate, is to understand appropriation not as a basis for the legitimation of a norm, but as an event in the constitution of the social.

Foucault’s comments not only highlight the importance of governmentality as a critical concept for understanding the link between experience and knowledge, but they also suggest, as we have already seen, the way in which governmentality inadvertently becomes enmeshed in a culturalist vision. What Foucault saw in the Iranian Revolution was nothing less than the priority of culture over the state, the assumption that culture exists anterior to and perhaps outside of the state. Of course, the passage to the outside of institutions—the passage to the side of power, to the side of strategies instead of functions, and to the side of practices instead of given objects—was a crucial feature of

Foucault's innovative attempt to critique the state. Yet when the passage to the outside of institutions is doubled by the passage to the outside of the West (which, we assert, is yet another institutional form), Foucault clearly falls into error. This is what makes it possible for Foucault to reference two parallel equivalencies between culture and population: just as "our culture" equals "the West", the "whole [of Iranian] culture" equals the "whole people". What these parallel equivalences ignore is precisely the way in which the equation culture=population is itself an archaeological product of a specific discursive form whose biopolitical effects articulate knowledge and experience.

To summarize, we have thus gleaned from Foucault's observations on the Iranian Revolution three key elements that correspond to three 'tasks' implicitly assigned to the subject of experience-as-intellectual: 1) To the critique of post/colonial power relations based on imitation and expropriation there corresponds an event of composition in which the subject of experience-as-intellectual inevitably participates. The central question for intellectuals in the post/colonial age is no longer that of developing increasingly accurate methods of fixing the correspondence between world and knowledge, i.e., truth-claims, but rather of displacing social relations away from the question of origin, genesis and filiation. 2) To the problem of indifference, there corresponds the task of challenging disciplinary practices that organize and codify the relation between experience and knowledge. The challenge for the subject of experience-as-intellectual is to gain awareness of the ways in which indifference—"the sanctioned ignorance that every critic of imperialism must chart" (Spivak 1988, 291)—is inscribed in the subject of knowledge through disciplinary practices. This forms the basis of our critique of Foucault's eurocentrism. 3) To the appropriation by the state of rational thought as a public good, there corresponds the task of understanding appropriation not as a basis for the legitimation of a norm, but as an event in the constitution of the social.

True to Foucault's understanding, we should remember that the intellectual is not just the product or the agent of the division of labor, but also an anthropological figure in the sense this term acquires in *The Order of Things*, where modern man is marked by a series of doubles that straddle the triumvirate of language, life, and labor. Foucault's interview in Tehran provides us with a powerful portrait of the intellectual in general as one of these doubles—emblematic as far as the difference between knowledge and experience is concerned. The intellectual who is sometimes indifferent because he is knowledgeable, whose own ambivalence between experience and knowledge directly parallels and consolidates, if not actually creates, the "monstrosity of the state", and whose social practice as a producer of knowledge is concentrated on the institution of normative imitation—the disciplines of 'truth' (understood as an adequation between object and statement)—rather than the event of composition is exactly, "the Other that is not only a brother but a twin, born, not of man, nor in man, but beside him and at the same time...both exterior to him and indispensable to him: in one sense, the shadow cast by man as he emerged in the field of knowledge; in another, the blind stain by which it is possible to know him" (Foucault 1966/1973, 337/326).

It is in this sense that I understand Robert Young's appraisal of the status of

eurocentrism in Foucault—“*The Order of Things* could be seen as an analysis not of eurocentrism as such, but of its philosophical and conceptual archaeology” (Young 1995, 9). Foucault’s acute orientalism is not merely the obverse of his investment in the methodological error of culturalism’s “self-containment”, it is also, far more crucially, a sign of the intellectual’s inability to avert the disastrous reversibility and confusion between the opposing poles of knowledge and experience that was identified by *The Order of Things* as the crucial feature of modernity. The crux of eurocentrism, as the quintessential modern geocultural hegemony, lies in the economy that links experience to knowledge through a plethora of philosophical decisions such as dialectical negation and phenomenological reduction (the two main straw men in Foucault’s work). Indeed, Chapter Nine of *The Order of Things* is devoted to analyzing the transcendental and empirical elements in the constitution of knowledge that turn “the analysis of actual experience” into a hopelessly equivocal “discourse of mixed nature” (Foucault 1966/1973, 332/321). Dialectical negativity and phenomenology both constitute, each in separate ways, flawed yet archaeologically-similar responses to this amphibological mixture that results in the modern construct of Man as simultaneously both subject and object of knowledge. Leonard Lawlor has persuasively demonstrated how Foucault’s critique of the amphibological nature of the modern concept of “lived-experience” (*le vécu*) lies at the heart of the critique of modern Man deployed by *The Order of Things*. Against this critique of *le vécu* or lived-experience, Foucault proposes a notion of *le vivant*, or the living, whose point of departure is taken from Canguilhem’s biological notion of error. In explaining Foucault’s objection to the concept of lived-experience, Lawlor writes: “the critique of the concept of *vécu* is based on the fact that the relationship in *vécu* is a mixture (*un mélange*) which closes “*un écart infime*”. Conversely, Foucault’s conception of the relationship – here we must use the word “*vivant*” – in “*le vivant*” is one that dissociates and keeps “*l’écart infime*” open” (Lawlor 2005, 417). This “*écart infime*”, which the English translation of *Les mots et les choses* renders as a “miniscule hiatus” (Foucault 1966/1973, 351/340), must be understood, argues Lawlor, in both senses of the French word “*infime*”: both “miniscule” and “infinitesimal” or “infinitely divisible” (Lawlor 2005, 422). I suppose that what Lawlor has in mind when basing his argument on the dual meaning of the French word *infime* is a form of what Sakai calls “continuity in discontinuity” (Sakai 2009, 85). In this case, the meaning of *infime* as the “infinitely divisible” would refer us to what mathematics calls “continuity”, while that of the “miniscule” would take us back to a difference so small it cannot be measured, thus constituting the incommensurability of “discontinuity”. Against the modern concept of man that is based on an equivocal relation between experience and knowledge, Foucault’s critique calls not for a “mixing” of the two but for a way of making the immeasurably small differences between them discontinuous and non-relational. The way this is to be done is to be found in a strategy of “double negation” that “affirms” both terms rather than combines them (Lawlor 2005, 424).

The problem with the modern Western *episteme*, according to *The Order of Things*, is that a fundamental equivocity and reversibility has been installed between experience and knowledge. The resolution of this amphiboly is not what concerns me here so much as what I take to be a warning, issued by archaeology to biopolitics. Biopolitics, particularly in the part of it that lends itself to studies of governmentality, always runs

the risk of becoming the study of the 'actual experience' of the politics of life. If the problem of eurocentrism ultimately concerns a hegemony that is mobile and self-transformative, i.e., if the problem of "the West" is not limited to the West, this is because at its core lies a fundamental equivocity or amphibological confusion between knowledge and experience. Similarly, the problem of the state amounts to a way of appropriating the amphiboly, or of capturing it, under the guise of "lived experience". Hence, to oppose experience—actual experience, local experience—against the hegemony of the West (and its avatar, "Western theory") ends up being a strategy complicit at a broad level with the hegemonic logic—consolidated in the state—according to which the West first gathered itself as a subject in history.

In his 23/09/78 Tehran interview, we will remember, Foucault calls the state a "monstrosity". Given that the word "monstrosity" is an English translation from the "original" text of the interview, which was published only in Persian, I doubt that it would be persuasive to base my entire argument on a single word. Yet we can certainly take it as a clue. About monstrosity, Derrida has reminded us that it is connected not just to nominalization and normalization, but also to species difference and hybridization (Derrida 1995, 385-386). Throughout Foucault's writings, the state is so consistently related to normalization it may be easy to forget that its appearance is also intimately related to a fundamental kind of anthropological system and experiment that marks the experience of modern politics as fundamentally invested by life. Although it appears, according to the historicist logic of origins and filiations, that modern states are devoted to defending the innate specificity of the nation, Foucault's genealogical approach urges us to abandon these "givens" and turn our attention to the way in which the state is not committed to the nation *per se*, but only to the idea of species difference in general. The state, we might say, is a grand experiment in the experience of bioanthropological plasticity. It will be remembered that in French, the word *expérience* covers in English the sense of both experiment and experience. *The Order of Things* offers a very clear assessment of this articulation between governmentality and bioanthropological plasticity: "In modern experience, the possibility of establishing man within knowledge and the mere emergence of this new figure in the field of the *episteme* imply an imperative that haunts thought from within; it matters little whether it be given currency in the form of ethics, politics, humanism, a duty to assume responsibility for the fate of the West, or the mere consciousness of performing, in history, a bureaucratic function. What is essential is that thought, both for itself and in the density of its workings, should be both knowledge and a modification of what it knows, reflection and a transformation of the mode of being of that on which it reflects" (Foucault 1966/1973, 338/327). The transformation of existence through the exchange between experience and knowledge is at the heart of both world-historical projects such as eurocentrism and the quotidian operation of the state. The implicit equation between ethics and bureaucratic functionalism is an indication of the gravity with which Foucault regards the transformative power of knowledge. If governmentality names a state-like technology of population management that is carried on beyond the conventional institutional boundaries of the state, biopolitics names the situation in which lived experience has become regularly appropriated by state-like technologies placed in the service of managing bioanthropological plasticity. The systems of knowledge about so-called

cultural difference are an essential part of these state-like technologies, and must be seen as biopolitical fields of struggle. The “monstrosity of the state” is not, first and foremost, a totalization of political life, but rather the totalization of life in politics and experience in knowledge.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The importance of experience in Foucault’s work has been explored recently by Mark Djaballah, *Kant, Foucault, and Forms of Experience* (Djaballah 2008); Timothy O’Leary, “Foucault, Experience, Literature” in *Foucault Studies* no. 5 (2008), pp. 5-25; Gary Gutting, “Foucault’s Philosophy of Experience,” *Boundary 2*, vol.29, no.2, 2002, pp. 69-85; and Leonard Lawlor, “A Miniscule Hiatus: Foucault’s Critique of the Concept of Lived-Experience (vécu)”, in A.-T. Tymieniecka (ed.), *Analecta Husserliana L XXXVIII* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005) 417–427. O’Leary suggests also consulting Timothy Rayner, “Between fiction and reflection: Foucault and the experience book,” *Continental Philosophy Review*, no.36, 2003, pp.27-43; and the chapter on Bataille, Blanchot and Foucault, in Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, , 2006), chap. 9. Judith Revel, one of the leading scholars of Foucault studies in France, also has an important work that was unavailable to me at the time of writing (it is out of print and unavailable in Taiwan’s university library collections), which, judging by the title, deals with the concept of experience/experimentation in Foucault’s work. Judith Revel, *Michel Foucault, Expériences de la pensée* (Paris: Bordas, 2005).
- <sup>2</sup> This interview is not included in *Dits et Ecrits*. It is unknown to me whether a French version exists. The English version was translated from Farsi.
- <sup>3</sup> Seen in light of recent neurobiological research on “mirror neurons” and the concept of neoteny, the connection between social institutions and indifference is not incidental. Cf. Virno (2003).

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