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# **Foucault, the Museum and the Diagram**

Kevin Hetherington

*Faculty of Social Sciences*

The Open University

Walton Hall

Milton Keynes

UK

MK7 6AA

[k.i.hetherington@open.ac.uk](mailto:k.i.hetherington@open.ac.uk)

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## **Abstract**

Foucault's work on the museum is partial and fragmentary but provides an interesting opportunity through which to explore issues of power, subjectivity and imagination.

Following a discussion of Deleuze's reading of Foucault and his introduction of the issue of diagram as a way of understanding the discursive and visual operation of power, the paper explores some of Foucault's work from the period around 1967-9 on the non-relation to explore how he engaged with the question of seeing/saying that Deleuze identifies as a key problematic in his work. Through analysis of Foucault's discussions of the themes of the outside, heterotopia and the work of the painter Manet, in the context of the museum, the paper explores how power operating through the diagram of the museum allows us to understand the space of imagination as one in which subjectivity is constituted.

## **Keywords**

Foucault, diagram, heterotopia, museum, imagination, subjectivity

## **I: The Diagram of Power**

One of Deleuze's main contributions in his analysis of Foucault's work (1988) is to look beneath the historical detail that Foucault offers in illustrating the dynamics of power and to suggest a more general understanding of its operation within society. His aim is to uncover the logic of Foucault's work – not a consistent argument that runs throughout - but what he sees as the key problematic that consistently informs his way of thinking as it unfolds across the various terrains of knowledge, power and subjectivity (1992; 1995). The main logic that Deleuze finds there is an exploration of the relationship between saying and seeing – between enunciations that make up discourses and visibilities that emerge from visual apparatus and with which those discourses come to interact (1988; see also Shapiro, 2003). It is in that space between seeing and saying that I seek to explore issues relating to the politics of imagination. The main question I address is whether imagination should be

seen as emerging from the subjective interior as part of a creative process or whether that interior is itself a part of the external imaginings of power that exist outside of the subject in the space between seeing things and being able to enunciate them as discourse.

For Deleuze, it is through the interplay of these two elements in the archive, the discursive and the non-discursive, that Foucault makes his contribution to the idea of power as force (1995: 97) and the associated process of subject formation (subjectification) (1992: 160ff). He finds a formulation for understanding the dynamics of this relationship in a passage in *Discipline and Punish*; embedded within Foucault's now famous discussion of panopticism (Foucault, 1977). There, for Deleuze, in a passing remark, is the articulation of an abstract principle that lies behind the operation of power as a defining feature of social relations that he suggests Foucault seeks to establish. The naming of this principle, or apparatus, is found in the passage where Foucault says,

But the Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: *it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form*; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use (1977: 205, *emphasis added*).

Foucault then goes on to describe how this diagram of power can be applied not just to prisons but also to schools, factories, workhouses and other social institutions before making it a general principle for understanding how power as discipline operates within the modern world. This opening up of Foucault's approach to power through the Deleuzian concept of diagram allows us to explore questions of power as Foucault conceives them in the context of a politics of imagination. Imagination has to do with the creative process with how we understand the world and our place(s) within it as subjects. Work that has recently engaged with this idea of diagram has been diverse but has tended to have a common aim: to open up the idea of power in Foucault as something not restricted to matters of confinement and carceral institution but to a more fluid and open form of analysis of

the space of practice (see Conley, 2004). Across a body of work spanning an interest in the shaping of cities (Osborne and Rose, 1999; 2004), surveillance practices (Elmer, 2003), as well as some of the philosophical assumptions behind Foucault's understanding of the social (Juniper and Jose, 2008), readings that focus on the idea of diagram have been used to argue for a more multiple and unstable analysis of the workings of power as something both operational (Bogard, 1991) and transformative (see Heller, 1996) than has typically come to be associated with Foucault and his application of the panopticon as an archetype for a modern disciplinary society.

An important point for Deleuze is that the idea of a diagram is Foucault's way of bringing together a new understanding of power as something seeable – a set of non-discursive practices within the social field that can be called a visual apparatus – with the sayable or the discursive elements that are also constitutive of power (the subject of his earlier work, notably in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1974). For

Deleuze, diagram is a way of expressing the unstable and multiple spatialities in which these two sets of practices come together and become recognisable as a totality, “What *The Archaeology* recognised but still only designated negatively, as non-discursive environments, is given its positive form in *Discipline and Punish*, a form that haunted the whole of Foucault’s work: the form of the visible, as opposed to the form of whatever can be articulated.” (Deleuze, 1988: 32). The space between seeing and saying is not only complex and unstable, ever changing as new diagrammatic configurations come into play across the social field, is also, I argue, a space of imagination and opportunity – a space where subjectivity is constituted and acted out.

What *Discipline and Punish* does, Deleuze suggests, is provide Foucault with an understanding of his familiar territory of discursive statements (such as those associated with penal law) coupled with the less familiar territory of the newly emergent non-discursive visual apparatuses with which those discursive statements come to interact (such as the

architecture, technology and operations of the prison). The diagram, therefore, is shaped by an interrelationship between the seen and the said in a specific social context (see also Shapiro, 2003; Juniper and Jose, 2008: 7ff); between what Deleuze calls curves of visibility and enunciation (1992: 160). So, for example in the best known diagram, the panopticon, that emerges around penal law and the panoptic-modelled visual apparatus of the prison, the prisoner, and everything we now come to associate with that subject position within modern society, is constituted through the forces of power in operation.

For Deleuze, a diagram is not conceived simply as a pictorial representation but more conceptually as a fluid and changing multiple of functions that exists in different forms within different societies and can be recognised visibly as such (1988: 34-35). He sees a diagram functioning as a seeing-saying machine (34) that acts as a point of emergence in which some social relations are established and others are broken down: “It never functions in order to represent a



persisting world but produces a new kind of reality, a new model of truth” (1988: 35). He defines a diagram, therefore, as “a display of the relations between forces which constitute power...” (36) and goes on to suggest that what diagrams do as assemblages (dispositif – see Deleuze, 1992) is to integrate the subjects they constitute with functions of power. However, society is not made up of one diagram (e.g. prison) but many (e.g. school, factory, workhouse and so on). The whole messy set of intersections and combinations of diagrams is what constitutes the social field, allowing Deleuze to suggest there is an operation of forces that constitute relations of power within society without reducing that society to a single function of power.

My interest here is principally with one diagram of power and perhaps at first sight not the most obvious – the museum. My argument for using this relates to Foucault’s own interests. I will show that between the time Foucault published *The Order of Things* in 1966 and *Discipline and Punish* in 1975, he had a particular interest in the space of

this relationship between discursive statements and visual apparatuses. One of the main spaces in which he sought to explore some of those relationships, albeit tentatively and sometimes abortively, was through the museum (1998a; 1998b; 2009; see also Shapiro, 2003).

Foucault's work has had some influence on recent museum studies, the new museology, that brings together museum practitioners with those who see museums as academic objects of critical enquiry (see for example Vergo, 1989; Pearce, 1992; Bennett, 1995; Macdonald, 1998). Some within museum studies have sought to closely elide the Foucauldian notion of the panopticon with the museums (Hooper-Greenhill, 1989) or have sought to use Foucault's work as a basis for a critique of the museum (Crimp, 1985; 1993). Others, notably Bennett, in his influential work on the exhibitionary complex, have argued that while museums played an important role in the disciplining of the mob into a more regulated crowd or audience of citizens through the power relations of regulated spectacle they differed

considerably from the principles of the panopticon in the ways that they made use of spectacle and open access in their display techniques (1995). Others, following Bennett's lead (1995: 1), have suggested that we should apply Foucault's concept of heterotopia to it and see museums as spaces where different and challenging ideas about society emerge (see Lord, 2006).

As archival spaces concerned with the collection, storage, cataloguing and display of artefacts through narrativised forms of spectacle to a visiting public, museums along with libraries and galleries have played an important role within the shaping cultural imagination within modernity. As both visual apparatus for the display of artefacts and discursive spaces for the enunciation of discourses of culture, nature and history, notably through their display galleries, museums have a significant place within modern society. There are, of course, other diagrams such as the theatre and later on the cinema that similarly constitute the display of culture as spectacle to audiences. The mutations of the diagram of

spectacle within society remains ongoing in more recent virtual and digital manifestations too (see Massumi, 2002). However, similar as museums are in some respects to these other spatial forms, museums are not just about constituting spectacles of entertainment. Their purpose expressed by a visual apparatus of display is more complex. They do aim to entertain but do that through an engagement with a series of other equally important functions including collecting artefacts, ordering and classifying them, conserving them, interpreting them and constructing knowledge and making them not only entertaining for their visitors but also educational and recognisable as indexes of a particular stories of identity as well. As spaces of political as much as scientific or aesthetic imagination, museums have always sought to articulate through both their archiving practices and their exhibition of artefacts an idea of society and of the subjects within it. They are also caught up in the second order representation of power organised around discourses of nation and empire as well as with their more recent contestation (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Bennett,

2004).

The museum as diagram is clearly a different diagram to that of a prison associated with the principles of panopticism, but I argue that we should see it as a diagram nonetheless that operates on similar principles of power (even though to a different end), and that in starting to understand it as such, we might find something significant in its role in the process of subjectification that it constitutes within modern society and the imagination process that that articulates.

Suggestively it has been argued that Foucault imagined the museum not as another weak form of carceral institution as early readings within the new museology suggested (for an overview see Mason, 2011), but in key respects as the antithesis to the panopticon diagram (Shapiro, 2003). In the fragments of his abandoned work on the painter Edouard Manet it has been argued that Foucault was trying to offer an alternative and more resistance focused understanding of the subject than that found in his discussions of the carceral institutions (see Foucault, 1998a; 2009). There is, however,

a broader possibility that I explore here – that the museum is a key diagram that makes visible the process of subjectivization to itself.

## **II: Sites without Geography**

Foucault is now widely recognised for his theoretical contribution to spatial analysis. Since an interview he had with some Marxist geographers in the mid-1970s (Foucault, 1980), critical geographers of all shades have been seeking to claim him as the leading analyst of the relations between space and power (see Driver, 1984; Philo, 1992; Elden, 2001; Crampton and Elden, 2007). However, there is something else in Foucault's analysis of space that is less well recognised but important nonetheless – he also constructs within his analysis a tension between ideas of space and geography around the theme of the non-relation.

While the question of territory and its relation to the discourse of government and population was to preoccupy him in some of his later work (2001; 2007), in earlier work – particularly that which came out in the years between the

publication of *The Order of Things* [Les Mots et les Choses] in 1966 after which he begins his interest in discourse and up to and including *Discipline and Punish* [Surveiller et Punir] in 1975 where he develops an understanding of the non-discursive apparatus of power - he tries to think spatiality in a way somewhat different to territory. There are four key works through which he explores this spatiality prior to the publication of *Discipline and Punish* and, I argue, they should be read in conjunction with one another. The first is an essay on the philosophical writer Maurice Blanchot first published in *Critique* 1966, in which he seeks to pose the question of what he calls the outside of thought (1990). The second is his now well known, but often misunderstood, essay on heterotopia, presented in 1967 as a lecture but not published until 1984 (1986; 1998b; see Genocchio, 1995; Hetherington, 1997; Johnson, 2006). This, itself, is a further comment he made on that term in passing reference in the preface to *The Order of Things* (1970) so we can fold that in here too. The third work is his abandoned book project of 1967/68 on the painter Edouard Manet - one lecture on

Manet has survived (2009) as well as a series of contemporary students' notes though this project only exists in fragments (see Foucault, 1998a; 2009; Shapiro, 2003). And the fourth text is an afterword to an edition of one of Flaubert's novels where he also refers to the painter Manet (1998a). What these works have in common is that they deal with the issue of the non-relation, its emergent visibility and diagrammatic resolution. Of particular note for our purposes is that the museum features prominently as a key issue in three of these works.

The essay on Blanchot, the most philosophically complex and developed of these short pieces, seeks to explore a separation between the utterances of the subject and the enunciations of discourse that exist outside and beyond their subjective grasp. This outside Foucault calls at one point the "site without geography" (1990: 55). For Foucault, this is the space in language in which the subject becomes recognisable as a void – in the sense of not being a creative agent who thinks they construct the world through their thought and



imagination. At the same time, and paradoxically, this site without geography, or outside, is also the space of subjectivization in which that very idea of subjectivity as an interior process is itself constituted. A key premise of Foucault's argument here is that while the subject might be the producer of speech acts, he or she is not the author of discourse that emerges from that speech. Words escape from the speaking subject into an exterior world of language outside the subject. I would argue that this exterior space is the space of imagination, for Foucault, rather than the interior world of the subject-as-author even though that is the understanding of the modern subject that this discourse itself establishes.

Foucault's interest, through a reading of Blanchot's works, is to explore this relationship between the subject and this non-relational 'outside' of language. As well as the site without geography, Foucault also calls this space "the thought from the outside" (1990: 16). This is a space that is Other to subjectivity. Modern subjects seek to interiorize

imagination and thought in consciousness and claim it as their own, but numerous authors (he singles out not only Blanchot but also de Sade, Nietzsche, Artaud and Bataille) have suggested an alternative that challenges this understanding of the modern subject by aiming to decentre it through an engagement with expressions of this outside.

Each of these writers, Foucault suggests, have sought through their work to explore the exterior relation with this outside of speech that they utter but which cannot be contained within their interior life as subjects. Each has a different way of conceptualising the outside of the subject: *attraction* (Blanchot), *desire* (de Sade), *force* (Nietzsche), *materiality of thought* (Artaud) and *transgression* (Bataille) (1990: 27). In effect, each describes the outside not as a *presence within* but as an *absence from* subjectivity. In the face of such an outside the coherence of the subject as interiorization of imagination is undone, or rather the subject itself becomes a fold within a language of imagination liberated from the speaking subject (1990: 54).

If we were to add Foucault himself to this list and ask what his way of conceptualising the outside is, then the corresponding word would have to be *power*. If we were to ask how we can see this site without geography that is outside of the subject then it would have to be through the diagram. The subject comes into being in relation to this Other space that is outside of itself and thereby is subject to its forces acting back through the varied mechanisms of power. The outside, as Deleuze recognised (1988: 85), is not a place as such but the place of the non-relation and it is engagement with this that is at the heart of the making of modern subjective imagination.

What the diagram does is put this relationship into operation – it organises the speaking subjects' utterances into an articulable discourse about subjectivity that suggests that subjects are the authors of thought and imagination. The other element in the diagram, for Deleuze, is that such discourses are operationalized through visible apparatus and not just through discourse. However, Foucault hadn't yet

developed that position in this text on Blanchot in 1966. His aim in that text was to critique the idea that imaginative thought emerges from the interior subject and to locate it, instead, within the outside as an emergence of discourse that then acts back on the subject on constituting the latter as a subject of the discourse of power. Deleuze calls this the theme of the double. The outside does not come from the inside (the subject) but it doubles back onto the subject as a process of subjectification (1988; 1992) in which the subject is constituted through a discourse of interior creative powers. These issues remain somewhat abstract in this essay and detached from real world practices and spaces. However, it was not long before Foucault was to begin to engage with these questions.

### **III Heterotopia and the Mirror**

This theme of the outside of thought is again taken up in Foucault's 1967 lecture on heterotopia (1986; 1998b) and is given this new term there. This somewhat unpolished lecture has often been misunderstood – partly because it contains a

series of confusions and seeming contradictions (as well as those added by translation), for example between undeveloped uses of difference/otherness, space/place and emplacement/site when defining *hetero/topia* (see Johnson, 2006: 77). Foucault's first formulation of heterotopia is in the preface to *The Order of Things* (1989b: xviii ff) where he introduces the term in his discussion of Borges' imaginary *Chinese Encyclopaedia*. There, as in the essay on Blanchot, Foucault is preoccupied with the outside and with discourse. Non-discursive space and the visual apparatus that later comes to preoccupy him in *Discipline and Punish* is not yet present in this early analysis. In that reading, Foucault suggests that Borges offers heterotopias within discourse that challenge the possibility of naming and orderly classification.

The bringing together of elements of speech that are seemingly incongruous with one another establishes their relationship as a non-relational otherness. In effect, what Foucault is referring to here is the operation of the non-relational figure within discourse. The relationship between these two different elements, discourse and figure, is

inherently fluid or topological (see Lyotard, 1984).

Discourses emerge from speech but heterotopias are seen. In seeing the incongruous we see the out of place in language – in effect, in heterotopias we encounter the outside as a fold within, “utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimensions of the fabula; heterotopias [...] dessicate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences” (Foucault, 1989b: xviii).

Another way of putting it is that in heterotopia ways of saying are confounded by what we see within the words; they are spaces of the non-relation in which we encounter the visibility of the outside of thought doubling back. In such a space subjects confront themselves as subjectivity outside of themselves. Heterotopia, therefore, make visible the workings of this outside of thought. With his later lecture on heterotopia to a group of architects, Foucault sought to develop this term in relation to spaces in the real world

rather than just within language (1998b). This was a decisive move for him and is the key importance of this otherwise sketchy lecture that was not initially intended for publication. Here the possibility of visual apparatus are added to his established interest in discourse and language.

In this lecture, after a brief discussion of the historical development of space since the middle ages, a space of hierarchies and localizations, Foucault goes on to suggest today that our space is defined, instead, by relations, emplacements and networks (1998b: 176). As Johnson points out, it is the issue of emplacement rather than site that is crucial to understanding Foucault's formulation of heterotopia here (2006: 77); something missed in the earlier English translation (Foucault, 1986). Our task, Foucault suggests, is to desacralize this space of emplacement and relations in the same way that thought in the nineteenth century desacralized time. This is a key task of imagination. He sees phenomenologists like Gaston Bachelard as the first to attempt this imaginative desacralizing of space (1969).

However, his major criticism of their position is that they treat such a problem of imagination as one internal to the subject whereas Foucault's task is to consider this desacralization as something that relates instead to the outside of the subject – a theme familiar from his Blanchot essay.

We live, he suggests, within a series of emplacements that are relational to one another but at the same time are non-relational (1998b: 178). He speaks first of utopias as emplacements that are not real spaces but which have a broad relationship to reality that allows us to consider the real space of society as a totality in contrast to the imaginary ideal. He then moves on to discussing realised examples of utopia within society – these he calls heterotopias. In between the two, utopia and heterotopia exists the space of the mirror (179) which is a mixing of them both.

Heterotopias, however, also act as mirrors, Foucault suggests somewhat confusingly, because of their doubling effect,



Due to the mirror, I discover myself absent at the place where I am, since I see myself over there. From that gaze which settles on me, as it were, I come back to myself and I begin once more to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in the sense that it makes this place I occupy at the moment I look at myself in the glass both utterly real, connected with the entire space surrounding it, and utterly unreal – since, to be perceived, it is obliged to go by way of that virtual point which is over there (1998b: 179).

This, for Foucault, is the first principle through which heterotopias operate (we will see below that it is also the way that the mirror operates in the art of Manet). This is the most developed of the six principles of heterotopia that he introduces in this lecture. What is important is that this relationship, through which he defines the working of a heterotopia, has the same form as the relationship that he had explored in his essay on Blanchot: the theme of the double and the making visible of the absence of the subject-as-interior. This whole process, then, is a mirroring one but one in which we recognise ourselves as different from our reflection.

He then seeks to explore heterotopias further suggesting they exist in all societies and not just our own and can be categorised into two groups as i) crisis heterotopias (sacred space apart from profane space) – in effect liminal spaces in anthropological language and ii) heterotopias of deviation (180). It is the latter that he is mainly interested in and which he suggests are coming to the fore in our society. These he identifies as positions (emplacements) associated with forms of deviant behaviour (prisons, psychiatric hospitals, old peoples' homes). After that he introduces the second principle of a heterotopia – that they can be transformed within society; a space that once existed and was knowable in its functioning can see that function changed through discourse. The principle example that he uses here is the cemetery and how it changes as the discourse surrounding death and disease changes in the nineteenth century. The examples are not as important as the principle. What he indicates here, in abstract terms, is that through heterotopia the speech directed to the outside that becomes discourse can change spaces over time. As it does so, what is constituted as

outside changes and the doubling effect back on the subject that then occurs will duly alter the process of subjectification as a consequence.

A third principle of heterotopias, Foucault suggests, are that in a single real place they can bring together several emplacements that are otherwise incompatible (181). Here he speaks of examples like gardens, theatres, and cinemas. This section is brief and undeveloped other than to suggest that there are spaces that are microcosms of how society sees itself, or would like to see itself in its totality. The museum and the library come in as examples when Foucault introduces the fourth principle of a heterotopia – spaces that have a complex relationship to time (heterochronia). The universal survey museums, like the Louvre that aim to bring together all places and all times in one space, are probably what he has in mind here. These heterochronia are contrasted with those concerned with short duration – festivals and fairs. We then get from Foucault a fifth principle of heterotopia – they operate systems of enclosure

and openness. In other words, entry and exit to them is controlled. Again this is not really a developed point other than to suggest the important principle of disruption within heterotopia (see Johnson, 2006: 79). Finally the sixth principle of heterotopias is that they function in relation to the rest of social space – again as a mirror, a space of contrast, or critique. Here he suggests examples of brothels or colonies as the main examples as well as the ship.

This lecture is undeniably unfinished, the examples varied and speculative and the outcome inconclusive. In the latter four principles, in particular, where he turns to real world examples of heterotopia, he is grappling, not entirely successfully, not with the discursive effects of heterotopia in language as previously but, though a discussion of mirroring and other relationships, with non-discursive or figural relations that are established within modern emplacements and their relationship with discourse. Some of them are concerned with issues of order, regulation, classification and control, others with freedom and transgression. Johnson has

singled out the theme of disrupting utopia as important to Foucault's approach here (2006). Lord, in her discussion of heterotopia in relation to the museum is perhaps closer to the mark (2006). She suggests that what Foucault was trying to understand with this term was the relationship between things seen and the construction of discourses (2006: 5). But there is more to it than either of these characterisations. The most important element in the whole lecture, I argue, is his introduction of the figure of the mirror and the principle of a non-relational doubling around the question of the subject and power. It is not the spaces themselves as geographical sites that matter most when considering this term, nor even the relations established between particular emplacements, though that has some interest, rather it is that heterotopia, which is a just another term for the operation of the outside of thought, establishes a potentially disrupting regime of the non-relational – of Otherness - within a visible field of relations through which the operation of power is established. Heterotopias are not places but a relationship established

between the non-discursive elements of the environment, the space of seeing or visual apparatus in Deleuze's terms, that comes together with the space of discourse that surrounds it and is folded into it. This is a space of the imagination outside of the subject. It is the coming together through the uncertain and disruptive emplacement of the non-relation of the discursive and the non-discursive within a diagram, that we should give the name heterotopia. In other words, the emplacement that is the visual apparatus (cemetery, museum, hospital and so on) begins as a displacement within the established space of discourse that it encounters. Once that becomes visible the discourse itself will start to change around it and that will also change the visual apparatus in its turn. It is through this process, a process of the operation of power, that the social imagining of modernity comes to be expressed. The question that remains is how the museum fits into this analysis.

#### **IV Manet and the Museum**

Unlike the asylum, clinic or prison, what Foucault has to say

about the museum (and the library) is fragmentary at best.

What we can draw from his brief discussion of museums in his essay on heterotopia is not just that they can be contrasted with fairs and festivals in their approach to time as Bennett suggests (1995) but more broadly that they articulate a non-discursive apparatus with discourse in a field of cultural imaginings (see Lord, 2006). The museum space is also the space of subjectification as the third 'text' from this period of Foucault's work, that associated with Manet, suggests. Nicolas Bourriaud has pointed out (2009: 17) that the main examples of heterotopia that Foucault discusses in his 1967 lecture can be grouped under three headings: sexuality, madness and the sacred. He notes that these are the same three themes that Bataille, an important influence on Foucault, had previously identified as the central themes in the artwork of the painter Edouard Manet (1983). Around the same time as he gave the lecture on Heterotopia, Foucault was in fact working on a book on Manet that he has been commissioned to write in 1967 called *Le Noir et la surface* [*The Black and the Surface*] while he was living and working

in Tunisia. He also gave some lectures on the project while he was there, as well as at conferences until about 1971.

However, the book was abandoned and Foucault destroyed the work he had done on it, clearly unsatisfied with it and not wishing it to be made public. One lecture has survived and has been published recently (2009). The lecture surveys 13 of Manet's paintings and analyses the significance of the painterly techniques of illusion that Manet uses in his work.

Since the Quattrocento, artists have sought to hide the materiality of their painting within the painting through various artful techniques of illusion. It is what is depicted that matters and not the materials and techniques behind the artwork. Manet, in contrast, is the first who overtly seeks to do the opposite and make that material technique visible. Through a discussion of these paintings by Manet, Foucault shows how he does this, noting three main techniques: painterly uses of the space of the canvas, uses of lighting within the picture and through playing around with perspective and the positioning of the viewing subject outside



the canvas (2009). What Foucault argues is that Manet uses techniques such as extensive use of horizontal and vertical lines, a lack of pictorial depth, erasure of the background, and closures within the picture's scene, in order to make apparent the picture as a picture-object rather than the representation of a place, person or event. Similarly, the lighting in Manet's paintings does not come from somewhere within the picture, in line with normal painterly conventions, but from outside, and sometimes from more than one place at the same time in ways that can be contradictory within the picture. His final theme on the position of the viewing subject he relates to just one picture, the most important one for Foucault, which brings together all the themes addressed in his lecture, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere* (figure 1). While all of Manet's techniques are on display in this picture, Foucault focuses mainly on the position of the viewing subject constructed by it. This is of particular significance since the development of perspective that has defined Western art for the last 500 years has sought to situate the viewing subject in clear perspectival relation to the picture

plane (see Panofsky, 1991). Within this perspectival tradition the picture plane acts as a mirror through which we as subjects are constituted through our relationship with what we see at a viewing point. The significance of this convention in art is that it lies behind the whole tradition of understanding the subject as interiority and creator of worlds as the imaginative constructor of the representations that it sees.

[Figure 1 about here]

This humanist God-eye meets its sorry end in a bar. Through a close analysis of Manet's use of these techniques in this picture, Foucault suggests that Manet confounds many of the conventions of Western art, making problematic the very idea of representation that painting operates within. In effect, Manet makes representation visible to itself. In so doing he also makes subjectivity visible to itself at the same time. In that picture the background is closed off by a mirror that dominates the picture. In front of it stands a barmaid waiting to serve us. She is lit from the front, from where we

seemingly view the picture, but we do not see ourselves in the mirror where we should. The perspective doesn't allow it. We see a void behind her and off to one side her reflection and that of a man with a moustache (us? the painter?) but not in the place where we should expect to be.

Indeed, following all the lines of perspective within this picture, Foucault suggests, shows the viewing subject to be both mobile and in more than one place simultaneously (Foucault, 2009).

In some respects the position that Foucault develops on Manet in this until recently unpublished work has now been established independently and in much greater detail in more recent scholarship on the painter's work. Crary, in particular, devotes a lengthy chapter of his influential *Suspensions of Perception* to a reading of Manet's painting and suggests that core to what he achieved with his work was a separation between perception and interiority (1999: 83). Manet's art does this, Crary suggests, through unfixing the relation of the viewing subject from the picture object and

through painterly introduction of various forms of non-linearity. The subject in modern art, Crary goes on to suggest, becomes fragmented and unable to absorb the message from a work of art as had previously been the case.

Instead, their subjective role is now to construct the world around them through a distracted mode of reception that is no longer part of some interior subjectivity.

Shapiro's recent reading of Foucault, which should be credited with bringing the importance of this little-known part of his work to broader attention, offers a different angle on Manet and one that engages directly with Foucault's own reading of him (2003). He suggests that a key theme for Foucault is that Manet's depiction of the subject-as-absent can be read as the antithesis of the viewing relationship established within the panopticon (2003: 308). There the subject sees only themselves as an object of contemplation and self-disciplining work. The prisoner is held there in the gaze of the (absent) guard exemplified in the central watch tower subject to constant disembodied scrutiny (Foucault,

1977). The art museum, in contrast, Shapiro suggests, a space that comes to be defined by works by people like Manet, can be seen as a space of resistance because it makes the apparent the problem of the position of the subject (323). For Foucault, in Manet's work the surface of the painting is all we see; we are not mirrored straightforwardly in it in the way perspectival techniques have always aimed to achieve and as a consequence there is no coherent positioning of the subject as a privileged viewing point. In effect, we have nothing that we can relate to as subjects except the absence of our own knowing subjective interior. When we look into the Bar at the Folies-Bergere we see only the void (Shapiro, 2003). What is most notable, though, is that this void is depicted as a mirror – a disrupting non-relational mirror, in fact, that makes apparent our subjectivity as an absence. The relationship that the painting creates is, therefore, heterotopic.

It is not just that we no longer recognise ourselves as having a subjective interior that produces imaginative thought but, that in our viewing of such a painting that imaginative process is revealed to be outside of us as subjects.

## V Museum, Imagination and the Subject

The Imaginary is not formed in opposition to reality as its denial or compensation; it grows among signs, from book to book, in the interstice of repetitions and commentaries; it is born and takes shape in the interval between books. It is a phenomenon of the library (Foucault, 1998a: 106)

It is not just the painting that matters but crucially its emplacement in the museum/gallery which helps to establish its discursive statement on the subject. To return, then, to the issue of subjectivity and imagination discussed here and developed more closely in his essay on Blanchot, it is almost in this picture as if we become pure exteriority, mirrored in the outside of thought that is represented by the picture as object. It is outside of our interior grasp. Manet's problematic situating of the spectator in multiple positions in front of the canvas, and his use of the mirror for us to view our own absence and uncertain position is like raising in painterly form the question of subjectivity to the subject.

The technique in the picture reveals the now familiar theme of the double that relates to the doubling of the outside back

on the subject and the problematisation of subjectivity involving the folding of the space of imagination around the subject rather than within. The heterotopia that Manet establishes is one where we are mirrored in nothingness, we see ourselves and our belief in our creative imaginations as such, left only to contemplate the materiality of the painting itself, outside of ourselves.

But this painting as object does not have an independent life free from social space. In his reading of Foucault's work on Manet, Shapiro rightly points out that the best place to situate the reading of such a picture, in fact the space in which Manet conceived it to be viewed and which Foucault recognised, is in the museum (2003: 312). Foucault does not say this directly himself in what we have of his analysis of Manet but Shapiro reconstructs this position from comments Foucault made elsewhere on the relationship between Manet and the museum (see also Donato, 1980; Crimp 1985). This position can be found in the fourth of Foucault's texts under discussion in an essay on Flaubert where he makes passing

reference to Manet as performing in art a similar role that Flaubert achieved in his fiction. There, Foucault makes his position clear,

Flaubert is to the library what Edouard Manet is to the museum. They both produce works in a self-conscious relationship to earlier paintings or texts – or rather to the aspect of painting or writing that remains indefinitely open. They erect their art within the archive. [...] Flaubert and Manet are responsible for the existence of books and paintings within works of art (Foucault, 1998a: 107)

In museums, objects, exemplified for Foucault by Manet's museum art, do not relate to us as subjects with an interior world able to interpret the artist's aims but only relate to other objects, serialised, ordered and classified in our absence. The gallery as a space of cultural imagining is constructed around this ordering process. What we see in the museum after Manet, Shapiro suggests, is not a series of fantasy representations of the world which we experience through our subjective interior and make meaningful through interpretation but rather a series of voids in which the materiality of art relates only to itself and to the space in



which it is displayed (2003).

This, then, is what becomes apparent in museum visiting and our position in relation to the objects there is multiple and unstable. Museums through their diverse collections of artefacts and the equally diverse stories they tell – of history, nature, evolution, cultural memory, nation, local identity and so on - all have one thing in common, that those artefacts, arranged through the visual apparatus of the gallery relate to a discursive narrative that gives sense to them being there on display. The museum is a discursive space of the outside as Foucault presents it, a space in which a certain imaginings about culture, nature, history and the forces of power associated with their exhibition, emerge through a non-relation to the subject who visits. What Foucault is suggesting is that visitors do not author the reception of culture/nature on display through their interior interpretation as western thought has believed. Rather, the imagination that emerges through the discursive relationship between the objects constructs the viewer as a subject. Through this

process of subjectification museums enact subjects who believe they then take possession of it through the process of imagination. However, what the museum reveals, after Manet, is the visibility of this process to itself. The modern museum is, above all, a space of the object and not the subject (see Hetherington, 1999). That is what Manet's museum paintings reveal – that artefacts and their significance are part of the diagram, a part of the visual apparatus of this space that interacts with its discourse,

*Dejeuner sur l'herbe* and *Olympia* were perhaps the first “museum” paintings, the first paintings in European art that were less a response to the achievement of Giorgione, Raphael, and Velasquez than an acknowledgment (supported by this singular and obvious connection, using this legible reference to cloak its operation) of the new and substantial relationship of painting to itself, as a manifestation of the existence of museums and the particular reality and interdependence that paintings acquire in museums (Foucault, 1998a: 107).

This theme of the uncertain visitor position within the museum is not an unfamiliar within museum studies but is one that is typically associated with the development of the modernist white cube gallery after the 1930s rather than with

museums at the time of Manet (Klonk, 2009). This temporal lag should not be surprising. It took architects, designers and museum curators some time to catch up with Manet and for the discourse associated with the museum to accommodate itself to this new visual arrangement. In Manet's time, most European museums were engaged directly with the question of how to cultivate what they believed to be the interior subjective experience of the viewer when they visited the museum. The choice of the wall colours for the background, the use of lighting in the gallery, the hang of the paintings, the use of bourgeois parlour interiors as a model for museum gallery decoration and display were the order of the day (Klonck, 2009); they were part of what we see then in the museum as diagram from that time. Manet challenged all that. In such a space it is easy to understand how Manet's paintings in the Salon of the day organised around such painterly techniques and modes of display, as much as their subject matter, could cause such a stir. There can be no doubt that the emplacement of Manet's paintings were a heterotopia within the diagram of the Parisian Salon of the 1860s.

Manet's paintings, over time, altered that diagram, creating a space, for example, for someone like Marcel Duchamp to enter with his signed urinal some 50 years later and continue to alter the museum gallery diagram in more radical ways still. Rauschenberg, too, and much of what passes for postmodern art, follows in this tradition too (see Crimp, 1993).

However, it is the case that overt questions of exteriority and the use of white void-like gallery spaces did not expressly inform museum displays until those techniques were first used in Weimar Germany in the late 1920s. By then it had become more acceptable to challenge the idea of the visitor positioned with a privileged subjective interior after the disruptions to this idea of subjectivity had been made apparent by the Expressionist refusal of interiority in response to the shocks of the first world war, as well as through the establishment of distraction over absorption as the principle mode of viewing that both cinema and department store shopping introduced to their audiences as

principles for a modern way of seeing spectacle (see Crary, 1999; Hetherington, 2007; Klonk, 2009).

The museum is a diagram in which the lines of power cross with those of subjectification (Deleuze, 1992). However, we cannot entirely agree with Shapiro's argument that the museum be seen as a space of resistance in contrast to the panopticon which is the typical space of power because the former reveals the construction of subjectivity and opens it up to interrogation while the latter conceals it and places all emphasis on interiority (2003). Instead, we should see both as diagrams of power but power operating on subjects in different ways. The visual apparatus of a diagram – its non-discursive elements - never totally line up entirely with the discourse in that diagram. That is what all diagrams are like. It is what all museums are like – neither total institutions or sites of pure resistance. Around issues of power and resistance we are dealing with a both/and configuration rather than an either/or one. The museum is neither a space that can be described as an open, inclusive *museum without walls*

(Malraux, 1978) but neither is it a self-enclosed, exclusive *monad without windows* (Blanchot, 1997: 22). It combines principles of both.

Where this leaves us, then, is with a better understanding of the operation of the force of power within the diagram of the museum. As a space, it comes to make visible the idea of the subject as viewer and all that is associated with that term as an external construction of the outside rather than an internally self-creating agent. The museum as a diagram is always in process, made up of an established discourse that produces a non-discursive environment. The discourse might be of a disciplinary exhibitionary complex (Bennett, 1995) but the non-discursive visual elements are in tension with that allowing for multiple openings for subject positioning. The subject, the visitor, is subject to these changing forces.

Power is there but it is fluid and not always certain. Following Foucault, we could suggest that the museum continually transforms the visual apparatus of display, not least because what is on display is in continual dialogue both

with the discourse establishes around museums and also within the gallery environment in which it is displayed.

Both the discourse and the visual apparatus that establish the force of power have changed over time, just as they themselves change how we see time displayed. All diagrams within modern societies might be said to be engaged in construction through the process of subjectivization the idea of a subjective interior as a space of creative imagination. What could be more an act of imagination than the reception of art? Yet in practice that imagination is created in the space outside the subject – that is precisely what is revealed, after Manet, by the operations of power in the museum gallery as a space of the exteriority of imagination.

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**Notes**