

PROBLEMATIZATION AND THE  
PRODUCTION OF NEW STATEMENTS:  
FOUCAULT AND DELEUZE ON LE GROUPE  
D'INFORMATION SUR LES PRISONS

From its inception, *Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons* (the Prisons Information Group, the GIP) sought to embody a fundamentally new kind of social and political resistance. The group demanded no ideological unity and provided no political guidance. They were neither a party, a reform movement, nor an affinity group. There was no central organizing committee or symbolic figure, no charter, no statutes, no members even, just activists drawn from various social strata: prisoners, lawyers, family members, judges, theorists, et cetera. The GIP was nothing less but nothing more than a meeting place or, in their own favored terms, a “relay,” a “line of attack.” The group’s activities, albeit brief, were notable for their diversity: from the creation and publication of information pamphlets (the Intolerable Series), and the organization of advocacy networks and publication of grievances to facilitate and support the prison revolts that occurred throughout France in the winter of 1971–1972, to street theater, the writing and performance of a play (“Le procès de la mutinerie de Nancy,” 1972), and the filming of a documentary (*Les prisons aussi*, 1972). The GIP’s work was an array of struggles, of diffusion and rupture, of dissemination and critique. But was there a coherent model(s) of resistance operative throughout these disparate projects? Were they pur-

suing what can, perhaps only in retrospect, be called a distinctive way of challenging the contemporary system of punishment?

The GIP marked the period of closest intellectual and practical collaboration between Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault. Yet in their later reflections on the work of the GIP, after they had become estranged, they each proposed what appear to be quite divergent answers to this fundamental question.<sup>1</sup> In an interview from April 1984, Foucault claimed that the GIP was “an enterprise of ‘problematization,’ an effort to render the evidences, practices, rules, institutions, and habits that had remained sedimented for decades and decades problematic and doubtful.”<sup>2</sup> While Deleuze, in an interview conducted in May of 1985, held that for the GIP, “it was not a matter of finding the truth about prison, but of producing statements (*énoncés*) about prison . . . they [prisoners and people outside of prisons] knew how to make speeches (*discours*) about prison, etc., but not how to produce statements.”<sup>3</sup> In what follows, I take these later reflections as guiding clues for a reexamination of the new form of social mobilization that the GIP sought to embody. To be clear, my aim is not to determine which, if either, of these models is correct, but to employ each as a framework to understand better the nature of the innovations in social activism that the GIP was able to foster. I argue that what these clues show us is that while some of the activities of the GIP are best construed as the production of new kinds of statements exposing the intolerable conditions of prison life, others were directed to provoking intolerance for contemporary penal practices. In this regard, both models ultimately provide us with important and essential frameworks not only for understanding the activism of the GIP better but also

for thinking through what might be advantageous for current and future forms of collective resistance.

The essay is divided into three parts. Part I takes up Deleuze's remark that the GIP's work was about the production of new statements. It examines Deleuze's distinctive appropriation of Foucault's theory of statements, and, following this, shows how Deleuze's own participation in the GIP's activities, specifically his editorial work in publishing the letters of an inmate who hanged himself in prison, embodied this model. Part II turns to Foucault's claim that the GIP was an enterprise of problematization. It outlines what Foucault meant by problematization as an act of critical resistance and it examines how Foucault's contributions to the organization—taking as exemplary his advocacy of the truth-telling report by a prison psychiatrist in the midst of the prison uprisings of 1972—bore out its mission of rendering doubtful the evidences, practices, rules, institutions, and habits that supported the prison system, penal justice, the law, and, most fundamentally, punishment itself. Part III concludes the essay by briefly assessing the conceptual resources that each of these models of this short-lived relay, this precarious line of attack, offers.

## **I. DELEUZE: THE PRODUCTION OF THE NEW**

What does it mean to produce new statements? To address this question, we must begin with Foucault's archaeological method. Foucault famously defines archaeology as the description of "discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive."<sup>4</sup> To describe discourses as practices is to investigate what he calls "discursive formations," that is, sets of statements (e.g., the eighteenth-century sciences of general grammar or

natural history or the nineteenth-century sciences of biology and economics), as monuments, rather than as documents. Archaeology is the study of statements, of what has been said, for their own sake. It is to treat such formations as positivities in all their rarity and not as means (not as documents) leading us back either to the intentional states of those who produced them or to the states of affairs that they denote. In this sense, a statement is neither a sentence nor a proposition. It is not an object of interpretation whose hidden meaning is to be discerned. And it is not an instance of a logical form whose fundamental axioms are to be identified. Rather, as what is actually said, as what is actually inscribed, in all its concreteness, that is, as a monument, a statement is a function. Drawing on the mathematical sense of this term, a statement, for Foucault, is thus a relation between variables where the variables take their value wholly and exclusively from the relation that the function defines.<sup>5</sup> Though rare, then, statements are nonetheless regular.

The variables or elements at issue in a statement, Foucault contends, are nothing other than its *objects*, that about which it speaks, its *subjects*, the authoritative positions from which the statement can be asserted, its *concepts*, the series of categories or schemata through which the statement is formulated, and its *strategies*, the themes or viewpoints that the statement develops. A statement's objects, subjects, concepts, and strategies are, in a strict sense, its derivatives. A statement, for Foucault, is therefore a function of the nonempirical rules that define what can count as or what can form its valid objects, subjects, concepts, and strategies. As such, a statement is a function of the a priori. The differences between one set of rules and

another is what defines the difference between discursive formations and these rules and their differentiations shift and mutate over time. The a priori is, accordingly, historical. Thus, the general system of the rules for the formation and transformation of statements within a historical epoch is what Foucault calls that epoch's archive and archaeological description seeks nothing other than to unearth these rules precisely in their historical variability, that is, to specify discourses as practices in the element of the archive. But if this sketch of the task of archaeological investigation is correct, and if, more specifically, the rules governing the formation of statements are indeed a priori, though historical, then how can new statements be produced? Would this not mean saying something that operates according to a different set of rules? Would it not be to create a fundamentally new function with a new set of subjects, objects, concepts, and strategies as its derivatives?

Deleuze's trenchant 1986 study of Foucault's thought addresses precisely this question. One of its signature innovations is to insist that Foucault's theory of statements must be situated within his early, and too often neglected, theory of literature and its attendant conception of language. This distinctive approach enables Deleuze to isolate what he calls the unique "spontaneity of language"<sup>6</sup> that lies at the core of Foucault's archaeological method and it is this spontaneity, endemic to language itself, that Deleuze believes makes possible the production of statements beyond the confines of a historical a priori.<sup>7</sup>

*a. The Spontaneity of Language: Poverty, Power, and Works*

Foucault's studies of modernist literature—a lineage stretching, for him, from Sade and Hölderlin, to Mallarmé, Artaud, Bataille, Blanchot, Borges, to Robbe-Grillet—demonstrate that, from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, a profound shift occurred in this field, one that exposed a fundamental structure of language itself. This shift is most clearly registered in the advent of the new kind of writing that emerges precisely at this juncture.<sup>8</sup> To write, at this moment, was no longer, as it had been, a matter of expressing ideas. It was no longer principally discourse and communication. Rather, writing begins here to escape the constraints of mimesis, the rigors of representation, and becomes instead a way of experiencing all that which lies outside the interiority of reflection and knowledge; in short, all that lies abysally outside the sovereignty of the subject. Literature is able to open this radically nonsubjective, transgressive form of experience, Foucault contends, because language itself is defined by an essential poverty and an equally essential power. These two elements, which together may be said to define the formal structure of language, for Foucault, are paradoxically intertwined.

Language is essentially impoverished because, despite the immense plethora of its content, the domain of things exceeds that of the words we are able to use to try to express them. There is then a fundamental lack at the very heart of language itself, an essential failure of fit, a void, between words and things, between signifiers and the signified, and it is this lack that engenders the power of language to produce meaning in and through the multitude of ways of separating and joining words to one another. The poverty of language is what makes

possible, even necessary, its power of metamorphosis and it is the latter that enables language, in turn, to reveal things. As Foucault puts this in his only book-length study of a literary figure—that of turn-of-the-century writer Raymond Roussel, published in 1963—the “constitutive lack of language” is “the misery and celebration of the Signifier, the anguish before too many and too few signs.”<sup>9</sup> The spontaneity of language, its power to produce sense through metamorphosis, is therefore a result precisely of its failure to be adequate to, its poverty before, the task of representation.

For Foucault, then, language is able to make sense not principally by virtue of its depiction of states of affairs, nor simply by expressing a subject’s intention, but rather because, at what Foucault calls the “enunciative level,”<sup>10</sup> what Deleuze calls the “correlative space” of the statement,<sup>11</sup> there is an anonymous murmur, a relentless disorderly drone,<sup>12</sup> out of which words can be related to one another and claims made. This murmur or drone is, then, the “there is (*il y a*)” of language, the very being of language itself, that logically precedes and makes possible, and yet is effaced in, each and every “there is this or that thing.”<sup>13</sup> As such, as Foucault claims, and Deleuze is insistent on the centrality of this thesis: “The statement is, at once, neither visible nor hidden.”<sup>14</sup> It is not hidden because it is not the repository of some latent meaning that demands interpretation. Yet it is not visible because it is always covered over with sentences and propositions. To excavate, then, to carry out the work of archaeology, is to break open the empirical relation of words and things, in which we are mired in the representationalist cliché according to which we speak of that which we see and we see that of which we speak, and

expose the uniquely historical a priori stratum wherein this relation of words and things, of what is sayable and what is visible, is shown to be a limit that both separates and joins these fundamental, though distinct, elements.

Now it is precisely here at the enunciative level, at the “there is language,” that Deleuze argues that the relation of words and things must take account of the spontaneity of language, for this power accords it a certain primacy with respect to the domain of things: words are *determining*, while things are *determinable*.<sup>15</sup> And it is here, Deleuze contends, that the full weight and depth of insight into the very nature of language that Foucault was able to discover in his exploration of Roussel must be brought to bear, albeit in a way that Foucault himself never did.<sup>16</sup> In that investigation, Foucault was able to isolate the distinct literary techniques, the literary machines as he called them, that Roussel invented to exploit the poverty and power, the murmur and drone, of language and so create different kinds of sense and nonsense on and around the limit of words and things.

The significance of these techniques for our purposes here, as I will show, is that they provide the necessary framework within which to situate Deleuze’s claim that the GIP produced genuinely new statements, and not just more speeches, not just more discourse, about prisons and from those imprisoned. What, then, are these techniques?

Foucault distinguished, Deleuze tells us, three kinds of machines in Roussel’s writings: mechanical works, methodical works, and infinite works.<sup>17</sup> Mechanical works seek utterly anonymous, yet meticulous descriptions of the most mundane

and miniscule of objects, for example, as in Roussel's *La Vue* (1904), of a small picture set in a penholder, of a scene in the letterhead of hotel stationery, and of a spa pictured on the label of a bottle of mineral water. These works strive to be nothing more than, as Foucault puts it, "pure spectacles without respite"<sup>18</sup> and thus they seek to open up the domain of things in order, as Deleuze says, "to induce (*induire*) statements."<sup>19</sup>

Methodical works break from this purely descriptive mode and, through various word games, create marvels and fantastical scenes, as, for example, in *Impressions d'Afrique* (1910), where Roussel selected two random, though almost identical terms, "inductor words"—*billard* (billiard table) and *pillard* (plunderer)—and, by adding identical words capable of at least two meanings to each term, he produced two identical sentences with wildly divergent senses; he then constructed a narrative about a gala performed by shipwrecked Europeans held captive off the coast of Africa that joined the one to the other. In this way, the weaving together of random words, as Deleuze says, opens them up so as "to conduct (*conduire*) visibilities."<sup>20</sup>

Finally, infinite works, at their core, are neither descriptive nor provocative. They do not seek to render things visible by bringing them to words, nor do they create things through the play of words. Rather, here statements proliferate solely by virtue of their syntactical, even typographical, relations. It is the generation of sense, and of sense that is genuinely new, purely by formal juxtaposition, rather than observation or semantic games. In his late masterpiece, *Nouvelles impressions d'Afrique* (1932), a poem in alexandrine verse of four cantos, Roussel begins each section with the description of a scene, much like in the mechanical works, but the account is quickly broken by

a parenthesis introducing a thought occasioned by a term in the description, which, in turn, is itself interrupted by another parenthesis and so on until as many as five pairs of parentheses in the main text (not to speak of the footnotes) have been opened and closed before the continuation of the original sentence completes the canto. The effect of this embedding of parentheses within parentheses is to create a sense of constant envelopment oriented around a vanishing point, the space within the center set of parentheses that, precisely by virtue of this technique, appears always allusive, ever inaccessible. The “linear language” of the mechanical and even the methodical, with its apparent regular flow, has been left behind, replaced by a language, Foucault says, “arranged in a circle in the interior of itself, hiding that which it gives to see, flowing at a dizzying speed toward an invisible cavity where things are beyond reach and where it disappears in its mad pursuit.”<sup>21</sup> Such a language of envelopment, Deleuze claims, “makes statements blossom and proliferate (*bourgeonner et proliférer*), by virtue of their spontaneity, in such a way that they exert an infinite determination over the visible.”<sup>22</sup> The parenthesizing technique thus embeds statements deeper and deeper into one another and thereby generates fundamentally new statements, statements that are woven from the incessant buzz that is language itself, but that do not fall within the confines of discourse, representation, and communication. To produce new statements is thus to proliferate them through structural juxtaposition. In this way, the new statements seek neither to observe nor to create the visible but to fashion this domain, the domain of things, in accord with new categories of meaning. And yet, this striving to determine things, to exert an infinite determination on the visible, necessarily, as Deleuze notes, “runs aground, not in the

sense of failure, but in the strictly maritime sense”<sup>23</sup> because things remain infinitely determinable, infinitely receptive to ever new arrangements, and thus always already beyond any final determination. That is to say, language in the infinite work inevitably runs up against that which necessarily exceeds it; it runs aground on its lack, its poverty, of being able to denote exhaustively the realm of things as such.

With this framework now in place, we can come back to Deleuze’s original claim. To say that the GIP enabled the production of new statements is not, we can now see, simply to claim that the GIP sought to allow inmates and their families to speak for themselves. Deleuze did famously say in the discussion between Foucault and himself from March of 1972 that the fundamental lesson that Foucault had taught, in both his books and in the practical domain, was “the indignity of speaking for others.”<sup>24</sup> And the GIP certainly sought to allow current and former prisoners, their families, and all those forgotten and obscured voices involved in the penal system to speak, as they so often put it, to “seize the floor (*prendre la parole*),” but this they did alongside many others.<sup>25</sup> What made the GIP’s work truly unique was not, then, the discourse and communication that it fostered; it was not about, as Deleuze says in the interview from 1986, “more speeches (*discours*).” Rather, what the GIP did, according to Deleuze, was create the conditions within which new statements could be made and heard: “The goal of the GIP was less to make them [inmates and their families] talk than to design a place where people would be forced to listen to and understand them, a place that was not reduced to a riot on the prison roof, but that would ensure that what they had to say came through.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, in the end what

was truly innovative about the GIP, for Deleuze, was not that it allowed the incarcerated and others to speak of their experience but that they were able to create a forum within which fundamentally new statements about prisons could be forged and understood.<sup>27</sup> But how exactly was that accomplished?

*b. Intolérable 4: Suicides de prisons (1972)*

By invoking Foucault's unique concept of the statement, as opposed to sentences or propositions, Deleuze is saying that what the GIP sought to open was a space within which fundamentally new functions could be created, ones abiding by new rules of formation and thus ones that would produce new derivatives as well: new objects, new subjects, new concepts, and new strategies. Deleuze's reading of Foucault indicates that to do this required nothing less than to take advantage of the distinctive spontaneity of language, both its power and its poverty. But to do this, to forge a space for the production of new statements, required employing the kinds of literary techniques, the kinds of works, that Foucault had identified in Roussel's corpus.

Yet what could this possibly mean? Where among the pamphlets, meetings, announcements, the protests, the play, and the documentary do we find any evidence whatsoever of the GIP making use of any of these kinds of highly abstract, modernist literary methods? The suggestion itself seems absurd. Surely one of the keys to understanding the innovative model of social resistance that the GIP embodied does not lie in the artistic practices of avant-garde literature?

And yet. I contend that this is precisely what we find when we examine the fourth of the Intolerable Series reports: *Suicides*

*de prison* (1972). As with all the pamphlets, this volume was originally published anonymously. But it is now known to be the editorial work primarily of Daniel Defert, cofounder of the GIP, and Deleuze. The last official act of the GIP before it disbanded, the report was composed in the fall of 1972 and published by Gallimard in February of 1973. The volume contained an opening statement, cosigned by the *Comité d'action des prisonniers* (the Prisoners Action Committee, the CAP) and the *Association pour le défense des droits des détenus* (the Association for the Defense of Detainee Rights, the ADDD) (indicating the transition from the GIP to these organizations led by and serving former prisoners and their families), a list of thirty-two known suicides that had occurred in the French prison system in 1972, a set of selected case histories of these incidents, five letters from inmates and their families regarding the suicides, and an interview with Doctor Georges Fully, who served at the time as general medical inspector for the penitentiary administration.<sup>28</sup> At the center of the report, however, stood a series of letters by an inmate referred to only as “H. M.” (now known to be Gérard Grandmontagne<sup>29</sup>), a thirty-two-year-old petty criminal, first convicted and jailed at the age of seventeen. In and out of some fifteen different prisons over the course of his life, H. M. hanged himself while in solitary confinement, having been sent there for being caught having sex with another inmate. The letters were accompanied by an introduction setting forth the basics of the prisoner’s record and his history of crimes and incarcerations and they were followed by a brief unsigned commentary, both now known to be authored by Defert and Deleuze.

To be clear: I am not claiming that these letters constitute some kind of *nouveau roman* nor do I think that is what Deleuze was pointing to in the interview from 1985. Rather, I argue that the editorial practices that Deleuze and Defert employ in this volume do serve, in accordance with the literary methods sketched above, to frame these letters—to parenthesize them, we could even say—such that they are transformed from being mere discourse—the transference of information, beliefs, hopes, and fears between family members, friends, and this particular inmate—to fundamentally new kinds of statements, ones whose exemplary status make it possible, as Deleuze and Defert put it in their brief concluding commentary, “to make lived analysis (*l'analyse vécue*)”<sup>30</sup> of the processes that compel so many into incarceration. Deleuze and Defert in this volume thus exploit the power and the poverty of language to open a space within which such fundamentally new and telling statements could be forged, communicated, and ultimately, perhaps, understood.

On their own, the letters detail what amounts to a fairly banal life in incarceration with subject matter ranging from the mundane to the eccentric: reports about H. M.'s condition, his troubled interactions with his prison-appointed psychiatrist, references to his interests in music and books, constant pleading to write back, and desires to be elsewhere, to be otherwise, whether through drugs (opium, specifically) or other means. All this accompanied, however, by the irruption, at times, of a changing set of voices (personalities) speaking, an eruption of schizophrenic discourse in and among the detritus of the everyday. Overall, though, left to themselves, the letters would really

say very little. But here is where the editorial practice proves decisive.

The opening statement of the pamphlet begins by acknowledging that suicides have always been part of the prison system. Yet, it claims, their number and, more importantly, their significance have now changed. The statement maps out three specific ways in which the wave of suicides afflicting the French prison system in 1972 was unique. First, the inmates took their own lives for what were clearly deeply personal reasons that, when combined with the conditions of the prisons, rendered their existence impossible. But many of the suicides formed part of the life of the prison and, as such, they expressed the very struggle against this system, a struggle that was taking place within its own walls where prisoners have, as Deleuze and Defert note, “only their bodies with which to fight and resist.”<sup>31</sup> Second, many of these deaths became catalysts for the revolts that spread across the French penitentiary system in the winter of 1971–72. So, they had not only a personal significance but a symbolic one as well. And finally, Deleuze and Defert contend that some suicides were related directly to the failed promises of reform offered by the government during this period. These reforms, they argue, actually obscure more direct forms of repression, such as massive retaliations for the slightest of provocations. They ultimately rendered more traditional forms of protest, for example, hunger strikes, ineffectual. It is in this unique context that suicides necessarily began to escalate, not as marking the collapse of the revolts but rather as another newer expression, as Deleuze and Defert put it, “of the detainees’ collective intolerance and their appeal to public opinion.”<sup>32</sup> The suicides were thus not merely the last desper-

ate moves in the internal struggle against the prison system, nor merely symbolic instigations that set off revolts. They were, rather, the first in the “forms of combat developed for tomorrow.”<sup>33</sup>

The report next lists the thirty-two suicides that had occurred in the French prison system during 1972 (the ones of which the GIP was aware at the time), providing dates, locations, and where available, names.<sup>34</sup> Deleuze and Defert then offer what is clearly the pamphlet’s core brief:

These suicides not only occurred *in* (en) prison, the penitentiary regime and administration as well as the criminal justice system had a direct hand in them. These are suicides *of* prison (*suicides de prison*).<sup>35</sup>

After several brief case studies from the list, Deleuze and Defert place the section that stands at the core of the report—“H. M.’s Letters”—prefacing it, as noted above, with an introduction setting forth in outline H. M.’s record and following it with a brief commentary. Now it is the way in which the latter text’s central claims serve to frame the letters themselves that I believe we must consider more carefully, as it is here that the literary devices at work in the report begin to become clear.

Deleuze and Defert begin by noting the difficulty faced by young people in France,<sup>36</sup> once convicted of even the slightest of infractions, of ever eluding the traps of delinquency and recidivism: “By a very precise system of police, criminal records, and supervision, which deprives them of any chance of escaping the consequences of a first conviction, these young people are led to return to prison very quickly after they have been released.”<sup>37</sup> One conviction leads to another and to another

and quite soon the “little delinquent” is classified “irredeemable”; accordingly, they become a creature of incarceration.

In prison, Deleuze and Defert contend, these young people live on what is often a quite narrow border between the temptation to commit suicide and the birth of a certain form of political consciousness. This consciousness is not concerned with vague indictments of society, nor of fate, nor even about making new resolutions for how to live. Rather, this unique political awareness seeks nothing less than to return again to what is clearly one of the pivotal claims of the commentary, “to make lived analysis (*l'analyse vécue*) of the personified mechanisms that ceaselessly push them into the correctional home, into the hospital, into the barrack, into prison.”<sup>38</sup> This analysis, which Deleuze and Defert refer to as a “new type (*genre*) of political reflection,” “tends to erase the traditional distinctions between public and private, sexual and social, collective grievance and personal way of life” and it is nourished, they say, by “the need to write to relatives and friends.”<sup>39</sup> In such a context, a prisoner’s correspondence is no longer simply a record of their communications with their family and friends about their needs, their lives, their obsessions. That is to say, it is no longer simply discourse. Rather, such correspondence is, as Deleuze and Defert describe H. M.’s, “exemplary because, through the qualities of soul and thought, it says exactly *what a prisoner thinks*. And it is not what we usually believe.”<sup>40</sup>

But what could it possibly mean to say that the correspondence of any single inmate is exemplary of what a prisoner *as such* thinks? What does it even mean to speak of a prisoner as such? I will return to these important questions and the issues they raise at the end of this essay. But to begin to address them,

we must recall, as Deleuze reminds us, both the formal structure of language—its poverty and its power—and the literary machines that Foucault identified in Roussel's work, for these are the underlying architecture and techniques that make possible the transformation of a prisoner's correspondence into an exemplary instance of carceral political reflection.

H. M.'s letters, like anyone's, are essentially poor because that is the very nature of language itself. They necessarily fail to depict, fully and completely, the states of affairs, personal and beyond, of which they speak. They suffer, like all writing, from the inherent void between words and things. And yet, as we saw in Deleuze's distinctive integration of Foucault's studies of literature into his archaeological method, it is precisely from this poverty that the power of language to create both sense and nonsense via metamorphosis, its spontaneity, springs. For Foucault, we recall, words, as Deleuze insists, are *determining*, things are *determinable*.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, H. M.'s correspondence is open to transformation. It can be taken out of its singular determinate context—communicating one inmate's experiences, wishes, and wants to his family and friends—and constructed as something other than what it, at least initially, is. It can be made into an exemplar of what prisoners as such think. But how is this accomplished?

Using Deleuze's later classification of literary techniques that he derived from Foucault's reading of Roussel, we can say that the editorial practice of *Suicides de prison* is not that of mechanical or methodical works. Deleuze and Defert in this volume seek neither meticulous description of the mundane, nor the fabrication of images through semantic games. As such, they seek neither to express the visible nor to create it out of

words. Instead, the editorial techniques employed in this pamphlet are those of an infinite work: they produce new statements through structural juxtaposition. The materials that surround the correspondence are not then, strictly speaking, commentary. They do not seek to uncover the meaning buried in H. M.'s words. But neither are they merely a way to classify the correspondence according to some predetermined typology. H. M.'s statements, as Deleuze would say, are neither visible nor hidden. They demand archaeological excavation, a breaking open of the representationalist dogma of the relation of words and things, and this is precisely what their juxtapositional framing provides.

By setting the correspondence within the social-political taxonomy of suicide-struggles offered by the opening statement, along with the claim that suicides are a product of the prison, rather than simply an occurrence within its walls, and by fabricating the pseudonym, H. M.,<sup>42</sup> the concluding text is able to frame, or better, parenthesize these letters as a privileged point of access into the new kind of critical reflection that emerges under these unique conditions. The relations among these elements together establish a space where the things about which the letters originally spoke, the authoritative positions from which the letters were written, the series of categories or schemata that the letters employed to speak about these experiences, and the themes or viewpoints developed in the correspondence, are all fundamentally changed. No longer do they stand as the testament of a single, solitary inmate (G rard Grandmontagne) seeking to communicate with the outside world and with, in particular, his boyfriend. Rather, as a result of structural juxtaposition, the correspondence becomes

emblematic of what any prisoner caught up in the midst of the struggles and conflicts of the French prison system in 1972 was thinking. It becomes a record of the “new kind of political reflection” that is uniquely able to analyze the way in which the anonymous structures of power become embodied in the personnel that administer the daily life of an inmate—the guards, the wardens, and the doctors and psychiatrists. Enveloped in this way, H. M.’s letters are able to become genuinely new statements, new functions with new derivatives, ones that in this setting can perhaps be heard for what they have to tell us, what their “infinite determination over the visible” strives to express. But what is it that we hear in these fundamentally new statements? What are its new objects, subjects, concepts, and strategies?

Deleuze and Defert contend that, couched in this way, it becomes clear that what the correspondence is truly obsessed with, what political reflection in this context focuses upon, is nothing other than “all sorts of desires to flee, such as to live (*envies de fuir, comme de vivre*).”<sup>43</sup> This is not, however, a desire to escape confinement wholly and completely. Rather, it is a concrete desire to flee from certain, definite forms of constriction: it is fleeing the traps set by the police that led H. M. back to prison; fleeing France, as he had wanted to before getting arrested, and going to India (on a spiritual journey); fleeing himself in prison as he undoes certain personalities that inhabit him—hence, fleeing, antipsychiatrically, as a schizophrenic; fleeing, as Genet taught, by “staying cool” in the face of feelings of self-persecution; fleeing into community away from the fascistic counterculture groups of the day, active, political flight, in the manner of prison radical and Black Panther

George Jackson, where one flees while looking for a weapon;<sup>44</sup> and, finally and tragically, fleeing by committing suicide when life itself simply becomes too difficult to bear.<sup>45</sup> Hence, what prisoners as such think about is what Deleuze, together with Félix Guattari, would come to call “lines of flight (*lignes de fuite*)” or “deterritorializations”: all the dimensions of a set of relations that tend fluidly to slip away from rigid structure and thereby continually disturb any effort to impose stasis and order. In this sense, the multiple desires to flee actually precede imprisonment and mutate in accordance with the constraints that a life in incarceration present. Carceral reflection thus teaches that the final word on power, as Deleuze famously put this crucial point in his later study of Foucault, is that “*resistance is first*.”<sup>46</sup>

Now in H. M.’s case, his homosexuality—which was always taken up as part of the tactics employed by the prison administration to divide the prisoners against one another—was used by a guard (who reported catching him in the act) to have him assigned to solitary confinement for eight days. And it was there that life itself proved unbearable, intolerable, and the only way to flee, for him, was to take his own life. It thus becomes clear, Deleuze and Defert argue, that this act was only the last, desperate struggle against a form of power that by means of an “ensemble of deliberate and personified provocations”<sup>47</sup> creates and ensures order precisely by fabricating those it excludes and condemns. Resistance, any form of the desire to flee, stands as an existential threat to such power. Deleuze and Defert thus conclude with an indictment of the penitentiary system and its agents for their part in producing this death, this specific suicide *of the prison* (*suicide de prison*): “A certain num-

ber of people are directly and personally responsible for the death of this prisoner.”<sup>48</sup>

To produce truly new statements about the prison and not simply more speeches, more discourse, thus requires not just allowing the inmates to speak, allowing them to seize the floor (*prendre la parole*), it requires creating a space within which such statements can emerge and proliferate and a space within which such statements can genuinely be heard and attended to in all their radicality. Exploiting the spontaneity of language through the editorial practices of structural juxtaposition, Deleuze and Defert in *Suicides de prison*, I contend, sought to do just that. And in doing so, they provide one model for how the GIP was able creatively and radically to disseminate information about the intolerable conditions within the prison system and provoke intolerance of such conditions amongst the public.

## II. FOUCAULT: THE PROBLEMATIZATION OF THE GIVEN

What does it mean to say that the GIP was an enterprise of problematization? To answer this question, we must begin with the concept of problematization itself. It has two distinct senses in Foucault's thought: one, methodological; the other, critical.<sup>49</sup> Put crudely, for the former problematization denotes the proper object of historical inquiry, while, for the latter it refers to a project to be pursued. To clarify this distinction, let us begin with a brief outline of the methodological sense.

Foucault first officially introduced the methodological sense of problematization in the Introduction to the second volume of the History of Sexuality series, *L'usage des plaisirs*

(1984).<sup>50</sup> This text, which was to serve as an introduction to the revised plan for the series, proved to be Foucault's last attempt to reformulate the basic tenets of his historical methodology. Distinguishing the object of his historical inquiries from that of a history of ideas and a history of mentalities or practices, Foucault declares that what he seeks to study are the "problematizations through which being gives itself as what can and must be thought and the practices on the basis of which these problematizations are formed."<sup>51</sup> The former, which he equates with experiences, and more specifically their historically variant forms or fields, are the objects of the archaeological dimension of the method, while tracing the latter, the practices by which they emerge, is the concern of its genealogical dimension.

A problematization is not then the representation of a prior existent object, but neither is it the fabrication in discourse of an object that did not previously exist. Rather, it refers to the discursive and nondiscursive practices whereby something is constituted as a matter for thought—with a definite set of objects, rules of action, and forms of self-relation—from which the subsequent reflection of the period takes its bearings.<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, the task of a "critical history of thought," as Foucault referred to his research during this period, is always to work back from the responses, the proposed solutions, offered in a historical epoch to the underlying "general form of problematization that has made them possible."<sup>53</sup> That is to say, the work of a history of thought is to isolate the historically varying field within which modes of representation and techniques of control operate (archaeology)

and to account for its emergence via specific sets of shifting practices (genealogy).

With this sketch of the methodological usage of problematization in hand, we can turn to what I have called its critical sense. Foucault's histories are often said to call into question the legitimacy of the supposedly necessary practices and epistemic positions that they examine by exposing their fundamental contingency. And this has led some of his readers to view these histories as rendering the practices and positions that they consider problematic, as problematizing them. But for Foucault, the relationship between historical inquiry and problematization is more nuanced than this approach suggests. The study of historical forms of problematization contributes to the work of critical thought, but it is not simply equivalent to it. Historical inquiry returns us to the roots of how various practices have been problematized in the past. And doing this can assist in freeing thought from its current allegiance, explicitly or implicitly, to forms of problematization for which it repeatedly seeks ever different solutions. It is in this way that archaeological and genealogical inquiry is properly said to aid in the work of what Foucault called, in an important, though often neglected passage that he added for the 1984 French translation of the famous discussions he held with Dreyfus and Rabinow in 1983, "the work of problematization and perpetual reproblematization."<sup>54</sup>

Thought itself, then, problematizes. The task of critique is to step back and reflect upon whatever entrenched practice or position, due to a complex of social, economic, and political processes, emerges as uncertain or unfamiliar and to seek not a resolution to these difficulties, but a new way of posing what is

at stake in the matter at hand. To do this, thought must be relieved of all that it has taken for granted about this issue so that it can pose a fundamentally new problematization, otherwise it threatens merely to throw out but one more solution to an already established problematic. Now, Foucault also spoke of this work of unblocking thought from its prior commitments to a preceding form of problematization as itself a kind of problematizing, but this is clearly a distinctly critical rather than methodological sense of the term. Here, to problematize means not to pose a new set of objects, relations, and rules, but to disinter thought from its entrenchment in calcified forms of thinking and practice. Returning again to the passage that Foucault added to his discussions with Dreyfus and Rabinow, he writes that, “The work of thought is not to denounce the evil that secretly dwells in everything that exists, but to sense (*pressentir*) the danger that threatens in all that is habitual, and to render problematic all that is solid.”<sup>55</sup> To problematize in this critical sense, then, is precisely to aid reflection in awakening from its dogmatic slumber.

Accordingly, archaeological and genealogical investigation of the history of problematizations is one way to contribute to the work of critique, but there are other forms as well and this, I believe, is where the claim about the GIP becomes significant. Recall Foucault said in the interview from April of 1984 that, “The GIP, I believe, was an enterprise of ‘problematization,’ an effort to render the evidences, practices, rules, institutions, and habits that had remained sedimented for decades and decades problematic and doubtful.”<sup>56</sup> Now certainly none of the activities of the GIP can be said to be historical, let alone archaeological or genealogical. So, in what sense are its efforts to be

thought of as problematizing? More precisely, how, exactly, did it seek to render the underpinnings of the penal system problematic?

The key to answering this question lies in one of the most important strands of thought that emerged out of the GIP experience for Foucault, namely the question of the role of intellectuals in political praxis. Foucault had, of course, spoken about the relationship between intellectuals and their social and political contexts before his engagement in the GIP—taking Sartre as his principal example<sup>57</sup>—but, from the interviews he gave during this time and just after, it is evident that his work in this organization challenged him to develop a fundamentally new way of thinking of the role of intellectuals in social and political movements.<sup>58</sup> Put most simply, the GIP's approach to rendering the sedimented procedures and commitments upon which the penal system stood problematic was not just to create a space within which prisoners could speak of their experiences and be heard, it was also to enable those within these systems of power with expertise in the violence of routine practices to engage in a form of critique that did not rail against how power operates generally, but testifies to and denounces its specific instances: as Foucault would put it, referring to the testimony of Doctor Édith Rose, the staff psychiatrist at the prison at Toul, “As someone within a system of power, instead of critiquing how it operates, she denounced what happened there, what had just happened, on a certain day, in a certain place, under certain circumstances.”<sup>59</sup>

*a. "A New Personage": The Challenges and Risks of the Specific Intellectual*

We will return shortly to the details of Doctor Rose's testimony and the situation in the prison at Toul, but before we do, we need briefly to examine the elements of the new conception of the intellectual that arose for Foucault in the wake of his work in the GIP. This conception revolves around the distinction between the *specific* and the *universal* intellectual.

In the famous discussion between Deleuze and Foucault from March of 1972, Foucault noted that the role of the intellectual had fundamentally begun to change:

The role of the intellectual is no longer to situate themselves "a little ahead or slightly to the side" in order to speak the silent truth to everyone; it is rather to struggle against forms of power where they are, at once, object and instrument: in the order of "knowledge," of "truth," of "consciousness," and of "discourse."<sup>60</sup>

Already here, drawing clearly from his experiences in the GIP, Foucault sees theory, the supposed domain of the intellectual, not as simply being expressed or translated into social and political struggle but as already itself a form of such praxis. It is, he says, "a struggle to make power appear and open up where it is most invisible and insidious."<sup>61</sup> The intellectual is no longer, then, the bearer of the universal, the one who speaks in the name of justice and truth as such. Rather, they are the one who speaks precisely from their unique ("local, regional . . . nontotalizing") position—as, at once, an object and an instrument of knowledge, truth, consciousness, and discourse—and

engages the struggle with and against power precisely at this locus.<sup>62</sup>

By June of 1976, in his extensive interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino, Foucault developed a broader historical account of this shift and introduced a terminological distinction to capture it.<sup>63</sup> We won't be able here to review all the elements of Foucault's discussion, but we can isolate its central theses.

For a long time, Foucault contends, intellectuals wrote and spoke with the authority of a master of truth and justice, as a "representative of the universal" or a "cantor of the eternal."<sup>64</sup> But a new relationship between theory and practice arose in the wake of World War II. Specifically, a new configuration of the relationship between power and knowledge took hold at this time when scientific and technical forms of understanding became extended and intertwined in fundamentally new ways with economic and strategic techniques. The model intellectual thus was no longer, as they had been in the nineteenth century, the genius writer, e.g., Voltaire or Zola, who spoke of the values that redound to everyone, rather, in the twentieth century, the intellectual par excellence became the technical expert, the savant, e.g., the physicist (Oppenheimer) or the biologist (the post-Darwinian evolutionists), whose highly specialized cognitive skills and expertise enables them, in the extreme, either to benefit or irrevocably destroy life itself. The former model Foucault refers to as the "universal intellectual," while the latter, the "new personage"<sup>65</sup> that emerges at this point, he terms the "specific intellectual."<sup>66</sup>

Foucault observes that with this new conception of what it is to be an intellectual comes an equally unique challenge. The intellectual no longer speaks on behalf of the universal, in the name of that which applies to each and to all—that is, in the name of truth as such. Rather, the specific intellectual is to engage, as Foucault puts it, in a “battle for truth or, at least, about truth.”<sup>67</sup> He quickly clarifies that such a struggle is not about championing one set of claims as a body of truths (science) over against another as false or illusory (ideology). Rather, the charge of the specific intellectual, he says, is to contest the “dispositif of truth.”<sup>68</sup> But this claim does little more than raise two basic questions: What exactly is a dispositif of truth? And how is it to be contested?

A dispositif of truth, for Foucault, is a nexus of power and knowledge where both are thought in terms of reciprocal determinations, rather than either being reduced to the other. This nexus is composed of the historically shifting set of a priori rules that regulate the production, distribution, and operation of statements together with the varying ways in which these statements become intertwined with techniques of power that serve not only to produce and sustain them but also to induce and extend them. Central to this notion is the distinction that Foucault draws between the acceptability of a statement and its veridicality.<sup>69</sup> For a set of signs to count as a well-formed statement, it must accord with the historical rules defining what is an appropriate object to be judged, what kind of epistemic agent is authorized to make such declarations, the concepts that must be brought to bear in defining the object, and the theorems and forms of argumentation (strategies) that are taken to be valid in deliberating about the object. It is only

insofar as it has met these logically prior conditions that a statement can then be a candidate for being assessed as to its truth-bearing, that is, as to whether or not it accords with the state of affairs that, under these conditions, it intends to depict in some way or other. Stated otherwise, it must first be acceptable in order to be able to be either true or false. A *dispositif* of truth thus can be said to set down the parameters within which truth, in its conventional correspondence or coherentist senses, is able to become a matter at issue.

Conditions of acceptability become entangled with normative practices of control and governance that they serve to legitimate and that they thereby assist in becoming instilled, shaping and molding the behavior of both individuals and groups. In turn, these practices not only support these conditions but also induce and extend them beyond the field of knowledge proper into that of conduct and disposition. The “battle for truth or, at least, about truth,” the battle to contest the “*dispositif* of truth,” is therefore a struggle to redefine the rules of acceptability, the techniques of power, and the ways in which these become historically and concretely intertwined. It is a struggle to alter the conditions for what counts as a well-formed statement (the objects, agents, theorems, and strategies that must be met) and the authoritative practices that guide and mold action itself. It is in this sense, then, that the challenge of the specific intellectual is—in a phrase that is as insightful as it is misunderstood—“to constitute a new politics of truth”: “to detach the power of truth from the forms of (social, economic, and cultural) hegemony within which it currently operates.”<sup>70</sup>

Now, if this is indeed the challenge of the specific intellectual, then how is it to be accomplished? How can the nexus of the conditions of acceptability and the techniques of power with which they are coupled be reconfigured, even redefined?

In response to this decisive question, Foucault notes that the specific intellectual—precisely because of their specificity—confronts this task with a unique set of obstacles and dangers. The specificity of the contemporary intellectual is threefold: (a) they stand in a specific class position, whether in service to capital or to labor or a mixture of both; (b) they work under determinate conditions, within a delimited field of research, perhaps with a defined status in a laboratory, and always with concrete political and economic demands that come along with their roles in universities, hospitals, corporations, et cetera; and finally, (c) they labor under the specific historical conditions for what can count as candidates for viable knowledge and the attendant techniques of control set down by the *dispositif* of truth that reigns in their particular society.<sup>71</sup> That they are experts means that their struggles can have effects at the level of the *dispositif* itself. Like no one else in society, by virtue of the position their abilities afford them, they are able to contest what counts as well-formed statements and thus what knowledge claims are even candidates for being true or false. The specific intellectual is uniquely positioned to engage the struggle to constitute a “new politics of truth,” but their specificity defines not only their challenge but their obstacles as well.

Working from determinate class positions and with equally concrete demands—professional, economic, and political—the specific intellectual inherently risks being caught in struggles (petty and significant and all those mixtures of both) solely at

these levels and, as a result, never being able to grapple and contest what can count as viable truth-bearing claims and the practices that support and extend such forms of knowledge as such. In this sense, Foucault contends, the specific intellectual always risks the possibility of having their work remain confined precisely to their specific region, never able to develop beyond their local domain. The example that Foucault cites of this risk—taken, as he notes, from the French context—is instructive:

The struggle around the prisons, the penal system, and the police-judicial apparatus, because it has developed alone among social workers and former prisoners, has tended increasingly to separate itself from the forces that would have enabled it to grow. It has allowed itself to be penetrated by a completely naïve and archaic ideology that makes the delinquent at once into the innocent victim and the pure rebel, the lamb of great social sacrifice and the young wolf of future revolutions. This return to anarchist themes from the end of the nineteenth century was possible only because of a failure of integration of current strategies. And the result has been a deep split between this monotonous and lyrical little chant, which is only heard in a few small groups, and the masses who have good reason not to take it as “money down,” but who also—thanks to the studiously cultivated fear of criminality—accept the maintenance or, even, the reinforcement, of the judicial and police apparatus.<sup>72</sup>

Clearly, given that Foucault writes this in 1976, the target of his critique is fairly wide in scope, but it must be read as at least

a partial indictment of the GIP's own work and of its legacy, particularly as it was taken over by the CAP and the ADDD.<sup>73</sup> At its core, it locates the weaknesses of these movements in their never reaching a level of sufficient generality—understood here, minimally, as public support—that would enable them to contest the dispositif of truth governing the entire penal system. In this sense, the intellectuals involved fell prey to the risks of their own specificity, to their class positions and the exigencies of their lives as employed experts. The movements remained too elitist, too removed from the general public, and it was in this split that the old ideology of the criminal as both victim and rebel reemerged, serving in the end to widen the gulf between the public and the social movement. It was this distance, Foucault concludes, that allowed the system to maintain itself by cultivating a general fear of criminals. Does not this example suggest that the obstacles of specificity are simply too great to surmount, that the specific intellectual is doomed to be the mouthpiece of their class or their local struggles, or that their own determinateness prohibits them from ever genuinely being able to problematize penal practice itself?

Surprisingly, Foucault identifies precisely this moment of crisis, this moment of obstacle and risk, as a point at which the critical function of the specific intellectual needs to be reconsidered, rather than abandoned. Despite the nostalgia for the universal intellectual that this situation provokes, we cannot go back. And with the ever increasing political responsibilities laid upon experts in the field, their role is becoming ever more important and therefore demands rethinking if it is to have any hope of meeting its challenge to problematize its field by constituting a new politics of truth. The evidence that Foucault

adduces for the possibility of such a reconsideration is curious but nevertheless significant: “It suffices to consider the important results obtained in psychiatry: they prove that these local, specific struggles haven’t been a mistake and haven’t led to a dead end.”<sup>74</sup> No further elaboration of this reference follows, so the obvious questions arise: What exactly are these important results obtained by psychiatry and how do they support the claim that specific intellectuals can connect with the general public in a way that allows them to contest the dispositif of truth itself?

Given that this reference follows the critical assessment of the prison struggle in France—it appears in the very next paragraph—I propose that it is best read as referring to Doctor Édith Rose, the psychiatrist at the Ney prison in Toul, one of the facilities that experienced a major inmate uprising in the winter of 1971–72.<sup>75</sup> The GIP supported this rebellion extensively and publicized Doctor Rose’s courageous testimony detailing the daily inner workings of the Ney prison. Accordingly, to address the question about how a specific intellectual can contest the intertwining rules of acceptability and techniques of control under which they live, I turn now to this testimony, the events surrounding it, and Foucault’s advocacy on behalf of Doctor Rose.

*b. “Le discours de Toul” (1971)*

A series of prison revolts rocked the French penitentiary system during the winter of 1971–72. In late September 1971, following numerous hunger strikes in various prisons protesting the conditions of their detention, two inmates at the Clairvaux prison took a nurse and a guard hostage and

demanded weapons and a car for their escape. The prison was stormed by authorities the next morning and both hostages were found dead.<sup>76</sup> The GIP responded by holding a large public meeting on November 11th to draw attention to the situation in the French and American prison systems, screening a documentary about the Attica revolt, which had taken place in September, and San Quentin, the site of the August killing of Black Panther leader George Jackson, along with testimony about the conditions in French prisons by former prisoners and their families.<sup>77</sup> The session included a brief address by its principal organizer, Daniel Defert, who called the protests by the prisoners a “struggle for existence” and declared that the GIP’s making public of the material conditions of detention—as it did in the first report in the *Intolérable* series, *Enquête dans 20 prisons*, published at the end of May 1971—was to engage in a fight “for the dignity of the imprisoned.”<sup>78</sup>

Due to the fact that similar hostage-takings had occurred earlier in the year, the French government had instituted a major crackdown in October with a general increase in inmate surveillance, but it reached its peak when, on November 12th, the long-standing practice of allowing inmates to receive Christmas packages from their families—what one prisoner had called “the last thing that made us men like other men”—was rescinded. Hunger strikes ensued throughout the French system in protest (at Draguignan, Lyon, Poissy, Fresnes, etc.). In support, the GIP staged a demonstration, on the night of December 4th, outside the Ministry of Justice in the Place Vendôme calling life in prison—in a tract drafted for the protest—not simply deprivation of freedom, but “degradation, humiliation, beating, and lack of work.”<sup>79</sup>

A succession of major prison revolts followed. The first, beginning on December 5th—the day after the GIP demonstration—occurred at the Ney prison in Toul, a small town in the northeast of France.<sup>80</sup> The uprising began with a sit-in that sought the removal of the warden of the facility whom the prisoners charged had a long history of torture and of carrying out a reign of terror throughout the prison.<sup>81</sup> The protests quickly expanded, however, to include demands for improvement of the basic material conditions of incarceration: food, showers, heat, access to dental services, pay, the removal of solitary confinement, et cetera.<sup>82</sup> But, after initially announcing that the director would indeed be removed and agreeing to review the inmates' demands, the administration failed to act and the protests became more aggressive, with inmates destroying property and facilities and taking to the roofs to communicate their demands directly to the public. The revolt was put down on December 13th by violent assault with numerous injuries, casualties, and punishments, both legal (indictment of the suspected ringleaders) and otherwise (e.g., beatings at the hands of the guards). The supposed instigators were transferred to a prison at nearby Écrouves.

The Toul GIP affiliate, together with the Paris group, worked closely with the banned Maoist organization, the *Gauche Prolétarienne*, to mobilize support around the revolt.<sup>83</sup> And it was at a December 16th joint press conference that Foucault read aloud the report from Doctor Rose, a report she had delivered to the Inspector General of the Penitentiary Administration, the French President, the Minister of Justice, and the National French Order of Physicians.<sup>84</sup> In it we hear

the rare voice of a specific intellectual struggling ultimately to contest the very *dispositif* of truth under which she worked.

The report poses a rather stark question for the French public:

Are you interested in condoning methods and regulations in the prisons that drive detainees to murderously violent conduct and that embitter them to such a degree that all that remains, as a solution for them upon release, is “to relapse” or should we envisage, with people of good will, methods that would tend to defuse this aggressivity that we sense is escalating and that makes us so afraid?<sup>85</sup>

The report proceeds to detail various regulations and practices—from a requirement to earn access to sports by remaining free from sanction for an entire year to the arbitrary confiscation of photographs, and the denial of cigarettes to confinement of inmates for entire days in seven by ten foot cells—that expose the various levels at which the activities and associations of the inmates were minutely and continually controlled by the administration. And it includes a section outlining the attempts (all denied) by Doctor Rose, together with the chaplains assigned to the facility,<sup>86</sup> to see the prisoners during the revolt and her analysis of the horrid working conditions and mental toll that the prison took on what she calls Toul’s “other victims: the guards.”<sup>87</sup>

However, at the center of Doctor Rose’s report stood a practice that she claimed “most nauseated and pained” her, the use of the restraint belt (*la contention*): a security measure, as it was referred to, wherein inmates who were deemed by the

administration to have attempted suicide or self-mutilation had their hands and arms strapped together, often for a week or more, were spoon fed, and reportedly—though Rose did not witness this aspect directly, she did hear from others who did—some were even left strapped in their own excrement.<sup>88</sup> Rose notes that this practice, though hidden and selective, was nonetheless known throughout the facility and, importantly for her as the staff psychiatrist, the inmates who were submitted to this medically outmoded treatment—supposedly those with some kind of mental illness—were never diagnosed by her or had this kind of therapy or anything even remotely like it ever prescribed by her.

Returning to the choice she posed at the beginning of the report—to continue to facilitate relapse or to begin to defuse aggression—Rose concludes by calling on her fellow citizens to get involved in the movement that the uprising had just begun, saying “I refuse to admit that a man is irremediably damned at the age of 20 as so many people at the Ney prison think.”<sup>89</sup>

The Rose report is a scathing exposé of the internal workings of the prison at Toul and, as such, it certainly counts as damning testimony against the practices and regulations in force there. But in what sense can it be said to be part of the struggle of a specific intellectual “to constitute a new politics of truth,” a struggle to alter the very conditions for what counts as a well-formed statement and the authoritative practices that guide and mold the penal system itself, a battle “to detach the power of truth from the forms of (social, economic, and cultural) hegemony within which it currently operates”? Is it not caught precisely in the specificity of Toul and all that that

entails? In a word, does it not fall prey to the obstacles inherent in being a specific intellectual?

Foucault published what amounted to a brief commentary on the report, entitled “Le discours de Toul,” on December 27th in *Le Nouvel Observateur*. It can be read—although somewhat anachronistically since Foucault had yet to develop the concept and task of the specific intellectual—as addressing the very questions we have just posed.

Foucault draws attention first to the *form* of Doctor Rose’s report. From a position in power, Doctor Rose spoke, resolutely, *of* power. Yet, she offered neither a historical analysis nor a moral critique. She did not contextualize the penal practices she discussed nor submit them to ethical judgment. Instead, she simply but methodically, and under oath (“I swear it, I attest to it” is the piece’s constant refrain) catalogued the practices that she witnessed, found troubling, and about which she wanted to alert her superiors and the public at large. The mode of her address, Foucault contends, is profoundly significant to her calling into question the very system of power of which she is herself a part. It takes the form of what might be called sheer documentation. As Foucault puts it, “Such and such a day, at such and such place, I was there and I saw; at such and such a moment, so and so told me . . .”<sup>90</sup>

Foucault argues that the penal system, like all institutional structures, is actually capable of accommodating standard internal critiques such as those offered by historical analysis or even moral judgment, for these approaches actually accept the practice of punishment itself and criticize only its aberrations or abuses. In this sense, such criticism remains wholly abstract or

formal. And though penal institutions may pretend to recoil before such analyses, these forms of critique, Foucault says, are nothing more than “their vanity and their blush;” accordingly, “they live through them.”<sup>91</sup> What they can’t tolerate, according to Foucault, is the detailed, first-hand reporting of what actually occurs within their confines, especially when it is made directly by those who are part of them: “when someone suddenly turns their back and begins screaming in the other direction: ‘This is what I just saw here, now, this is what is happening. This is the event.’”<sup>92</sup> Doctor Rose, like every specific intellectual, thus speaks from a determinate position of authoritative knowledge and does so in a way that is equally determinate and concrete. To bear this kind of witness, therefore, not only exposes what has been kept secret but also does so with a concreteness, detail, and immediacy, that is to say, with a specificity, that the formalisms of historical and moral critique are never able to reach.<sup>93</sup> But our question now only seems to return: How does this mode of discourse not just reinforce the very obstacles and dangers that are inherent in the specific intellectual’s position? How does the specific intellectual move beyond their local domain to contest the dispositif of truth under which they labor?

To see this, we must follow Foucault and turn to the *content* of Doctor Rose’s report. What is it, then, that Doctor Rose’s documentation and testimony uncovers and exposes? Foucault contends that it is neither dishonesty nor mistakes. Again, the report is not about moral indictment, nor contextualization. Rather, what the report places before Doctor Rose’s superiors and the general public is nothing other than “the violence of relations of power,” what Foucault refers to also as

“the forces that confront one another” and the “act of domination.”<sup>94</sup> Foucault argues that this—the mundane but indisputable immediate violence of power, from the intrusive confiscation of photographs and the summary denial of Christmas packages to the brutality of the restraint belt—is precisely that from which it is demanded that we look away, that we concern ourselves, instead, with abstractions, whether those are provided by the right or the left: tables, statistics, and bell curves, from the administrative side, or working conditions, budgets, loans, and staff recruitment, from the unionist side.<sup>95</sup> Paradoxically, in seeking to grapple with the so-called evils of power “at the root,” that is, at the level of these structural abstractions, we are continually led away from the actual concrete events of power itself. But it is precisely about this concrete, immediate violence and from this place of sheer domination that Doctor Rose speaks. Situated within a system of power, she does not critique its operations but instead denounces its occurrences, the material events of power itself, in all their specificity and she does so through nothing less than simple, patient documentation: “what was happening there, what had just happened, on a certain day, in a certain place, under certain circumstances.”<sup>96</sup>

Foucault thus sees in the immediacy of the reporting mode in Doctor Rose’s testimony a way of exposing power relations that is able to bypass the clichés that afflict the conventional forms of both critique and defense and that sets out the operations of power in its microphysical, material detail. Approaching the issues that incarceration presents in this way, Doctor Rose not only succeeds in exposing the heinous practices employed at Toul but she also renders doubtful and problematic her audience’s habitual acceptance that crime can only really be effec-

tively dealt with through this specific form of punishment. In other words, by detailing the various actual practices that define incarcerated life, the Rose report is an emblematic act, for Foucault, of genuine critique. It enables its audience to reflect upon what has become unfamiliar and uncertain, what has become problematic, due here to the uprisings and the government's responses, and poses what is at stake in these practices in a new way. It disinters thought from its entrenched views about punishment and allows us "not to denounce the evil that secretly dwells in everything that exists, but to sense (*pressentir*) the danger that threatens all that is habitual, and to render problematic all that is solid."<sup>97</sup> In a word, the report is an act of problematization in the critical sense.

But if I am correct in following Foucault's lead and deeming the report an act of problematization, how does it move beyond the material specificities of the power relations in the Ney prison? More precisely, how does its account of the heinous practices of incarceration in this facility engage a struggle to alter the intertwined conditions of acceptability and normativity? Foucault indicates that Doctor Rose's report, what he names here, "the 'discourse of Toul' (*le 'discours de Toul'*)," moves beyond the confines of its own specific point of origin by saying that it will "perhaps be an important event in the history of the penitentiary and psychiatric institution."<sup>98</sup> But how does it do this?

Surprisingly, at least initially, Foucault ties the report's possible significance within this history, its ability to contest what is acceptable and normative within this line of descent, not to its contents, nor even to its distinctive form—the foci of his analysis thus far—but rather to its author. Yet, not to its author

as an individual, that is to say not to Édith Rose herself, but to the report's "author-function," or better, to its "enunciative modality": "this voice that said 'I,'" as Foucault puts it in the commentary.<sup>99</sup>

The response to the report thus far had been, Foucault tells us, that a "certain silence" had arisen around this voice. To its challenge, "everything had to be put back in place. . . . Normal information had to recapture its rights: those who had been charged with speaking of the event must do so; those who had been capable of producing critique must do so."<sup>100</sup> And to do this meant nothing less than eliminating all vestiges of the voice of the one who issued the denunciations, the one who "had the unique courage to say: 'I just saw, I just heard . . . .' 'I swear it, I attest to it, I accept the confrontation.'"<sup>101</sup> In the newspaper reports, the details of what had occurred in the prison at Toul that Doctor Rose provided were presented as anonymous tips or unattributed quotes. So, it is precisely this voice that Foucault insists that we "recognize (*reconnaisse*)—or, rather, notice (*connaisse*) for the first time."<sup>102</sup> But what is this voice?

Let us begin with what it is not. The appeal to the voice is precisely not, for Foucault, a way of regrounding the report back in the speaking subject, back, as we said, in the individual, Édith Rose, and her unique experience. Rather, the voice here serves as a marker to invoke the question of the status, the site, and the position—in short, the question of what Foucault had called in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* the "enunciative modality"—of the one who issued this report. For it is precisely in this function that the intertwining of power and knowledge becomes clear and it is this locus, the conjunction of power and

knowledge, that enables the report to move beyond the confines of the Ney prison and its uprising to the dispositif of truth governing the field of punishment itself.

Consider first the question of status: Doctor Rose was an accredited psychiatrist. As such, she had been trained and declared competent by her academic institution and had, subsequently, been acknowledged by the relevant professional organizations as an expert and legally accorded the right by the state to make professional judgments and prescribe appropriate treatment within this field. With this kind of certification comes the presumption that the testimony and professional judgments that Doctor Rose provides would be both truthful and authoritative.

Next is the question of site: Doctor Rose was employed as the staff psychiatrist at the Ney prison in Toul. As such, she was charged with providing care for the mental well-being of the inmates and for serving as an expert of reference for the administration of the prison in all matters that would impact, whether positively or negatively, the mental status of the inmates as well as for those responsible for guarding them. Doctor Rose's testimony and judgments are thus issued from a very specific location, a specific office with certain authorities, within the very institutional site whose practices she seeks to expose and denounce.

Finally, position: As the accredited staff psychiatrist at Ney, Doctor Rose served in a number of roles vis-a-vis the inmate population and prison staff. These roles were defined by the relations within this specific prison, within the French penitentiary system more broadly, and between this system and other

social institutions. Doctor Rose was responsible for counseling, diagnosing, and treating the mental illnesses of the prisoners, acting at once as their therapist and clinician. She reported her observations and recommendations as to the mental well-being of the inmate population to the Ney administrative staff as well as to her superiors in the penitentiary system and her office supplied the bureaucracies of these institutions with requisite data for their systems of registration, notation, classification, and statistical integration. In addition, her expertise and experience were made available to training programs in government and academia. So Doctor Rose's report is issued by one whose position placed her precisely at one of the multiple intersecting nodes of this dispositif of knowledge and power.

Now how does this distinctive enunciative modality enable Doctor Rose's report to contest the dispositif of power and knowledge that supports the intertwining of the institutions of the penitentiary and psychiatry? It is precisely Doctor Rose's status, site, and position that permit her intervention here and invest it, minimally, with a presumption of authoritativeness. As a psychiatrist, as a clinician, as a member of the prison staff, she speaks in the name of a local scientific truth. But the truth she speaks—precisely because of the status, site, and position of the one, “this voice that said ‘I,’” who issues it—is caught up in the web of rules that separate truth and falsity and the specific effects of power that are attached to the true in this society. It is due to their unique enunciative modality that the specific intellectual is not only able to speak on behalf of a local truth but also to enter into the contest about the rules of truth, the rules of genuine knowledge, and its relationship to power. Doctor Rose, as Foucault puts it, “if only by virtue of her

knowledge, was ‘of’ power, ‘in’ power”<sup>103</sup> and it is this distinctive situatedness that makes her reporting and questioning of the practices employed at Ney not ultimately just about that specific prison but also about the intertwining of psychiatric knowledge and penal power, the dispositif of truth, that governs both disciplines.

Take, for example, one of the central charges set forth in the report: the use of the restraint belt as a technique of control. Doctor Rose’s testimony about this practice is absolutely unequivocal. In her experience, this technique had been used in psychiatric hospitals only on those in states of extreme agitation and only for a few hours at a time in order to administer sedatives.<sup>104</sup> At Ney, prisoners had been strapped down for a week or more. When she objected, she was told that it was an administrative decision to use this “security measure” on those who had attempted suicide or self-mutilation. But, as Doctor Rose noted, aren’t those in such conditions precisely the ones who, by right and expertise, should be under her direct care and supervision? Yet, she affirms “under oath,” she never once prescribed this type of treatment nor was she able to consult and examine those who were undergoing it. Hence, the restraint belt, outside any approval and oversight by the one legally assigned this specific authority, is exposed as a technique of sheer domination, a matter of power being exerted over the inmate population as a whole through the confinement and torture of the bodies of some.

But Doctor Rose’s report serves not only to condemn this terroristic practice, it also calls into question the role of psychiatry in the penitentiary system more broadly. If an outmoded form of psychiatric treatment is being employed on

those purportedly mentally ill to control the prison population as a whole, and this is being done precisely without the authorization of the staff psychiatrist—this, we could say, is the “local” scientific truth on behalf of which Doctor Rose speaks—then Doctor Rose, at the same time, is contesting the precise relationship between psychiatric knowledge and its rules for what can count as true and false, and penal power, with its techniques of control and domination, that govern the prison system. The local truth and Doctor Rose’s enunciative modality are inseparable from the general dispositif within which they operate and from which the authority of both descend. As such, the report is not just a dossier of the violations of standard prison protocol but a problematization, precisely in its critical sense, of the engrained and calcified forms of thought and practice surrounding the art of punishment. It senses the danger that threatens in the habitual way in which psychiatry and penalty have become entangled and renders doubtful the evidences and rules unreflectively relied upon here. It is the work of a specific intellectual as she intervenes in the battle to alter the conditions for what counts as a well-formed statement (the objects, agents, theorems, and strategies that must be met) and the authoritative practices that guide and mold action itself. It moves beyond the obstacles that specificity bring to advance “a new politics of truth,” that is to say, to detach the power of truth from the hegemonic forms in which it presently functions.

### III. ASSESSMENTS

The preceding analyses have sought to examine a rather simple question: Did the GIP develop what must be called a

distinctive way (or ways) of challenging the contemporary system of punishment? Taking Deleuze and Foucault's later reflections on their collaborative militancy as guiding clues, we have been able to explore in some detail the contrasting models of producing new statements and problematizing evidence that the GIP pursued in at least some of its work.

Again, the aim of this investigation has not been to determine which, if either, of these models is correct in capturing the distinctive work of the GIP. Rather, each was employed as a framework to understand better the nature of some of the theoretical motivations that drove the innovations in activism that the GIP was able to create. I conclude by reflecting on these models, briefly noting some of their relative strengths and possible weaknesses.

Let us return first to Deleuze's model, the production of new statements. As we saw, this framework helpfully clarifies the role of the GIP itself in what became perhaps, for better or worse, its signature campaign: the publication of the testimony of prisoners, their families, and others involved in the penal system. Our analyses show that, contrary to what some of its most ardent defenders have claimed, the GIP did not simply step aside and allow these marginalized groups to speak, to finally "seize the floor (*prendre la parole*)." Rather, as we saw in Deleuze and Defert's editorial practices, by incorporating such modernist literary techniques as parenthesizing, the GIP constructed spaces within which these voices could be heard with their fundamentally new objects, subjects, concepts, and strategies. The role of the GIP thus was not to serve as an intermediary for others, it was not to represent them but to fashion a stage that allowed the dissonant strangeness of new state-

ments, the intolerable conditions of which they spoke, rather than the simple repetition of discourse, to be heard and engaged precisely in all their radicality.

But, as we noted, the employment of these devices and their supposed transformation of the material that they present raises a significant problem: exemplarity. Recall that, by setting the correspondence of Gérard Grandmontagne (“H. M.”) within the frame or parentheses laid out in *Suicides de prison*, Deleuze and Defert contend that these letters are able to be transformed into an exemplar of what prisoners caught up in the midst of the struggles and conflicts of the French prison system in 1972 were thinking. But how can the singular communications of one inmate with his family and friends be indicative of what prisoners in this situation *as such* think? How can the writing of one retain the determinate elements of its original specific context, in all its banality, and yet stand as emblematic of a profoundly “new kind of political reflection”? There may be an inherent void between words and things that makes the creativity of language possible, but is not the very determinacy of Grandmontagne’s letters—the communication of his experiences, wishes, and wants to his family, boyfriend, and friends—in some sense denied, or at least, suppressed, by the transformation of them into the correspondence of H. M. and the placement of these as exemplars of prisoners’ thought itself? Is the void such that the original relation of words to things can be transcended, lifted out of their original context, in this way? Or rather, are words not determining precisely because they are already, at least to some extent, determined and is the risk not that the latter is sacrificed in the GIP’s practices for the sake of the former? The GIP’s experience thus

suggests that any form of resistance must exercise caution in its treatment of what are standardly called the voices of the oppressed. In allowing the subjugated to speak, to seize the floor, a space must be created wherein genuinely new forms of discourse can be heard, but this must be done without turning the speech into an exemplar of what it is to be oppressed for this runs the risk, as we can see, of suppressing precisely the determinacy and specificity of what is being said.

If we turn now to Foucault's claim that the GIP was an enterprise of problematization, we can see that this framework provides a clear way of understanding the role of intellectuals in the organization. For the movement to engage in genuinely critical problematization required the courageous truth-telling of those whose status, site, and position entitled them to intervene in local struggles, that is, it required the work of specific intellectuals. And, as we have seen, it is precisely the specific intellectual whose enunciative modality links local struggles over administrative practices within a specific facility, such as the uprising at Toul, to the more general battle contesting the historically shifting dispositif that governs the carceral system itself. In this way, the specific intellectual is able to contribute to the task of moving beyond simply calls for reform to actually provoking the public's intolerance for this way of punishing, to contribute to the problematization of this practice. Specific intellectuals thus did not have to act as masters of universal truth rendering a verdict on behalf of justice itself. Instead, they functioned as experts, whose very knowledge placed them within power and, by virtue of this, entitled them to speak authoritatively of these practices and the sheer violence of domination that they wielded.

And yet it is precisely the distinctive position of such intellectuals that poses a fundamental challenge to their work: specificity. As we saw, Foucault notes that intellectuals today are bound by the specificity of their class, their work and all the entanglements that come with that, as well as the *dispositif* under which they labor. But if their specificity is what links them not only to the local struggles but to the general as well, it seems as though they are never able to contest the problem of social hierarchy itself. That is to say, though their expertise enables them to engage in battles not only over the proximate conditions under their epistemic and legal authority but also over the general way in which truth functions in service to social, economic, and political hierarchies, their enunciative modality does not grant them a point of access to formulate and critique the problem of the concrete inequities of wealth, power, and privilege that underlie the social position of authority in which they find themselves precisely by virtue of their access to training and accreditation. Put more simply, the specific intellectual may be uniquely able to grapple with the local and general intertwinements of power and knowledge, but this same positionality is what precludes them from tackling the issue of social justice itself. Is their own specificity and its privileged social and political status ever able itself to become a matter of their struggle or is such a perspective part of what is irretrievably lost with the vanishing of the universal? Our examination of the role of intellectuals in the GIP's work thus indicates that the very entitlements that enable us to speak authoritatively today about some intolerable condition and even about the nexus of power and knowledge under which the practice in question may be legitimated must themselves also come under scrutiny and doing this, we must acknowledge,

may entail taking up a different, more encompassing, critical vantage point than that afforded the specific intellectual.

The GIP thus indeed embodied a fundamentally new form of social and political resistance. It was, in so many ways, a wholly unique forum, a new “relay,” a strange “line of attack.” The models of the production of new statements and the problematization of the given have allowed us to see that throughout its varied activities the GIP not only pursued innovative strategic goals but also did so through equally innovative means. And with these innovations come new dangers and new problems. Nonetheless, the GIP stands as an experiment in a new form of critique and militancy and it remains a challenge, a provocation even, to think just what a genuinely nontotalizable relationship between theory and practice might be.

## NOTES

- 1 All references to the works of Foucault, Deleuze, and the GIP are included in the text according to the following scheme of abbreviation:

### Foucault

- DE *Dits et écrits. 1954–1988*, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).  
EW *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, 3 vols. (New York: The New Press, 1997–2000).  
RR *Raymond Rousel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963).  
DL *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Rousel* (New York: Continuum, 1986).  
AS *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

- AK *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).
- MC *Les mots et les choses. Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).
- OT *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970).
- OD *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).
- SP *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
- DP *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1977).
- UP *L'usage des plaisirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).
- UPE *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Random House, 1985).
- AN *Les anormaux. Cours au Collège de France. 1974–1975* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 1999).
- AB *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975* (New York: Picador, 2003).
- PK *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980).
- FL *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961–1984* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996).

Deleuze

- F *Foucault* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1986).
- FE *Foucault* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).
- ID *L'île déserte. Textes et entretiens 1953–1974* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002).
- DI *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004).
- DRF *Deux régimes de fous. Textes et entretiens 1975–1995* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2003).

*Problematization And The Production Of New Statements:  
Foucault And Deleuze On Le Groupe d'Information Sur Les Prisons*

TRM *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006).

GIP

AL *Le groupe d'information sur les prisons: Archives d'une lutte, 1970–1972* (Paris: Éditions de l'IMEC, 2003).

INT *Intolérable* (Paris: Verticales, 2013).

Note: Existing translations have been revised.

- 2 DE IV, 688–89; EW 3, 394–95. The interview originally appeared as “Interview de Michel Foucault” (entretien avec C. Baker, avril 1984), *Actes: cahiers d'action juridique*, no. 45–46: *La Prison autrement?* (Juin 1984): 3; reprinted in DE IV, 688–89; English translation as “Interview with *Actes*,” EW 3, 394–95.
- 3 DRF, 259–60; TRM, 278. The interview originally appeared, in a significantly different version, in English translation as “Foucault and the Prison,” *History of the Present 2* (Spring 1986): 1–2 and 20–21.
- 4 AS, 173; AK, 131.
- 5 For an excellent account of what it means to conceive of a statement as a function, see David Webb, *Foucault's Archaeology: Science and Transformation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 85–90 and 98–105.
- 6 F, 67; FE, 60.
- 7 I leave aside here the question of the validity of Deleuze's interpretation of Foucault in the interest of exploring his appropriation of Foucault's thought as this provides the requisite background for understanding his claims about the GIP's work. The basis for the book Deleuze published on Foucault in 1986 lies in two lecture courses that he delivered immediately after Foucault's death, though the courses contain developments and interpretations that far exceed the parameters of the published work: “Foucault—Les formations historiques” (October 22–December 17, 1985) and “Foucault—Le Pouvoir” (January 7–May 6, 1986). For transcriptions of the audio recording of these courses, see [http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id\\_article=1](http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id_article=1).

- 8 The account of Foucault's theory of literature and language that follows draws on two principal texts: "Le langage à l'infini" (1963) and "La pensée du dehors" (1966). See also: 1) the important discussions from 1963, which were sponsored and published in the *avant-garde* literary journal *Tel quel* in 1964: "Débat sur le roman" and "Débat sur la poésie"; 2) the recently published lectures delivered in Brussels in December of 1964, "Littérature et langage," in *La grande étrangère. À propos de littérature* (Paris: Editions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2013), 71–144, esp. 76–79, 84–86, and 140–44; English translation by Robert Bononno as "Literature and Language," in *Language, Madness, and Desire: On Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 41–91, esp. 45–48, 51–52, and 88–91; and 3) Foucault's treatment of the emergence of language as the common point underlying the "counter sciences" of ethnology and psychoanalysis in the collapse of the age of man in *Les mots et les choses* (1966), *MC*, 392–98; *OT*, 380–86. For extremely helpful discussions of these issues, see Timothy O'Leary, "Foucault's Turn from Literature," *Continental Philosophy Review* 41 (2008): 89–110, esp. 94–104, and Jean-François Favreau, *Vertige de l'écriture: Michel Foucault et la littérature (1954–1970)* (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2012), esp. chaps. VI–VII.
- 9 *RR*, 208; *DL*, 167.
- 10 *AS*, 121, cf. 145–48; *AK*, 91, cf. 110–13.
- 11 *F*, 16–18; *FE*, 6–9.
- 12 See *OD*, 52–53; *DL*, 228–29. Following principally Blanchot during this period, Foucault held that language is preceded by "a murmuring that repeats, recounts, and redoubles itself endlessly." *DE I*, 252; *EW 2*, 91, cf. *DE I*, 523–24; *EW 2*, 152. See also "Littérature et langage," in *La grande étrangère*, 76–79; "Literature and Language," *Language, Madness, and Desire*, 45–48.
- 13 See *AS*, 145; *AK*, 111.
- 14 *AS*, 143; *AK*, 109; cf. *F*, 24–25; *FE*, 15–17.
- 15 See *F*, 74; *FE*, 67.
- 16 For a more expanded account of the necessity of appealing to Foucault's study of Roussel to address this problematic, see the December 10, 1985,

session of Deleuze's first lecture course on Foucault, "Foucault—Les formations historiques." For a transcription of the audio recording of the course, see [http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=21](http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=21).

17 See *F*, 74n27; *FE*, 141n29.

18 *RR*, 133; *DL*, 105.

19 *F*, 74; *FE*, 67.

20 *F*, 74; *FE*, 67.

21 *RR*, 172; *DL*, 137.

22 *F*, 74; *FE*, 67.

23 *F*, 74.

24 Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," *ID*, 291; *DI*, 208; *DE II*, 309; *FL*, 76.

25 Consider, for example, the work of the *Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire* (FHAR), a unique alliance at the time between French lesbian and gay activists, that declared in 1971: "As for fags, dykes, women, prison inmates, women who have had abortions, people who have been declared asocial or mad . . . no speaking for them. They have begun to speak for themselves, based on their desire, based on their oppression." Though at times contentious with the GIP—and with Foucault, in particular—FHAR nonetheless often shared common cause with them. See Didier Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self*, trans. Michael Lucey (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), part 3, chaps. 8 and 9.

26 *DRF*, 259; *TRM*, 277. Cf. "Foucault and the Prison," *History of the Present*, 2. Deleuze discusses the GIP more expansively in the opening session (January 7, 1986) of "Foucault—Le Pouvoir." For a transcription of the audio recording of the course, see [http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id\\_article=438](http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id_article=438).

27 It is in this sense, then, that the GIP can indeed be said to have, as Cecile Brich has claimed, "contributed to channeling, moulding and mediating inmates' discourse" (46). Yet, as the following analysis will demonstrate, this was done not, as Brich contends, to impose a hegemonic discourse on prisoners and fashion for them a certain kind of subjectivity, but,

- instead, to create a space in which statements with profoundly different rules for what could count as proper objects, subjects, concepts, and strategies could be made and understood, a project that poses its own challenges to be sure, as we shall see, but not that of simple doctrinal imposition and pre-determined subject formation. For Brich's critique, see "The Groupe d'information sur les prisons: The voice of prisoners? Or Foucault's," *Foucault Studies* 5 (January 2008): 26–47.
- 28 The interview—conducted as we now know by Deleuze, Defert, and Jean-Marie Domenach serving as representatives of the Association pour le Défense des Droits des Détenus—covered the general increase in prison suicides and discussed some of the specific cases, particularly that of Gérard Grandmontagne.
- 29 The editors of *AL* identify H. M. as Gérard Grandmontagne (277) and offer photographs of two of his actual letters that were included in the H. M. collection in *Suicides de prison* (as evidence (288–89 and 292–93) along with an unpublished typewritten report on his case prepared by the GIP at the time of the work on the pamphlet (304–6). Daniel Defert reaffirms this identification, though the pseudonym is mistakenly referred as "H. H.," in his recent set of interviews regarding his life and political activism, *Une vie politique* (Paris: Seuil, 2014), 65.
- 30 *INT*, 312; *ID*, 340; *DI*, 244.
- 31 *INT*, 272.
- 32 *INT*, 272.
- 33 *INT*, 272.
- 34 The report notes that, of the thirty-two suicides in 1972, eight were by immigrants. It also notes that in January of 1973, as the pamphlet was going to press, *Le Monde* published a list of thirty-seven suicides from 1972. See *INT*, 273n1. On the historical importance of the GIP's marshalling of this kind of alternative data as a way of challenging the reliability of the French penitentiary system's statistics, see *AL*, 271, and Grégory Salle, "Statactivism Against the Penal Machinery in the Aftermath of '1968,'" *PACO: The Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies* 7, no. 2 (2014): 221–36, esp. 229–31.

- 35 *INT*, 275. *INT* fails to carry over the emphasis on “*en*” from the original pamphlet; cf. *Intolérable 4: Suicides de prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 9.
- 36 It should be noted that the GIP’s focus was almost exclusively on the conditions of young men’s incarceration, rather than those of female inmates. An exception to this, however, was the group at La Roquette.
- 37 *INT*, 312; *ID*, 340; *DI*, 244.
- 38 *INT*, 312; *ID*, 340; *DI*, 244.
- 39 *INT*, 312; *ID*, 341; *DI*, 244.
- 40 *INT*, 313; *ID*, 341; *DI*, 244. The emphases appear in the original pamphlet and also in the *INT* version, but not in the version included in *ID* and thus not in the translation in *DI*. Also, the final sentence (“And this is not what . . .”) is missing altogether from the translation.
- 41 See *F*, 74; *FE*, 67.
- 42 In private correspondence with one of the editors of the present volume, Daniel Defert has remarked that Grandmontagne’s boyfriend, since deceased, had asked at the time for privacy and that this contributed to the letters being presented under a pseudonym.
- 43 *INT*, 313; *ID*, 341; *DI*, 245.
- 44 *Intolérable 3: L’assassinat de George Jackson*, with a preface by Jean Genet, included two interviews with Jackson, and an account and analysis of what the pamphlet refers to as the “political assassination” of Jackson and its aftermath (see *INT*, 153–213). Deleuze and Guattari refer to Jackson’s declaration, which they render as “I may be running, but I’m looking for a gun as I go,” in their account of “lines of flight” in *L’anti-Œdipe* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1972), 329–30, English translation by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane as *Anti-Oedipus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 277. The actual quote from Jackson is: “I may run, but all the while that I am, I’ll be looking for a stick.” See also their later account, which again references Jackson’s line, in *Mille plateaux* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980), 250, English translation by Brian Massumi as *A Thousand Plateaus* (London: Continuum, 2004), 204. For further discussion of the role of Jackson in Deleuze and Guattari’s thought, see Michelle Koerner, “Line of Escape: Gilles Deleuze’s Encounter with George Jackson,” *Genre* 44.2 (2011):

- 157–80. It is also worth noting that Foucault himself first used the phrase “lines of flight (*lignes de fuite*)” to refer to the way in which modernist literature’s techniques enable it to subvert social codification; see his “Distance, aspect, origine” (1963) (*DE I*, 304). I thank Chris Penfield for this reference. See his, “Foucault, Kant, Deleuze, and the Problem of Political Agency.” PhD diss., Purdue University, 2015, 88n250.
- 45 See *INT*, 313–14; *ID*, 341–42; *DI*, 245.
- 46 *F*, 95; *FE*, 89.
- 47 *INT*, 315; *ID*, 343; *DI*, 246.
- 48 *INT*, 315; *ID*, 343; *DI*, 246.
- 49 Failing to observe this distinction, Robert Castel takes problematization simply to be Foucault’s ultimate historical method (see his “‘Problematization’ as a Mode of Reading History,” in *Foucault and the Writing of History*, ed. Jan Goldstein [Oxford: Blackwell, 1994], 237–52). Colin Koopman proposes a distinction similar to the one advanced in what follows between what he calls problematization as an act of critical inquiry and as a nominal object of investigation. But he, like Castel, tends simply to equate problematization as critical inquiry with Foucault’s historical methodology, rather than seeing it, more broadly, as I will suggest, as any activity whereby thought is challenged to break from its attachments to a prior mode in which something came to be at issue, which is to say, to a prior problematization (see his *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and Problems of Modernity* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013], 98–109; and his entry “Problematization,” in *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*, ed. Leonard Lawlor and John Nale [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014], 399–403).
- 50 Foucault had occasionally used the term itself in what is arguably a technical sense much earlier in his published writings, but each time he left it undefined: See *Surveiller et punir* (1975), *SP*, 263–64; *DP*, 227, the essay “La politique de la santé au XVIIIe siècle” (1976), *DE III*, 14; *EW* 3, 92; he invoked the methodological sense of the concept at the conclusion of his famous late text, “Qu’est-ce que les Lumières?” (1984), but, once again, he left it undefined, *DE IV*, 577; *EW* 1, 318. The concept is employed in a clearly methodological sense in an interview with the journal *Masques* from the spring of 1982: *DE IV*, 293; *FL*, 368, and, finally,

Foucault used the term in what is arguably its methodological sense in his lecture course from the winter of 1975, *AN*, 129; *AB*, 139. But it was only in the seminar he conducted at the University of California at Berkeley in the fall of 1983 entitled “Discourse and Truth” that he began to develop the kind of definition that would subsequently appear in the Introduction to *L’usage des plaisirs*:

As you may have noticed, I utilized the word *problematization* frequently in the seminar without providing you with an explanation of its meaning. I told you very briefly that what I intended to analyze in most of my work was neither past people’s behavior (which is something that belongs to the field of social history), nor ideas in their representative values. What I tried to do from the beginning was analyze the process of “problematization”—which means: how and why certain things (behaviors, phenomena, processes) became a *problem*. Why, for example, certain forms of behavior were characterized as “madness” while other similar forms were completely neglected at a given historical moment; the same thing for crime and delinquency, the same question of problematization for sexuality. (*Fearless Speech* [New York: Semiotext(e), 2001], 171.)

51 *UP*, 17; *UPE*, 11; cf. *DE IV*, 545–46.

52 See *DE IV*, 670; *FL*, 456–57.

53 *DE IV*, 598; *EW 1*, 118.

54 *DE IV*, 612; cf. *DE IV*, 386; *EW 1*, 256.

55 *DE IV*, 612.

56 *DE IV*, 688–89; *EW 3*, 394–95.

57 For instance, see *DE I*, 657–58.

58 On the question of the relationship between theory and practice in Foucault, see Marcelo Hoffman’s invaluable study, *Foucault and Power: The Influence of Political Engagement on Theories of Power* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

59 *DE II*, 238; *AL*, 168.

- 60 *ID*, 290; *DI*, 207; *DE* II, 308; *FL*, 75.
- 61 *ID*, 290; *DI*, 207–8; *DE* II, 313; *FL*, 79.
- 62 See also the interview with the Marxist journal *Quel corps?* from June of 1975, *DE* II, 759; *PK*, 62.
- 63 The section of the interview that we will be discussing in what follows is Foucault’s written response to Fontana and Pasquino’s final question, which, in part, reads: “If one isn’t an organic intellectual (that is, one who speaks as the spokesman for a global organization), or when one isn’t the holder, a master of truth, where is one to find the intellectual?” *DE* III, 154; *EW* 3, 126. The complete interview with Fontana and Pasquino first appeared in an Italian translation in 1977, but Foucault published his response to this final question as “La fonction politique de l’intellectuel” in France in late 1976 (see *DE* III, 109–14).
- 64 *DE* III, 154, 157; *EW* 3, 126, 129.
- 65 *DE* III, 157; *EW* 3, 129.
- 66 *DE* III, 154; *EW* 3, 126–27.
- 67 *DE* III, 159; *EW* 3, 132.
- 68 *DE* III, 159; *EW* 3, 131.
- 69 For Foucault’s discussion of the conditions of acceptability as the conditions of being “in the truth (*dans le vrai*),” see his Société française de philosophie lecture from May of 1978, “Qu’est ce que la critique? Critique et Aufklärung,” *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie* 84 (1990): 25–63; reprinted in his *Qu’est-ce que la critique? suivi de La culture de soi* (Paris: Vrin, 2015), 33–80, English translation as “What is Critique?” in his *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 2007), 41–81.
- 70 *DE* III, 160; *EW* 3, 133.
- 71 See *DE* III, 159; *EW* 3, 131–32.
- 72 *DE* III, 157–58; *EW* 3, 130.
- 73 Foucault offers a much more extensive and nuanced assessment of the GIP’s work in a 1979 roundtable published in the journal *Esprit*, entitled “Luttes autour des prisons,” in which he took part as a representative

member of the organization under the pseudonym, Louis Appert (see *DE* III, 806–18), and again in correspondence between himself (*sans* pseudonym), Jean-Marie Domenach, and Paul Thibaud about this issue of the journal that was published in *Esprit* in 1980 under the title, “Toujours les prisons” (see *DE* IV, 96–99). For an earlier evaluation of the GIP and its projects, see the interview published in German in June of 1973 entitled, “Gefängnisse und Gefängnisrevolten (Prisons et révoltes dans les prisons),” *DE* II, 425–32.

74 *DE* III, 158; *EW* 3, 130.

75 In treating Doctor Rose’s involvement with the Toul uprising as a paradigm case of what Foucault meant by a specific intellectual, I follow the lead of Daniel Defert and François Ewald, the editors of *DE* (see their editors’ note for “Le discours de Toul,” *DE* II, 236). See also Defert’s important Postface, “L’émergence d’un nouveau front: les prisons,” in *AL*, 315–26, esp. 318.

76 After a controversial trial, the prisoners were both found guilty and, to the surprise of many given President Pompidou’s well-known opposition to the death penalty, they were guillotined on November 29, 1972. Foucault wrote a scathing article in response: “Le deux morts de Pompidou,” *DE* II, 386–89; *EW* 3, 418–22.

77 According to the chronology that the GIP later prepared detailing the prison movement during this period, approximately 5,000 people attended this session (see *La Révolte de la prison de Nancy: 15 Janvier 1972* [Paris: Le Point du Jour, 2013], 120). *Intolérable 3, L’assassinat de George Jackson* had been published by Gallimard on the previous day, November 10, 1971.

78 *AL*, 127, 129.

79 *AL*, 144.

80 For the history of the Toul uprising, see the special issue of the journal *Négation*, “La Révolte de la prison de Toul: déliquance sociale et justice gauchiste,” avant-premier numéro (1971), the report published by the Comité Vérité Toul, *La Révolte de la Centrale Ney* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973) and, for additional context and a broader perspective, see Anne Guérin, *Prisonniers en révolte: Quotidien carcéral, mutineries et politique*

*pénitentiaire en France (1970–1980)* (Marseille: Agone, 2013), chap. 6, and the documentary, *Sur les toits*, directed by Nicolas Drolc (Les Mutins de Pangée, 2014), DVD.

- 81 Georges Galiana, the Warden of the Toul facility, had previously served as the director of an Algerian prison during the War of Independence and he was the director of the prison at Nîmes during a revolt where a crack-down on the inmates, a so-called “bloody week,” had occurred in 1967 (see Guérin, *Prisonniers en révolte*, 109n).
- 82 The GIP included a list of the Toul prisoners’ demands along with those from Loos-lès-Lille, Melun, Nancy, Fresnes, and Nîmes in the document collection they published in April of 1972 entitled *Cahiers de revendications sortis des prisons lors des récentes révoltes* (see INT, 221–66, the Toul demands appear on 225).
- 83 Among the first acts of their campaign, the GIP called for an independent investigation commission to be established, while the *Gauche Prolétarienne* created the *Comité de vérité de Toul* to investigate the events of the uprising itself and to support this new “revolutionary front.” A GIP communiqué, from December 11, 1971, called for an independent investigation commission that would examine the bullying and abuse claims from throughout the prison system and for which many inmates had already filed official complaints, research on the state of the medical care available through the French penitentiary system, and review of the treatment of the prisoners transferred out of Toul for being leaders of the uprising (see AL, 146). Together the two groups collected extensive testimony, from both inmates and guards, as to the intolerable conditions and practices under which they all operated within the prison. The collection, published twice in early 1972, was entitled “L’enfer de Toul” (The Toul Hell). It was also included in the Comité Vérité Toul’s *La Révolte de la Centrale Ney*, 13–168. For a sample of some of the testimonies in the original collection, see AL, 158–60.
- 84 As a measure of the GIP’s efforts to publicize the report, it is worth noting that it was published on three separate occasions in December and January: (1) by the *Gauche Prolétarienne* in their *La Cause du peuple—J’accuse* (December 18, 1971, no. 15); (b) as a full page open letter purchased by Foucault and others in *Le Monde* (December 18, 1971); and (c) in *Psychiatrie d’aujourd’hui* (January/February 1972, no. 7). In

a statement at a subsequent press conference on January 5, 1972, Foucault provided an analysis of the Toul revolt itself, noting its unique organization, objectives, and tactics, and arguing that a fundamentally new type of struggle—at least new to the French context—had arisen at Toul, one where the inmates sought not to escape prison itself, but “to get out of their status of being humiliated prisoners” (*AL*, 151). As such, the detainees at Toul were engaged, he said, in a distinctly “political struggle”: “For I think we can call political any struggle against established power when it maintains a collective force, with its own organization, objectives, and strategy” (*AL*, 155). And he concluded that “what happened at Toul is the beginning of a new process: the first time a political struggle was led against the entire penal system by the same social stratum that is its primary victim” (*AL*, 155). See also Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), chap. 2.

85 *AL*, 165.

86 Philippe Artières has noted that the pivotal role played by the prison chaplains, Father Velten and Pastor Amedro, during the uprising itself and afterward, has been largely passed over in silence by Foucault and by subsequent accounts. See his “Les mutins, la psychiatre et l’aumônier,” *Le Portique* 13–14 (2004): 2–6.

87 *AL*, 166.

88 See *AL*, 165. The first section of “L’enfer de Toul” presents extensive eyewitness testimony regarding the use of the restraint belt and the fact that it was ordered, through a network of administrators, by the warden, Georges Galiana. See Comité Vérité Toul, *La Révolte de la Centrale Ney*, 15–22. See also, Guérin, *Prisonniers en révolte*, 111–12, and the accounts of this practice offered by former inmates in *Sur les toits*.

89 *AL*, 166. Doctor Rose went on to participate extensively in the Comité de vérité de Toul. She was, however, ultimately dismissed by the penitentiary administration for her support of the uprising. Foucault refers to the role played by Doctor Rose as a social worker who denounced the system of power and paid the price of expulsion for it in a round table devoted to examining, among other things, the relationship between social work

and police control published in April–May of 1972: “Table ronde,” *DE* II, 329; “Confining Societies,” *FL*, 88.

90 *DE* II, 237; *AL*, 167.

91 *DE* II, 237; *AL*, 167.

92 *DE* II, 237; *AL*, 167. Foucault actually wrote “*se mettre à hurler vers l’intérieur*,” which would literally be rendered in English as “begins screaming toward the interior.” The translation here follows *AL*, departing from *DE* II, which marks “*vers l’intérieur*” as *sic*, indicating this as a mistake on Foucault’s part (see *AL*, 167). To read the phrase consistent with the beginning of the clause, “*que quelqu’un leur tourne soudain le dos et* (when someone suddenly turns their back and),” “*vers l’intérieur*” has been replaced with “*dans l’autre sens*,” in English, “in the other direction”; hence, “begins screaming in the other direction.”

93 It is reasonable, I believe, especially given the recent context of the claim, to assume that Doctor Rose is one of those silently referred to by Foucault in the following passage from the March 1972 discussion with Deleuze:

And if pointing out focal points [of power, e.g., “a boss, a security guard, a prison warden, a judge, a union representative, a newspaper’s editor-in-chief”], speaking out publicly to denounce them, is a struggle, it is not because no one was aware of them, but because to seize the floor (*prendre la parole*) on this subject, to force the institutionalized network of information to name and say who did it, to designate the target, is the first reversal of power and it is the first step for other struggles against power. If speech (*discours*) like that, for example, of inmates or prison doctors are struggles, it is because they confiscate, at least momentarily, the power to speak of prison, normally exclusively controlled by the administration and their reformist accomplices. The speech (*discours*) of struggle is not opposed to the unconscious: it is opposed to the secret. (*ID*, 296; *DI*, 211; *DE* II, 313; *FL*, 79)

94 *DE* II, 237; *AL*, 167–68.

95 See *DE* II, 237; *AL*, 168.

96 *DE* II, 238; *AL*, 168.

97 *DE* IV, 612.

98 *DE* II, 238; *AL*, 168.

99 *DE* II, 238; *AL*, 168. In “Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?” (1969), Foucault distinguishes the “author-function” from reference to a real individual and maintains that it is properly considered a variable constituted by certain juridical and institutional systems together with series of complex and specific operations (*DE* I, 789–821, esp. 799–804; *EW* 2, 205–22, esp. 211–16). In *L’archéologie du savoir* (1969), he develops this notion more extensively in terms of the formation of enunciative modalities (see *AS*, 68–74; *AK*, 50–55) and he returns to it again in the Inaugural Lecture from December of 1970 at the Collège de France (see *OD*, 28–31 and 38–47; *AK*, 221–22 and 224–27). Compare, however, the more radically Blanchotian conception of the “neutral space” of the author in “La pensée du dehors” (1966) (see *DE* II, 518–39, esp. 518–20; *EW* 2, 147–69, esp., 147–49).

100 *DE* II, 238; *AL*, 168.

101 *DE* II, 238; *AL*, 168.

102 *DE* II, 238; *AL*, 168.

103 *DE* II, 238; *AL*, 168.

104 See *AL*, 165.