

ESSENTIAL WORKS OF
FOUCAULT,
1954-1984

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Ethics
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Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology
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C.B. But didn't Breton grant as much importance to life as he did to writing? Isn't there, in *Nadja*, in *L'Amour fou*, in *Les Vases communicants* a sort of continuous osmosis between writing and life, between life and writing?

M.F. While Breton's other discoveries were already at least prefigured in Goethe, in Nietzsche, Mallarmé or others, what we really owe to him alone is the discovery of a space that is not that of philosophy, nor of literature, nor of art, but that of experience. We are now in a time when experience—and the thought that is inseparable from it—are developing with an extraordinary richness, in both a unity and a dispersion that wipe out the boundaries of provinces that were once well established.

There is no doubt that the whole network connecting the works of Breton, Georges Bataille, Leiris, and Blanchot, and extending through the domains of ethnology, art history, the history of religions, linguistics, and psychoanalysis, are effacing the rubrics in which our culture classified itself, and revealing unforeseen kinships, proximities, and relations. It is very probable that we owe this new scattering and this new unity of our culture to the person and the work of André Breton. He was both the spreader and the gatherer of all this agitation in modern experience.

This discovery of the domain of experience enabled Breton to be completely outside literature, to contest not only all the existing literary works, but the very existence of literature; but it also enabled him to open up to possible languages domains that had remained silent and marginal until then.

DIFFERENT SPACES*

As we know, the great obsession of the nineteenth century was history: themes of development and arrest, themes of crisis and cycle, themes of accumulation of the past, a great overload of dead people, the threat of global cooling. The second principle of thermodynamics supplied the nineteenth century with the essential core of its mythological resources. The present age may be the age of space instead. We are in an era of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition, of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the scattered. We exist at a moment when the world is experiencing, I believe, something less like a great life that would develop through time than like a network that connects points and weaves its skein. Perhaps we may say that some of the ideological conflicts that drive today's polemics are enacted between the devoted descendants of time and the fierce inhabitants of space. Structuralism, or at least what is grouped under that somewhat general name, is the effort to establish, between elements that may have been distributed over time, a set of relations that makes them appear juxtaposed, opposed, implied by one another, that makes them appear, in short, like a kind of configuration. And this does not really amount to a denial of time; it is a certain way of handling what is called time and what is called history.

It should be made clear, however, that the space now appearing on the horizon of our concerns, of our theory, of our systems, is not an

*This is the text of a lecture presented to the Architectural Studies Circle 14 March 1967; it was first published until 1984. (See *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 [October 1984], pp. 46-49). Robert Hurley's translation.

innovation. Space itself, in the Western experience, has a history, and one cannot fail to take note of this inevitable interlocking of time with space. It could be said, to retrace very crudely this history of space, that in the Middle Ages there was a hierarchized ensemble of places: sacred places and profane places, protected places and, on the contrary, places that were open and defenseless, urban places and country places (speaking of people's real life); for cosmological theory, there were supracelestial places as opposed to the celestial place, which contrasted in turn with the terrestrial place. There were places where things were placed because they had been violently displaced and then places, on the contrary, where things found their natural emplacement and their natural rest. It was this whole hierarchy, this opposition, this interconnection of places that constituted what might be called, very roughly, medieval space—a space of localization.

This space of localization opened up with Galileo, for the real scandal of Galileo's work was not so much in having discovered, or rather rediscovered, that the earth revolves around the sun, but in having constituted a space that was infinite, and infinitely open—so that the medieval place was dissolved in it, as it were. A thing's place was no longer anything but a point in its motion, just as a thing's rest was nothing more than its motion indefinitely slowed down. To put it differently, starting from Galileo, from the seventeenth century, extension supplanted localization.

In our day, emplacement is supplanting extension which itself replaced localization. Emplacement is defined by the relations of proximity between points or elements. In formal terms these can be described as series, trees, lattices.

Further, we are aware of the importance of problems of emplacement in contemporary engineering: the storage of information or of the partial results of a calculation in the memory of a machine, the circulation of discrete elements, with a random output (such as, quite simply, automobiles or in fact the tones on a telephone line), the identification of tagged or coded elements in an ensemble that is either distributed haphazardly or sorted in a univocal classification, or sorted according to a plurivocal classification, and so on.

More concretely still, for people the problem of place or emplacement is posed in terms of demography; and this last problem of human emplacement is not just the question of knowing if there will be enough space for man in the world—a problem that is very important

after all—but also the problem of knowing what relations of proximity, what type of storage, of circulation, of identification, of classification of human elements are to be preferentially retained in this or that situation to obtain this or that result. We are in an age when space is presented to us in the form of relations of emplacement.

In any case, I think that today's anxiety concerns space in a fundamental way, no doubt much more than time. Time probably only appears as one of the possible games of distribution between the elements that are spread out in space.

Now, in spite of all the techniques of investment, in spite of the whole network of knowledge that enable us to determine it or formalize it, contemporary space is perhaps not yet entirely desacralized—unlike time, no doubt, which was desacralized in the nineteenth century. To be sure, there was a certain theoretical desacralization of space (signaled at the start by the work of Galileo), but perhaps we have not yet arrived at a practical desacralization of space. And perhaps our life is still dominated by a certain number of oppositions that cannot be tampered with, that institutions and practices have not ventured to change—oppositions we take for granted, for example, between private space and public space, between the family space and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure activities and the space of work. All these are still controlled by an unspoken sacralization.

The enormous work of Gaston Bachelard and the descriptions of the phenomenologists have taught us that we are living not in a homogeneous and empty space but, on the contrary, in a space that is laden with qualities, a space that may also be haunted by fantasy. The space of our first perception, that of our reveries, that of our passions harbors qualities that are all but intrinsic; it is a light, ethereal, transparent space, or rather a somber, harsh, cluttered space. It is a space from on high, it is a space of peaks, or, on the contrary, it is a space from below, a space of mire, it is a space that can be fluid like running water, it is a space that can be fixed, solidified like stone or crystal.

And yet these analyses, though they are fundamental for contemporary reflection, are concerned primarily with internal space. I would like to speak now of the space outside [*du dehors*].

The space in which we are living, by which we are drawn outside ourselves, in which, as a matter of fact, the erosion of our life, our time, and our history takes place, this space that eats and scrapes

away at us, is also heterogeneous space in itself. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, within which individuals and things might be located. We do not live in a void that would be tinged with shimmering colors, we live inside an ensemble of relations that define emplacements that are irreducible to each other and absolutely nonsuperposable.

Of course, one could attempt to describe these different emplacements, looking for the set of relations by which a particular emplacement might be defined. For example, describe the set of relations that define emplacements of transit, streets, trains (a train is an extraordinary bundle of relations, since it's something through which one passes; it is also something by which one can pass from one point to another, and then it is something that passes by). One could describe, through the bundle of relations that make it possible to define them, those way stations that cafés, movie theaters, and beaches constitute. One could also describe, through their web of relations, the emplacement of repose, closed or semiclosed, formed by the house, the room, the bed, and so on. But what interests me among all these emplacements are certain ones that have the curious property of being connected to all the other emplacements, but in such a way that they suspend, neutralize, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected, or represented [*réflechis*] by them. Those spaces which are linked with all the others, and yet at variance somehow with all the other emplacements, are of two great types.

First, there are the utopias. Utopias are emplacements having no real place. They are emplacements that maintain a general relation of direct or inverse analogy with the real space of society. They are society perfected or the reverse of society, but in any case these utopias are spaces that are fundamentally and essentially unreal.

There are also, and probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places, actual places, places that are designed into the very institution of society, which are sorts of actually realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed, sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable. Because they are utterly different from all the emplacements that they reflect or refer to, I shall call these places "heterotopias," as opposed to utopias; and I think that between utopias and these utterly different emplacements, these heterotopias,

there must be a kind of mixed, intermediate experience, that would be the mirror. The mirror is a utopia after all, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror I see myself where I am not, in an unreal space that opens up virtually behind the surface; I am over there where I am not, a kind of shadow that gives me my own visibility, that enables me to look at myself there where I am absent—a mirror utopia. But it is also a heterotopia in that the mirror really exists, in that it has a sort of return effect on the place that I occupy. Due to the mirror, I discover myself absent at the place where I am, since I see myself over there. From that gaze which settles on me, as it were, I come back to myself and I begin once more to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in the sense that it makes this place I occupy at the moment I look at myself in the glass both utterly real, connected with the entire space surrounding it, and utterly unreal—since, to be perceived, it is obliged to go by way of that virtual point which is over there.

As for heterotopias, properly speaking, how might they be described? What meaning do they have? One could imagine, I won't say a "science," because that word is too compromised now, but a sort of systematic description that would have the object, in a given society, of studying, analyzing, describing, "reading," as people are fond of saying now, these different spaces, these other places, a kind of contestation, both mythical and real, of the space in which we live. This description could be called "heterotopology." As a first principle, let us submit that there is probably not a single culture in the world that does not establish heterotopias: that is a constant of every human group. But heterotopias obviously take forms that are very diverse, and perhaps one would not find a single form of heterotopia that is absolutely universal. They can be classed, however, into two major types.

In so-called primitive societies, there is a certain form of heterotopias that I would call "crisis heterotopias"; that is, there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places reserved for individuals who are in a state of crisis with respect to society and the human milieu in which they live. Adolescents, menstruating women, women in labor, old people, and so on.

In our society these crisis heterotopias have all but disappeared, though one still finds a few remnants of them. For example, the private secondary school, in its nineteenth-century form, or military ser-

vice certainly played such a role for boys, the first manifestations of male sexuality needing to take place "elsewhere" than in the family. For girls there existed, until the middle of the twentieth century, a tradition that was called the "honeymoon trip" [*voyage des nocces*]; this was an ancestral theme. The girl's deflowering could not take place "anywhere," and so the train, the honeymoon hotel, was indeed this anywhere place, this heterotopia without geographical coordinates.

But these crisis heterotopias are now disappearing and being replaced, I believe, by what could be called heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals are put whose behavior is deviant with respect to the mean or the required norm. These are the rest homes, the psychiatric hospitals; they are also, of course, the prisons, to which we should probably add old people's homes, which are on the borderline, as it were, between the crisis heterotopia and the deviation heterotopia, since after all old age is a crisis and also a deviation, seeing that in our society, where leisure activity is the rule, idleness forms a kind of deviation.

The second principle of this description of heterotopias is that, in the course of its history, a society can make a heterotopia that exists and has not ceased to exist operate in a very different way; in fact, each heterotopia has a precise and specific operation within the society, and the same heterotopia can have one operation or another, depending on the synchrony of the culture in which it is found.

I will take as an example the curious heterotopia of the cemetery. The cemetery is certainly a different place compared with ordinary cultural spaces, and yet it is a space that is connected to all the other emplacements of the city or the society or the village, since every individual, every family happens to have relatives in the cemetery. The cemetery has practically always existed in Western culture, but it has undergone substantial mutations. Up to the end of the eighteenth century, the cemetery was placed in the very heart of the city, next to the church. A whole hierarchy of burial places existed there. You had the charnel house in which the corpses lost every trace of individuality; there were a few individual tombs; and then there were tombs inside the church. These tombs were themselves of two kinds. Either nothing more than slabs with an inscription or mausoleums with statues. This cemetery, which was lodged in the sacred space of the church, took on an altogether different look in modern civilizations; and, curiously, it was during the time when civilization became, as we

say very roughly, "atheist," that Western culture inaugurated what is called the cult of the dead.

Basically, it was quite natural that at a time when people really believed in the resurrection of bodies and the immortality of the soul they did not attribute a cardinal importance to mortal remains. On the contrary, from the moment that one is no longer quite sure of having a soul, that the body will return to life, it may be necessary to devote much more attention to those mortal remains, which are finally the only trace of our existence in the midst of the world and in the midst of words.

In any case, it was in the nineteenth century that each person began to have the right to his little box for his little personal decomposition; but, further, it was only then that people began putting cemeteries at the edge of cities. In correlation with this individualization of death and the bourgeois appropriation of the cemetery, there emerged an obsession with death as a "disease." It was thought that the dead brought illness to the living, and that the presence and proximity of the dead right next to the houses, right next to the church, almost in the middle of the street, was responsible for the propagation of death itself. This great theme of disease spread by the contagion of cemeteries persisted at the end of the eighteenth century; and it was only in the course of the nineteenth century that cemeteries began to be moved toward outlying districts. Cemeteries then no longer constituted the sacred and immortal wind of the city, but the "other city" where each family possessed its dark dwelling.

A third principle. The heterotopia has the ability to juxtapose in a single real place several emplacements that are incompatible in themselves. Thus the theater brings onto the rectangle of the stage a whole succession of places that are unrelated to one another; in the same way, the cinema is a very curious rectangular hall at the back of which one sees a three-dimensional space projected onto a two-dimensional screen; but perhaps the oldest example of these heterotopias, in the form of contradictory emplacements, is the garden. One should bear in mind that in the East the garden, an amazing creation now thousands of years old, was deeply symbolic, with meanings that were superimposed, as it were. The traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that is said to have joined together within its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world, with a space even more sacred than the others which was like the umbilicus, the

navel of the world at its center (this was the location of the basin and the fountain); and all the garden's vegetation was supposed to be distributed within that space, within that figurative microcosm. As for carpets, originally they were reproductions of gardens. The garden is a carpet in which the entire world attains its symbolic perfection, and the carpet is a kind of garden that moves through space. The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and the whole world at the same time. Since early antiquity the garden has been a sort of blissful and universalizing heterotopia (hence our zoological gardens).

Fourth principle. More often than not, heterotopias are connected with temporal discontinuities [*découpages du temps*]; that is, they open onto what might be called, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronias. The heterotopia begins to function fully when men are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time; thus, the cemetery is indeed a highly heterotopian place, seeing that the cemetery begins with that strange heterochronia that loss of life constitutes for an individual, and that quasi eternity in which he perpetually dissolves and fades away.

Generally speaking, in a society like ours heterotopias and heterochronias are organized and arranged in a relatively complex way. First, there are heterotopias of time that accumulates indefinitely—for example, museums and libraries. Museums and libraries are heterotopias in which time never ceases to pile up and perch on its own summit, whereas in the seventeenth century, and up to the end of the seventeenth century still, museums and libraries were the expression of an individual choice. By contrast, the idea of accumulating everything, the idea of constituting a sort of general archive, the desire to contain all times, all ages, all forms, all tastes in one place, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside time and protected from its erosion, the project of thus organizing a kind of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in a place that will not move—well, in fact, all of this belongs to our modernity. The museum and the library are heterotopias that are characteristic of Western culture in the nineteenth century.

Opposite these heterotopias, which are linked to the accumulation of time, there are heterotopias that are linked, rather, to time in its most futile, most transitory and precarious aspect, and in the form of the festival. These are heterotopias that are not eternitary but absolutely chronic. Such are the fairs, those marvelous empty emplace-

ments on the outskirts of cities that fill up once or twice a year with booths, stalls, unusual objects, wrestlers, snake ladies, fortune tellers. And, just recently, a new chronic heterotopia has been invented, the vacation village, those Polynesian villages which offer three short weeks of a primitive and eternal nudity to city dwellers. And you can see, moreover, that the two forms of heterotopia, the heterotopia of the festival and that of an eternity of accumulating time are combined: the straw huts of Djerba are in one sense akin to the libraries and the museums, for, by rediscovering Polynesian life one abolishes time, but time is also regained, the whole history of humanity goes back to its source as if in a kind of grand immediate knowledge.

A fifth principle. Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at the same time. In general, one does not gain entry to a heterotopian emplacement as if to a windmill. Either one is constrained to enter, which is the case with barracks and prisons, or one has to submit to rituals and purifications. One can enter only with a certain permission and after a certain number of gestures have been performed. There are even heterotopias that are entirely devoted to those purification activities, a half-religious half-hygienic purification as in Muslim baths, or an apparently purely hygienic purification as in Scandinavian saunas.

There are others, on the contrary, that look like pure and simple openings, but which generally conceal curious exclusions. Everybody can enter these heterotopian emplacements, but actually this is only an illusion: one believes he is going inside and, by the very fact of entering, one is excluded. I am thinking, for example, of those famous rooms that existed in the large farms of Brazil and, in general, of South America. The door for entering did not open onto the central room where the family lived, and every individual who passed by, every traveler had the right to push that door open, enter the room and sleep there one night. Now, these rooms were such that the individual who visited there never gained access to the heart of the family; he was absolutely the chance guest, he was not really the invited guest. This type of heterotopia, which has practically disappeared in our civilizations, might be reencountered in the famous American motel rooms where one enters with one's car and one's mistress and where unlawful sexuality is both absolutely sheltered and absolutely

hidden, kept out of public view, and yet without being left to the open air.

Finally, the last trait of these heterotopias is that they have a function in relation to the remaining space. This function is spread between two extreme poles. Either the heterotopias have the role of creating a space of illusion that denounces all real space, all real emplacements within which human life is partitioned off, as being even more illusory. Perhaps it is this role that was played for a long time by those famous brothels which we are now deprived of. Or, on the contrary, creating a different space, a different real space as perfect, as meticulous, as well-arranged as ours is disorganized, badly arranged, and muddled. This would be the heterotopia not of illusion but of compensation, and I wonder if it is not somewhat in that manner that certain colonies functioned.

In some cases they played a heterotopian role at the level of the general organization of terrestrial space. I am thinking, for example, of those Puritan societies which the English founded in America during the first wave of colonization, which were other absolutely perfect places.

I'm also thinking of those extraordinary colonies of Jesuits that were founded in South America: marvelous, absolutely regulated colonies in which human perfection was effectively achieved. The Jesuits of Paraguay established colonies in which existence was regulated in every particular. The village was laid out according to a strict arrangement around a rectangular plaza with a church at the far end; on one side the secondary school, on the other the cemetery, and then, opposite the church, there began an avenue that a second avenue intersected at a right angle. The families each had their little hut along these two axes, and in this way the sign of Christ was exactly reproduced. Christianity thus marked the space and the geography of the American world with its fundamental sign.

The daily life of individuals was regulated not with the whistle but with the bell. Reveille was set for everybody at the same hour and work began for everybody at the same hour; meals were at noon and five o'clock; then one went to bed, and at midnight there was something called the conjugal wakeup, meaning that when the convent bell rang, everybody did his duty.

Brothels and colonies were two extreme types of heterotopia, and if you consider, for example, that the ship is a piece of floating space, a

placeless place, that lives by its own devices, that is self-enclosed and, at the same time, delivered over to the boundless expanse of the ocean, and that goes from port to port, from watch to watch, from brothel to brothel, all the way to the colonies in search of the most precious treasures that lie waiting in their gardens, you see why for our civilization, from the sixteenth century up to our time, the ship has been at the same time not only the greatest instrument of economic development, of course (I'm not talking about that subject today), but the greatest reservoir of imagination. The sailing vessel is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without ships the dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police that of the corsairs.