

THE "PASSION FOR THE OUTSIDE":
FOUCAULT, BLANCHOT, AND EXTERIORITY

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"At the time, I dreamt of being Blanchot."¹

For us he is that thought [of the outside]
itself—its real, absolutely distant,
shimmering, invisible presence, its inevitable
law, its calm, infinite, measured strength.²

It is not generally well known that Michel Foucault, the archaeologist, the genealogist, the thinker of power and sexuality, had, for the want of a better phrase, a "literature phase." In the early 1960's Foucault devoted many essays to figures such as Bataille, Klossowski, Hölderlin, Blanchot, Robbe-Grillet, Sollers, Laporte, Artaud, Sade, Flaubert, Nerval and also wrote a monograph solely devoted to Raymond Roussel.³ Admittedly, Foucault was never merely interested in the "essence" or the specificity of the literary, and the works of literature in his writings generally functioned paradigmatically as a "sort of 'counter-discourse'"—as indexes pointing toward an exit from dialectics (OT, p. 44). Nonetheless, he was always captivated by the manner in which certain writers incessantly pushed against and transgressed the boundaries of language. All of Foucault's essays on language and literature from this period share similar concerns, the most important of which are the notions of exteriority, self-reflexivity and the relation of language to madness and death.⁴ Although Foucault never completely dismissed his earlier concern for language and literature, in his interviews he spoke of this preoccupation as something that was superseded by his later writings. Perhaps as a result of his own estimation and pronouncements, only a few of the many works of secondary literature devoted to Foucault's writings have extensively commented on his essays on literature.⁵ It is my contention, however, that Foucault's "literary" writings, and especially his exploration of the notion of exteriority, were the beginning of a rigorous questioning of the status of language and literature. I would also claim that despite Foucault's own subsequent disinterest in the project of those early essays, his work on the intransitivity of language and transgressive literature, especially his extended article on Blanchot, not only has an important critical force of its own, but also bears upon his "later" work. In fact, in Blanchotian terms, what seems so distant from his involvement with the topics of the "history

of sexuality' and the "care of the self" is actually what remains most proximate.

My very limited concern in this paper will be briefly to discuss Foucault's understanding of language, literature, and exteriority as delineated in his essay "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside," to indicate the proximity of Foucault's thought to Blanchot's, particularly regarding the thinking of exteriority, and to elucidate Foucault's exploration of Blanchot's notion of proximity in literature. I will also suggest the significance of the notion of exteriority for a reading of Foucault's three volumes of the *History of Sexuality*.⁶ My aim here is not to trace any particular thinker's influence on Foucault or to establish a "continuity" between the "earlier" and the "later" writings, but merely to intimate toward a "spectrality effect,"⁷ a haunting⁸ of Foucault's thought by the specter of Blanchot.

As noted above, Foucault's essays on language and literature have been for the most part viewed as a brief and misguided flirtation. His concern for a "poetics of transgression"⁹ has been criticized as a naive obsession with an outmoded modernist sublime.¹⁰ For most commentators, Foucault's "practical" turn towards "more 'specific' political struggles" is perceived as an active denunciation of his earlier valorization of "avant-garde" literature. Foucault is, thus, said to have abandoned his meditations on death in favor of a more "affirmative" engagement with political issues. John Rajchman, who is among the few critics who have discussed Foucault's writings on literature, goes so far as saying that "a study of language and literature is of little use in understanding" Foucault's project in the "later" writings—this being the investigation of what enables knowledge to become an instrument of policies (Rajchman, p. 29).

Foucault may have lent this interpretation some credence when, in a rare interview on his works on literature, he states that his concern with the literary and the intransitivity of language was merely preparatory.¹¹ In this interview, Foucault characterizes his task with regards to literature as that of avoiding the sacralization of the literary. What is more important than an emphasis on language itself, Foucault claims, is an analysis of why a certain number of discourses, particularly the literary, have been sacralized and accorded a privileged function and status in society. Furthermore, attention should be paid to how a non-literary discourse enters into the literary domain.

None of this, however, should invalidate for us Foucault's earlier preoccupation with literature. Here we must heed Heidegger's lesson not to base our interpretations solely on what a philosopher has to say about his own work. Our concern should always be with the matter [*die Sache*] of thinking. In fact, it can be argued that without these very same writings on language and without an adequate understanding of the "thought of

the outside" it would be very easy to misapprehend Foucault's "later" writings on "the care of the self" as a facile return to the subject. For a thorough comprehension of the notion of the outside, and along with this an understanding of the inter-relation of the inside and the outside, is absolutely necessary for an understanding of this "self." However distant the notions developed in the literary essays may seem, they are never too far from the work that Foucault was engaged in at the end of his life.

All of the essays that Foucault wrote on the subject of language and literature share a number of similar themes: a movement towards exteriority, the self-reflexivity of language, transgression of limit(s), the intransitivity of language, the dispersion of the subject, and the "folding" of the outside in the neutral space of literature.¹² Foucault's last major work on literature, his essay on Blanchot in 1966, is the pinnacle of his literary essays. Not only is it a remarkable appreciation of Blanchot's work, but it also stands as one of Foucault's most beautiful, yet densest essays. In this essay Foucault attempts to show how the utterance of the phrase "I speak" problematizes the interiority of an "I think," which has served as an emblem of Western thought. By taking up such notions from the writings of Blanchot as attraction, negligence, and the companion, Foucault provides his most elegant account of the "thought of the outside," revealing "the shared transparency of the origin and death" (FB, p. 58). By concentrating on this essay on Blanchot, I will briefly explicate Foucault's general position on language, knowing full well that such an account must remain inadequate.

The "thought of the outside" never ceased to be an important component of Foucault's writings. For Foucault, thought has always been enclosed within certain codes and structures that have historically constituted and delimited it. Foucault always maintained that the task and responsibility of thought was to attempt to reflect outside of these structures in which thinking has remained historically situated. This "thought of the outside," this thinking in a new way, as opposed to "legitimizing what is already known," is the incessant movement towards the realm of exteriority (UP, pp. 8-9).

To understand the full impact of this thought of exteriority, we must take into consideration Foucault's trenchant critique of all interiority. It would be no exaggeration to characterize Foucault's thought as a persistent refusal of the privilege of a deeper inside. Undoubtedly, it is the totalizing impulse of the dialectical thought of Hegel—with its concepts of reflection, contradiction, unity, totality, and reconciliation—that Foucault resists. Of course, Foucault was always all too aware of the power of Hegelian thought, and its interiorization and recuperation of all exteriority; yet he was also convinced that it possible to move away from Hegel through a poetics of transgression. In his search for "discourses exterior to philosophy," Foucault rejects any form of thought that poses

a pure, interior space that is the repository of all meaning (FL, p. 118). This, then, amounts to the rejection of the traditional interior unities of the author, the book and the subject. All discourse, according to Foucault, takes place on a level surface.¹³ In other words, there is no protected interior space and, therefore, no "outside", i.e., no zone above or below the surface of discourse that can govern it and reveal its secrets. In brief, for Foucault, all discourse exists in an exterior network of statements where interiority is always dispersed.

Foucault's notion of the outside obviously complicates our ordinary understanding of interiority and exteriority, and therefore must not be reduced to a single term of a binary opposition. Admitting the immense difficulty of finding a language faithful to the "thought of the outside," Foucault turns to Blanchot's writings, which for him exemplify a thought directed towards the outside. Both Blanchot's theoretical writing and his *récits* are engaged in "converting" Hegel's reflexive language (FB, p. 21). Blanchot's texts are attuned to the *approach* of "what continues outside the workings of the Hegelian dialectic," (Davies, p. 208). In the continuing of literary activity, Blanchot sees something that refuses the grasp of the universal concept. This activity is a (not) stepping (not) beyond to a domain "outside" the realm of the realization of truth. Philosophy itself is unable to make this outside an object of its conceptualization. Blanchot's writings, which bear the effects of this outside on the Hegelian text, point to the possibility of another language. Foucault describes this other language in an eloquent passage:

Thus patient reflection, always directed outside itself, and a fiction that cancels itself out in the void where it undoes its forms intersect to form a discourse appearing with no conclusion and no image, with no truth and no theater, with no proof, no mask, no affirmation, free of any center, unfettered to any native soil; a discourse that constitutes its own space as the outside toward which, and outside which, it speaks, (FB, p. 25).

It is important to note that, for Blanchot, and for Foucault, it is never a matter of placing literature (or writing) in opposition to the Hegelian system. Rather, literature brings about an alteration of philosophy. "Writing, giving rise to the thought of the 'outside'. . . necessitates this alteration," (Davies, p. 209). The task of writing, for Blanchot and Foucault, then, is to write in such a way "as to introduce (to insinuate) the *thought* of this outside into philosophy," (Davies, p. 209).

How, then, does Foucault account for according Blanchot's writings the honor of being "that thought [of the outside] itself?" (FB, p. 19). Perhaps the key to Blanchot's approach is that by avoiding a purely fictitious or reflexive discourse he is able to use negation non-dialectically. By casting his language "ceaselessly outside of itself," Blanchot, in effect, negates his own discourse (FB, p. 22). This is done not to "repatriate" the

experience of the outside into a region of interiority, but "in order [for it] to be free for a new beginning," (FB, p. 22). This "rebeginning," Foucault writes, is "not reflection, but forgetting; not contradiction, but a contestation that effaces; not reconciliation, but droning on and on; not mind in laborious conquest of its unity, but the endless erosion of the outside," (FB, p. 22). As discourse ceases to direct itself towards the interior and addresses the being of language, it has already become language about the outside.

Foucault opens his Blanchot essay by distinguishing the importance of the two statements, "I think" and "I speak." He remarks that "the naked experience of language poses a danger for the self-evidence of 'I think'" (FB, p. 13). By dislodging the primacy of the interiority of the mind, of a self-consciousness, of the "essential nucleus" toward which all thinking has been said to have solidified, Foucault wants to show that any fundamental thinking must find itself in a realm of exteriority (AK, p. 121). Instead of a movement from a merely contingent outside toward an "interiority of an intention," thought is displaced toward an outer bound where words endlessly murmur (AK, p. 121). For Foucault, "I speak" does not represent the sovereignty of a subject, nor the indubitable certainty of an agent; rather, it reveals the fragmentation and dispersion of the "I" who speaks. The subject is "a non-existence in whose emptiness the unending outpouring of language uninterruptedly continues," (FB, p. 11). "I speak," then, occupies the void, that "naked space" in which the "I" disappears. Indeed, "I speak" is nothing but "an absolute opening through which language endlessly spreads forth," (FB, p. 11). What concerns Foucault is not the communication of a meaning by an agent of discourse, but the "spreading forth of language in its raw state, an unfolding of pure exteriority," (FB, p. 11).

Apart from the dispersion of the subject, what is the significance of this outpouring of language? The "thought of the outside," for Foucault, involves the self-reflexive movement of language toward a limit and the transgression of that limit. In its unfolding, language pushes against its own boundaries. In this continuous movement to the outside, language arrives at its own "edge" where it finds a void that will efface it, and "into that void it must go, consenting to come undone in the rumbling, in the immediate negation of what it says, in a silence that is not the intimacy of a secret but a pure outside where words endlessly unravel," (FB, p. 22). It is from this limit, edge, gap or void that a critical perspective can be opened up.¹⁴ Language in its transgressive movement "carries the limit to the limit of its being," (LCP, p. 34). Poised at this extremity, language entertains an essential relation to the outside. This relation constitutes an opening onto a radical form of exteriority. The thought of this exteriority—"a language from which the subject is excluded"—is precisely the thought that cannot be reduced to philosophy (FB, p. 15).

Language, ceaselessly rushing forth, in the crossing of its own limits, discovers its own being. Yet, language does not possess any other law but the affirmation of its own being, which resides in that gray neutrality where origin and death have a shared existence. However, it is only with the disappearance of the subject that the being of language can appear for itself. The being of language, “that nearly imperceptible retreat,” does not signify a secret depth (FB, p. 57). Rather, it is the bringing together of origin and death, the bringing of both “to light in the flash of their infinite oscillation,” (FB, p. 57). We must note that this “momentary contact” involves a complex role-reversal where “the origin takes on the transparency of the endless; [and] death opens interminably onto the repetition of the beginning,” (FB, p. 57). The intransitivity of language, then, is revealed in its movement of self-reflexivity which operates at the limit. In this movement where “the anonymity of language is liberated and opened to its own boundlessness,” the being of language is unveiled (FB, p. 54). This self-reflexivity is language turning upon itself, not to refer to itself but to question its own limits. For Foucault, this constitutes the *taking place* of literature.

Literature can be understood as language’s escape from the mode of representational discourse. In fact, Foucault defines literature as the passage to the outside. Literature is not language folding back upon itself to scrutinize itself, but language “getting as far away from itself as possible,” (FB, p. 12). Even though language may reveal its own being in this passage to the outside, this being is found to be nothing but a gap, an empty secret. “The ‘subject’ of literature (what speaks in it and what it speaks about) is less language in its positivity than the void language takes as its space when it articulates itself in the nakedness of ‘I speak,’ ” (FB, p. 12). The void, that neutral space from which literature springs, is simultaneously that zone “where language loses itself in its extreme limits,” (LCP, p. 84). In this site or non-place [*non-lieu*], where the outside hollows out all interiority, language becomes in its silence the “always undone form of the outside,” (FB, p. 57). Foucault remarks that it is by way of literature, i.e., “speech about speech,” that we are led to this outside.

So far we have seen how language is continuously in the process of casting itself outside of itself, and how in a self-reflexive movement it transgresses its limit(s) whereby the being of language is revealed. Indeed, the being of language appears as the “I” is effaced. Then, quite suddenly, at the moment language is returned to the outside, its transformation to literature occurs. What has transpired is that language has moved so much to the outside that it has become “language about the outside of all language,” (FB, p. 25). What seems to characterize the mode of literature is an “attentiveness” to the constant rumble of language, an attentiveness not to what is articulated in language but to the “void circulating between

its words," (FB, p. 25). It is precisely at this non-site, Foucault claims, that Blanchot's discourse—which is neither fiction nor reflection—operates. This discourse, a "meticulous narration of experiences [and] encounters," (FB, p. 25), takes place in the "fixed open expanse" *between* fiction and reflection (FB, p. 26).

By virtue of occupying this very space, Blanchot's texts break down the distinction between "novel," "narrative," and "criticism." What particularly distinguishes Blanchot's writings is that each of his major terms is an intricately complex amalgam of significations. Each apparently simple theme involves an oscillation of meanings, a to and fro, a step (not) step. So it should not strike us as contradictory when Blanchot writes that "approach" and "distance" draw near to one another and forever move apart. We may think we are familiar with the meaning of these common terms, yet Blanchot imbues each with complexity and ambiguity. Likewise, "fiction," for Blanchot, designates the proximity of what is most distant, since proximity is an indication of the "folding" of the outside.

Before exploring Foucault's treatment of Blanchot's "fiction," especially his reading of the figures of *attraction* and the *companion*, it is important to give an account of the status of exteriority in Blanchot's "critical" works. This will enable us to offer some comments on the notion of proximity and on its relation to the "outside" in Blanchot's texts. In *The Infinite Conversation* Blanchot employs the notion of "(pure) exteriority" to discuss writing. Writing, for Blanchot, designates a "space" or zone of pure exteriority that is "foreign to every relation of presence," (IC, p. 431).¹⁵ The "attraction" of (pure) exteriority is the *topos* where the "outside 'precedes' any interior," (IC, p. 426).¹⁶ In another text, *The Step Not Beyond*, Blanchot writes that "exteriority" excludes "every exterior and every interior, as it precedes their succeeding, ruining for them every beginning and every end," (SNB, p. 37). This exteriority, which is always becoming, is always exterior to itself. Its relation to itself is that of discontinuity. Blanchot writes that "we always write from out of the exteriority of writing," (IC, p. 426). In fact, what summons us to write is the *attraction* of (pure) exteriority. According to Blanchot, the experience of language, that is "writing: exteriority," (IC, p. 431) leads us to "sense a relation entirely other, a relation of the third kind," (IC, p. 73). We can discern that Blanchot's "outside" is a "wholly other nondialectical outside," (Davies, p. 207). It should never be thought of as the immediate outside of an inside. We could perhaps say that this outside functions very much like what Derrida in *Glas* has called the *reste*, that which remains of the Hegelian system, its remains, its surplus.

Blanchot allows the question of the outside to unfold in the most exemplary manner in *The Space of Literature* in a section entitled "The Outside, the Night," in which he takes up the notion of the *other* night. He writes that this *other* night is neither simply the opposite of the day nor

its continuation. This *other* night is *not* the night of the day, i.e., it is not a construction of the first night. Thus, Blanchot's *other* night is not the negation of the day but something that cannot be easily incorporated into dialectics. We cannot have access to the other night, since having access to it would mean to accede to the outside, to be outside the night and "to lose forever the possibility of emerging from it," (SL, p. 164). In the first night, that is, the night of the day, everything disappears and absence approaches. This is the night of silence and repose. The *other* night, however, is the appearance of *everything disappears*. We must remember that "the *other* night is never pure night," (SL, p. 164). The *other* night is not the welcoming openness of the night, for "in it one is still outside," (SL, p. 164).

Blanchot's *other* night illustrates the economy of *proximity*.¹⁷ What is to be understood by this proximity of the outside becomes clearer when we examine Foucault's meditations on the figure of the *companion* and the theme of attraction in Blanchot's *Celui qui ne m'accompagnait pas*.¹⁸ In Foucault's reading, attraction is "the pure, most naked experience of the outside," (FB, p. 27). Attraction is not being drawn in towards an interiority, but the experience of the presence of the outside. This irreducible outside is not a "positive presence" but an undoing of all interiority (FB, 28). The infinite outside, which has no essence, hollows out all interiority and "divests [it] of its identity," (FB, p. 47). To be attracted is to be borne by an immense weight and yet at the same time to be drawn out of oneself. Attraction necessitates its own correlate—*negligence*. Thus Foucault writes, "to be susceptible to attraction a person must be negligent," (FB, p. 28). Foucault remarks that the relationship between these two "indefinitely reversible figures" is complicated: total disregard constitutes the flip side of jealousy (FB, p. 30). Jealousy, or being "attracted by attraction," is the other side of the coin to extreme negligence (FB, p. 29).

At the first glimpse of attraction, "a sweet, and violent movement" forces itself upon interiority, emptying it all out, luring it outside (FB, p. 47). It places alongside interiority the figure of the companion—at once hidden, yet making its presence felt. At the moment when the outside hollows out the "place into which interiority customarily retreats" a spectral form arises that deprives interiority of its identity (FB, p. 47). By taking away the speaker's right to say "I," by preventing interiority from retreating to its hiding place, it divides interiority into "non-coincident twin figures," (FB, p. 47). The companion, then, is like a double, a shadowy figure maintaining its distance. The invisible companion, that "eternal neighbor" whose silence closes in on the speaker, withdraws from his vicinity (FB, p. 50). The infinite distance that separates the speaking "I" and the companion is also the sign of a powerful filiation.

On the one hand, the speaker is drawn out of himself by an "inaccessible remoteness"; On the other hand, this "mute presence" exerts its unbearable weight from the shadows (FB, 48). This onerous weight and persistent demand constitute the draw of the companion. This is perhaps why one has an immutable tie to the companion: his reticence and timidity are attractive—he seems implausibly familiar; yet his menacing intimacy is that of an exiled figure. Thus, Foucault writes, "the companion is also indissociably what is closest and farthest away," (FB, p. 50). In fact, what the companion signifies is "the nameless limit language reaches," (FB, p. 51). The companion is the void into which language disappears when it folds back upon its enigmatic origin, Foucault draws a parallel between the movement of attraction and the withdrawal of the companion. For Foucault, they share a similar relation to the outside: "the empty outside of attraction is perhaps identical to the nearby outside of the double," (FB, p. 48).

The themes of attraction and the companion perfectly illustrate the economy of proximity that is woven through all of Blanchot's texts. The thematic economy of proximity consists of the intrusion and investment of an exteriority that approaches and conditions an interiority. The movement of exteriority, then, becomes an intrication, an intimacy, a contact. Interiority moves toward the outside only because interiority is already outside. This eternal outside approaches as it escapes; its inaccessibility is an involvement, its distance a contact. The approach of the outside, which takes place in a region where nothing persists, is the approach of that which cannot become present. This motif of the "folding" of the outside, the formation and constitution of interiority by a pre-original outside, haunts the majority of Foucault's texts. The hollowed out inside is always an operation of the irreducible outside: it is the folded inside of an outside. The inside-space is "completely co-present with the outside-space on the line of the fold," (Deleuze, p. 118). This makes the outside that which is "farther away than any external world . . . henceforth [becoming] infinitely closer," (Deleuze, p. 86).

The force exerted by the notion of exteriority developed above is not limited to Foucault's earlier writings. The folding of the outside, I contend, exercises a powerful influence on Foucault's three volumes of *The History of Sexuality*. In order to show this, we shall briefly discuss how the "subject" in volumes two and three is irretrievably linked to the notion of the outside. *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self* "analyze the practices by which individuals were led to focus their attention on themselves as subjects of desire, bringing into play between themselves and themselves a certain relationship that allows them to discover, in desire, the truth of their being," (UP, p. 5, my emphasis). Foucault's fundamental concern in these texts is the constitution of individuals as subjects of

desire. What interests him is to describe the *set of processes* through which the subject exists, and not to define precisely the moment of the emergence of what comes to be called the subject.

Foucault uses the term subjectivization to explain “the process through which results the constitution of a subject, or more exactly, of a subjectivity which is only one of the given possibilities of organizing a consciousness of self,” (FL, p. 330). The process of subjectivization is a folding, in which the relations of the inside and outside are interwoven. In other words, under the influence of the outside, the process folds back upon itself so that the inside is opened out onto the outside. In this way “the relations of the outside folded back to create a doubling, allow a relation to oneself to emerge and constitute an inside which is hollowed out,” (Deleuze, p. 100). This doubling is the complex relation of the self to itself and to others.¹⁹ When Deleuze comments in his *Foucault* that the subject is “a derivative of the outside, conditioned by the fold,” the fold is not to be taken as a form of reflexivity of a consciousness or self-presence (Deleuze, p. 104). Rather, reflexivity is one of the effects produced by the folding of the outside.

Foucault identifies the subject as the nexus of the application of the “techniques of the self” and the “practices of subjection.” The practices of the self are those that enable the individual to direct his focus on himself. It is through this attentiveness of the self to the self, through an eventual gaining of self-mastery, that an ethical subject emerges. The Greeks called this “attitude” of self-mastery, which is essential for an ethics of pleasure, *enkrateia*. *Enkrateia* refers to “the dynamics of a domination of oneself by oneself and to the effort that this demands,” (UP, p. 65). In *The Care of the Self* Foucault details the emergence of a self that is formed in relating to itself by caring for itself. Self-governance, which is the subject’s desired goal, is achieved through a variety of agonistic practices, all of which involve combating and subduing excessive and inferior passions. The art of the care of the self is, then, a matter of knowing how to govern one’s life in order to give it the most beautiful form possible. For Foucault, the ancients, through the “internal” regulation of themselves, cultivated an art of existence that was independent of moral legislation.

We must think the nature of the auto-affection described in the last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*—the formation of the self as an “ethical subject”—in terms of the constant folding back of the outside to constitute a hollowed out inside. The ethical subject, which is the product of the relations and circulations of powers, is externally constituted through its practices, behaviors and acts. To be sure, the ethical subject acts upon itself, that is, monitors, examines and reflects upon itself, but this self-attentiveness and self-reflection is never directed toward an inner

recess but is, rather, constantly cast outward. The internal self-regulation is always in relation to a differential network of power relations. The particular ways in which an individual relates to himself—we may call this the production of inwardness—are “structured by a circulation of powers that emerges as individuals are formed relative to desire within given cultural, [social, political, and familial] circumstances,” (Scott, p. 113). Such circumstances allow the subject to have a relation to itself; but since this self-relation is constituted within a dynamic field of relations, an originary self is at no time posited.

Having thus suggested the importance of the notion of exteriority in Foucault's last works, it is perhaps not going too far to say that all of Foucault's work subsequent to his “literature phase” is *haunted* by a singular motif. This ghostly double, this silent partner, this companion that accompanies all of Foucault's texts, is, of course, nothing other than the “thought of the outside.” Foucault's discourse silently harbors this *haunting* of the outside, whose phantomlike traces are found throughout the space of his texts, although it may appear that it was long ago left behind. In this case, the infinite distance separating his literary texts from the “later” texts would in fact demonstrate their infinite proximity.²⁰

1 This is how Foucault described the 1950's to Paul Veyne. See Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*. trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 58.

2 Michel Foucault, “Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside,” in *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Zone Books, 1987), p. 19.

3 Foucault's interest in certain “literary” figures such as Sade and Bataille may be common knowledge, but it is a lesser-known fact that Foucault wrote over twenty articles on literature between 1962 to 1966. For an exhaustive bibliography of Foucault's “literary” writings see David Macey, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Pantheon, 1993), pp. 543-547. For essays on Hölderlin (“The Father's ‘No’”), Bataille (“Preface to Transgression”), and Sade (“Language to Infinity”) see Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977). For Foucault's book on Roussel see *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Ruas (NY: Doubleday, 1986). The essay on Klossowski, “The Prose of Actaeon,” was translated by Sophie Hawkes and Stephen Sartarelli as the foreword to Klossowski's novel *The Baphomet* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1988).

4 A full account of Foucault's “early work” would have to take the confluence of the notions of language, death, and madness into consideration. Due to its limited scope, this paper will not be able to undertake such an analysis. Needless to say the question of madness, which Foucault explicitly takes up in *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic*, was of crucial concern for Foucault.

5 See David Carroll, *Paraesthetics: Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida* (New York: Methuen, 1987), Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), Simon During, *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing* (London: Routledge, 1992), Dennis Hollier, "The Word of God: 'I am Dead'" in *Michel Foucault, Philosopher*, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, (Pantheon, 1993), and John Rajchman, *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy* (New York: Columbia Press, 1985). Here, I should like to acknowledge my great debt to David Carroll's work. A discussion of many of the themes broached here can be found in his *Paraesthetics*. Since this paper was written I became aware of Pierre Macherey's *A quoi pense la littérature*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990), translated recently as *The Object of Literature* by David Macey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) which treats Foucault's analysis of Roussel as well as other related topics.

6 Although it is not the aim of this paper to delineate the ecific links between the thought of the outside and Foucault's understanding of the "self" in the three volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, I believe that an engagement with Foucault's essay on Blanchot is essential for such a task. See Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). Also of particular interest is Georges Preli's *La Force du dehors: extériorité, limite, et non-pouvoir à partir de Maurice Blanchot*, (Paris: Encres-Recherches, 1977) which came to my attention too late.

7 Jacques Derrida in *Spectres of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994) refers to a "spectrality effect" which undoes the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and ideality (p. 40). Derrida discusses the return of an elusive ghost that arrives from the future [arrivant], signalling toward the future. Derrida is attempting to think the spectral in terms of a radical untimeliness. The specter is that which inhabits without residing.

8 Derrida uses this term in a number of texts (e.g., "At This Very Moment in Whose Work I Am," *Cinders*, "Désistance," "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," "Force of Law," "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," "Living On: Border Lines," *Memoirs for Paul De Man*, "Telepathy," *Truth in Painting*, "Ulysses Gramma- phone"). For an excellent guide see Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1993) where Wigley discusses the topic of "Haunted Houses."

9 David Carroll uses this phrase in the third chapter of his *Paraesthetics*.

10 See John Rajchman, *Michel Foucault*, p. 17.

11 See Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live*, trans. John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1989).

12 I am borrowing this term from Deleuze who first uses it in his analysis of Foucault.

13 Statements "are always in their own place," (AK, p. 119). "The enunciative domain is identical with its own surface. Each statement occupies in it a place that belongs to it alone," (AK, p. 119).

14 For Foucault this would be where a space of critique could be established.

15 Rather than being the positivity of presence, the outside is the "exposition of difference."

16 The significance of "attraction" shall become clearer in the analysis of Blanchot's "fiction."

17 I have been influenced by Joseph Libertson's path-breaking study *Proximity: Levinas, Blanchot, Bataille and Communication*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982) which provides an extended meditation on the notion of proximity in Blanchot.

18 Translated as *The One Who Was Standing Apart From Me*, trans. Lydia Davis (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1993).

19 As Deleuze writes: "The relation with others must be doubled by a relation with oneself," (Deleuze, p. 101).

20 I owe a debt of gratitude to the following: Peg Birmingham, and especially to Pleshette DeArmitt and Michael Naas, not just for their many helpful comments on several drafts of this paper, but also for their patience and encouragement.

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