

Death and the Labyrinth

THE WORLD OF
RAYMOND ROUSSEL

MICHEL FOUCAULT

Translated from the French by
CHARLES RUAS

With an Introduction by
JAMES FAUBION

and a Postscript by
JOHN ASHBERY

Continuum

The Tower Building	15 East 26th Street
11 York Road	New York
London SE1 7NX	NY 10010

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Introduction © James D. Faubion 2004

Postscript © John Ashbery 1986

English translation © Doubleday and Co. Inc. 1986

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 0-8264-6435-1

Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Cromwell Press, Trowbridge, Wiltshire

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General Introduction

BY JAMES FAUBION

Michel Foucault finds in Raymond Roussel's works and days an entire cosmos, whose principle of unity is the principle of the threshold, which is also the principle of the parenthesis. The Rousselian cosmos is replete with thresholds, microscopic and galactic. It is itself the vastest threshold of all, the vastest parenthesis, forever posed between the radical originality of a birth to which it owes its existence but can never authentically reproduce and the silent infinitude of a death that it ubiquitously foreshadows but can never encompass. Its cosmogony must remain something of a mystery as a consequence. So, too, its teleology. It is nevertheless clearly divisible into two parts, two phases. In its youthful phase, it glows with the light of a radiant and sovereign sun. It is a place of relentless spectacle, of sheer visibility, but of a luminosity so intense that it can be disorienting, even blinding. It is thus a place in which what is most fully exposed has perhaps the best chance of remaining secret. Then suddenly, a

crisis: the sun implodes and in the melancholy half-light of its void, a second phase begins, more troubled but also more expansive, more far reaching.

Yet, Foucault warns us against making too much of such a division. Beneath it, the Rousselian cosmos preserves a constant substrate. It is composed of two fundamental elements: words and things. Its dynamics of fusion and fission, of creation and destruction, are various, but its ecology is pervasively an ecology of metamorphosis, of the tragic and fateful metamorphosis of the living into the dead. Its creatures—organic, machinic, or some combination of the two—are themselves metamorphic. They are threshold-creatures, populating the parenthesis posed between birth and death and destined to meander within its labyrinthine confines without ever finding their way out. The labors of these living dead are also various, but they all belong to an economy of unremitting scarcity and need. The Rousselian cosmos allows no surplus. It does not even allow simple subsistence. The depths of its poverty stem from the essential poverty of its sole means and mode of production—from the poverty of language itself. In the Rousselian cosmos, being is the mother lode, the source of all value. Each thing is a jewel of exquisite and radical rarity, and each requires a tool of equal exquisiteness and singularity for its extraction and refinement. Words might avail—if only there were enough of them to go around. The trouble is that language is an industry far too crude to be able to fit out each thing with its tailor-made signifier. Such words as there are must thus do yeoman's service. In so serving—in their abstraction and polysemy and play—they are the instruments of all that is distinctly poetic, of all tropes and figures. But these yeomen are also false. Or to be less extreme, their loyalty is imperfect. They should represent the things that are their proper masters but instead they distort and degrade them.

Words are bad actors who botch their roles. They are copies made of used, leftover, prefabricated and reprocessed materials. They are lacking. They are the cleft in the threshold, the hollow between two parentheses, the decay in every tragic metamorphosis, the countless dead ends of a labyrinth within which every quest and from which every attempted escape is futile.

Is the Rousselian cosmos Roussel's own? Opinions vary. Foucault published his essay—the French title of which is simply *Raymond Roussel*—in 1963. A considerable corpus of Roussel's previously inaccessible manuscripts, letters and journals came to public light in 1989 and generated a new wave of scholarly engagement that continues to this day.* Its leading scholars largely agree that Foucault's analysis of Roussel's methods of composition and of the design and structure of his poetry and prose remains an essential precedent to which every subsequent "formalist" critic must acknowledge a debt.† Many of the same scholars object to what they regard as an excessively "metaphysical" interpretation of the relation between Roussel's biography and his oeuvre that ends up distorting the biography and the oeuvre alike. Anne-Marie Amiot, for example, reminds us of ample evidence of a Roussel who

* Since 1989, Roussel has been the subject of a special issue of the French journal *Digraphe* (Kerbellec 1994) and of the first volume of a projected critical series sponsored by *La Revue des lettres modernes* (ed. Amiot and Reggiani 2001). He has also been the subject of full-length studies, the most extensive one undertaken by the eminent French literary scholar Annie Le Brun (1994; see also Busine 1995). None of these texts are as yet available in English. The discovery and making public of the contents of Roussel's famous "trunks" of papers also inspired his leading biographer, François Caradec, to issue a revised version of his seminal study, which has recently been translated into English by Ian Monk (Caradec 2001). Mark Ford's *Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams* (2000) is the first full-length study originally written in English to appear in more than three decades; it includes among other things a fine bibliography of Roussel scholarship, past and present.

† In a recent overview of Roussel scholarship, Anne-Marie Amiot characterizes Foucault's study as an "essential piece of work to which almost the totality of formalist critiques refer and from which they draw" (Amiot 2001: 51, n. 50).

is less Foucault's Harbinger of Death Foretold than an inveterate dandy who increasingly cultivates the Romantic pallor of the Tragic Genius and increasingly projects himself into the fantastic landscapes of his novels the older he grows (Amiot 2001: 25–7). Annie Le Brun's Roussel is not a disappointed Gnostic in perpetual mourning over the inadequacy of language and the inaccessibility of being but instead a bitter visceralist in sempiternal protest against the weight of the very real "fluids, secretions, vomit, sweat, spit, snot, and excrement" in which he and every other human being are inextricably mired, and his language only the more or less expressive, the more or less poignant means of testifying to such ignominy (1994: 314). As early as 1984, at least one scholar expressed frustration over Foucault's imitation in his essay of the circularities, convolutions and flourishes of paradox typical of Roussel's own literary style (Adamson 1984: 90). Perhaps more forthrightly, and in any event more recently, Mark Ford points to the same convolutions and flourishes in reiterating what Foucault himself admits in the interview with Charles Ruas that is included as an appendix in this volume: his essay is difficult; it is hard to follow. In Ford's judgment, it is altogether too like Roussel, its mimicry a symptom of a somewhat too ardent "love" (as Foucault puts it in the same interview), and its difficulty self-defeating (2000: 228–9). Ford credits Foucault with doing more to garner for Roussel that "bit of posthumous fame" he so desired (227), but chides him for rendering both Roussel and his own essay "marginal" in the process (229). For all this, most contemporary scholars could still agree with the assessment that John Ashbery offered in his introduction to the first edition of *Death and the Labyrinth* (included here as another appendix). Foucault's essay is indeed "groundbreaking." It is an often dazzling, always intellectually acrobatic tour de force.

But is the Rousselian cosmos then actually Foucault's? Some of the new Rousselian wave implies as much. Reflecting recently on his own enduring interest in Roussel, Ashbery dispenses with all subtlety: "From Jean Cocteau to Foucault and beyond, critics who discuss Roussel tend almost unconsciously to write about themselves" (2000: 49). The pronouncement is a bit harsh, but it is also compelling—not least because of the very tone of the writing to which Ashbery alludes. Through long stretches of *Death and the Labyrinth*, Foucault seems to dissolve into Roussel, to speak in Rousselian tongues. At the very least, he seems surprisingly ready and willing to adopt the role of the acolyte of the Master and of the brilliantly humble exegete of the master's Wisdom. The essay is often unabashedly metaphysical. It puts forward what approaches the status of a full-fledged philosophy of language (cf. Amiot 2001: 38). It is remarkable for the timeless generality of so many of its claims. Nothing in Foucault's entire oeuvre sounds quite so axiomatic. Nothing else sounds quite so much like an articulation of the invariant first principles upon which and from which historical inquiry might proceed.

But Foucault, whose loyalties (and disloyalties) are more often than not textually veiled, isn't about to let us resolve the issue so easily. In the interview with Ruas, he confides that Roussel's prosody seduced his "obsessional side." He teasingly suggests that the very reasons which, in his "perverseness" and in his "psychopathological makeup," led him to pursue his interest in the history of madness also led him to pursue his interest in Roussel. He confesses to a "secret affair" with Roussel that unfolded over the course of "several summers." These are charming intimacies (or apparent intimacies, as the case may be), but they hardly lay bare the scope or substance of a relationship that he "doesn't feel any inclination" to

scrutinize. Nor do they even remotely add up to the revelation of a thoroughgoing meeting of minds. Foucault presses the point with Ruas; he would “go so far as to say” to him that his essay on Roussel “doesn’t have a place in the sequence of [his] books.” If through an argument from silence, he makes the same point in the intellectual self-portrait that he submitted pseudonymously to an encyclopedia of French philosophers only a couple of years at most before he spoke with Ruas. In inaugurating that portrait, a certain “Maurice Florence” observes that Foucault has as his project a “critical history of thought” that would amount “neither to a history of acquisitions or a history of concealments” of the truth but instead to a “history of ‘veridictions,’ understood as the forms according to which discourses capable of being declared true or false are articulated concerning a domain of things” (1998d: 460). He observes further that the project is restricted by design just to those veridictions or “games of truth” in which “the subject himself is posited as an object of possible knowledge” (1998d: 460). Under the banner of that project Monsieur Florence proceeds to place all of Foucault’s books from *Madness and Civilization* forward to the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*.^{*} Or rather, he does so with only one exception. He neither mentions nor alludes to the book on Roussel.

None of which, of course, quite entails that the book on Roussel is anything other than a declaration of first principles. . . . In the end, however, it is futile to play a second-guessing game with Foucault, to try to read between lines that are already between the lines in order to discern and expose his real commitments when he does not care to

^{*} The book we have in English as *Madness and Civilization: A History of Madness in the Age of Reason* (1965) is an abridged version of Foucault’s doctoral thesis, *Folie et Dérason: Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique*, published in French in 1961. The first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1978) was published in French in 1976.

expose them himself. His ironies and his silences will always have the upper hand, all the more so the farther we are removed from getting yet another interview, playing yet another round with him. Certain questions must be left unanswered—including the question of whether, beyond any intellectual attraction, Foucault might have “identified” with Roussel the man—as dandy, aesthete, obsessional, depressive, Romantic, experimentalist, homosexual, *enfant terrible* of the French bourgeoisie, or what have you. Be that as it may, upon the publication of his second book, the young Foucault identified Roussel—together with Jacques Lacan, Maurice Blanchot, and Georges Dumézil—as someone who had influenced him.* Speaking with Ruas, a considerably older Foucault can still offer a specific illustration. Roussel’s preoccupation with the prefabrication of language, with the “ready-made” and artifactual quality of words and phrases and sentences, informs Foucault’s conceptualization of discourses as scatterings of “enunciations,” of words and phrases and sentences already spoken, of the linguistic but quite material deposits of thought itself. Foucault makes no mention of Roussel in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, his most systematic exposition of discourses and their constituents (Foucault 1982). Yet, with Ruas’s prompting, even he acknowledges that a Rousselian echo is audible in his subsequent endeavors. Nor is it the only such echo to be heard.

Unsurprisingly, Rousselian imagery and Rousselian themes are most palpable in the writings that Foucault undertook shortly before and shortly after the third and, as he suggested to Ruas, the most “personal” of his books

* That is to say, in *Madness and Civilization*. See Eribon 1991: 71. Foucault wrote a short book, *Maladie mentale et Personnalité*, in 1954, seven years before *Madness and Civilization*. He revised the book in 1962; we have the latter in English under its revised title, *Mental Illness and Psychology* (Foucault 1976).

appeared, and especially in his writings on literature and literary authority. "So Cruel a Knowledge," a commentary on two late eighteenth-century romances that was published in the journal *Critique* in 1962, is so saturated with Rousselian imagery and themes alike that it must be regarded as a companion piece to *Raymond Roussel* (Foucault 1998g). It unleashes a cascade of mirrors, labyrinths, Minotaurs and other grotesques, strange (and brutal) machines. It dwells on subjects and objects, on the deceits of language, on metamorphosis, on death. If it could be read, not merely as a companion piece but as a sort of historical preface to Foucault's study of Roussel, its conclusion would be all the more provocative. "So Cruel a Knowledge" closes with the observation that the space of the metamorphosis of the natural into the counternatural—into the machine, the beast, the corpse—is the space in which "the truly transgressive forms" of distinctly modern eroticism transpire (1998g: 67). Yet, if that space is indeed the space of Roussel's cosmos, Foucault has nothing to say about it in the very discreet pages of *Raymond Roussel* itself.

The thinker whom we now associate with a particularly relentless unmasking of the historicity of apparently timeless phenomena nevertheless engages in explicitly ontological speculation in "Language to Infinity," published in the autumn of 1963 in the journal *Tel Quel* (Foucault 1998f). There is no mention of Roussel here, either. Instead, Foucault opens with a meditation on the relation between language and death whose themes would have been very familiar to anyone who had read the second, third and fourth chapters of that most personal of his books during the spring or summer of the same year. Foucault resorts not to Roussel but to Jorge Luis Borges for an illustration of "the great, invisible labyrinth of language, of language that divides itself and becomes its own mirror" (1998f: 91–2). He seems unwilling to appeal to

the “empty lens” of Roussel’s *Nouvelles Impressions d’Afrique*, the “black disk” that is “like a dark machine for creating repetition and thus the hollowing out of a void where being is swallowed up, where words hurl themselves in pursuit of objects, and where language endlessly crashes down” (138) in order to vivify his central philosophical claim. Instead, he himself casts being (more lucidly?) as a Scheherazade obscured and lost and language as the “brilliant, profound, and virtual dis[k]” out of which she arises “infinitely reduced.” So, then:

A work of language is the body of language crossed by death in order to open this infinite space where doubles reverberate. And the forms of this superimposition, essential to the construction of the work, can undoubtedly only be deciphered in these adjacent, fragile, and slightly monstrous figures where a division into two signals itself; their exact listing and classification, the establishment of the laws that govern their functioning or transformations, could well lead to a formal ontology of literature (1998f: 93).

Should “Language to Infinity” still somehow not serve adequately as a philosophical afterword to *Death and the Labyrinth*, one might supplement it with Foucault’s commentaries on Gustave Flaubert’s *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (1998a) or Jules Verne (the writer whom Roussel most admired [see Foucault 1998c]) or his assessment of Pierre Klossowski’s (Foucault 1998i) or Maurice Blanchot’s (Foucault 1998j) literary and philosophical achievements. Every one of these latter writings further develop and further refine the thematic of language, repetition and doubling, and the infinite recession of being.

A “Publisher’s Note” informs the reader of the English translation of Foucault’s *Les Mots et les choses* that a literal

rendering of the French title would risk the book's confusion with two others already bearing the title *Words and Things* and that besides, Foucault had originally preferred the title subsequently given the work in English: *The Order of Things* (1973: viii). Fine and well: the French title is still the most voluble echo of the central motifs of *Raymond Roussel* in any of Foucault's other books. Yet, if *Les Mots et les choses* is very much concerned with words and things, it is more specifically concerned with the great revision of the presumptive relation between them at the end of the eighteenth century that went hand in hand with the emergence of a strange creature called "Man," a creature somehow capable of being at once the subject and the object of knowledge, at once free and determined, and so at once the practitioner and the laboratory rat of a new and rapidly differentiating array of "human sciences."* No such concern informs any of Roussel's own labors. Nor is *Les Mots et les choses* a philosophical work. It is not in any event a treatise on ontology. It is an "archaeological" inquiry into the pasts of certain philosophical and scientific discourses and its rhetorical trajectory is the trajectory of a historico-epistemological critique—a relentless one, too—of the false figures and errant enunciations of which those discourses were composed. Not much Roussel in that, either.

The French title of *The Order of Things* is not, however, as misleading as it might seem at first sight. It presages an actual visit from Roussel, who arrives in the company of Antonin Artaud in the book's final chapter, perhaps a bit late but at a juncture that could hardly be more pivotal. He is among the earliest messiahs of a literature devoted to the question, the vast puzzle, of language itself. He is

* The French rubric translated here as the "human sciences" has no precise counterpart in English. It includes both the theoretical and the applied social sciences, but also includes psychology and human biology.

the threshold-creature of a literature “whose necessity has its roots in a vast configuration in which the whole structure of our thought and knowledge is traced” (1973: 383). His literature—enlarged by the surrealists, polished by Franz Kafka and Georges Bataille and Blanchot—is the unbounded mirror in which we who are human above all bear witness to our limits, to our fundamental finitude, to our being reduced.* It is the vehicle through which we might gain an inkling of the encompassing unity of language and so gain an inkling of at least one of our possible destinies. If we—as Men—came into being only when language ceased to be trusted as a picture of reality and became instead so many fragmented parcels of our subjective property, we might envisage ourselves being absorbed and so having our end—as Men—in a language that once again convinces us of its proper integrity and objectivity and is finally freed of the expectation that it ultimately refer to anything but itself. Jacques Lacan and Claude Lévi-Strauss may thus encourage him, but it is Roussel and his literary confreres who ultimately guide Foucault to what is still his most notorious (and often misunderstood) “wager”: that Man might someday “be erased, like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of a sea.”†

If Foucault was betting that Man was in fact very soon to be erased, he was surely wrong, and he seems sooner or later to have realized that he was. He would never place such a bet again, if he ever did at all. If his wager was

* Foucault’s introduction to the collected works of Georges Bataille appears in English as “A Preface to Transgression” (Foucault 1998b).

† Foucault 1973: 387. In the pages before this grand remark, Foucault points to “psychoanalysis” and “ethnology” as carrying the logic and the questions of the human sciences to its limits and so foreshadowing the possibility of the dissolution of Man into language. The psychoanalysis he has in mind is clearly the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan. The ethnology he has in mind is clearly the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss. See Foucault 1973: 373–87.

instead an early, somewhat brash formulation of the historicity and historical variability of the form and substance of our comprehension of ourselves as subjects, then it remains very much of a piece with Foucault's broader project, as Maurice Florence would have it be. It remains just as much of a piece with the Rousselian detachment of being from language that Foucault spells out so rigorously in *Death and the Labyrinth*, this most personal book, but still avows not to be at all inclined to take personally. Foucault never makes public, in anything that might unambiguously be registered as his own voice, a general theory of reference (or non-reference) against which the sincerity or self-awareness of his avowal might be assessed, might be policed. But there is no need to police (at least in this instance). It is enough to note an enduring, though partial, parallel. Foucault's Roussel is forever troubled by the unsuitability of words to things, forever bearing anxious witness to the incapacity of words to capture the intrinsic particularity of every particular thing. He thus finds himself corroborating the cardinal postulates of a quite strong version of what usually passes for "nominalism." Foucault's Roussel is a committed nominalist, even if an unwilling and fretful one.

The suspicion in which Foucault himself holds Man in *The Order of Things* is not first of all the suspicion of a nominalist. The problem with Man is first of all that he is a paradoxical being. Yet, Man is also posited as a universal, and the problem with his universality is that it is a false universality. Man is a type of being whose putative tokens—we who are human beings—are not genuine. We cannot be so easily encompassed, if we can be encompassed at all. Sotto voce, a suspicion of nominalist temper can thus be detected in *The Order of Things*. It can be detected in Foucault's occasional, and occasionally withering, estimations of nineteenth-century and

twentieth-century “humanism.”* Arguably at least, the same suspicion flows as a forceful critical undercurrent in all of Foucault’s investigations into the constitution of the human sciences and proto-sciences, and so in all the books noted by Monsieur Florence. In every instance, Foucault devotes scrupulous attention to the coalescence and systematization of naturalized kinds of human beings that would, once presumptively complete, range exhaustively over humanity as a whole, leaving none of its particular expressions undocumented or uncoded or at large. The great, unbridgeable divide—the divide within Man—that presides over such systematization is the presumptively universal divide between the “normal” and the “pathological.” In *Madness and Civilization*, it marks off the exclusive domain of “reason” from all “unreason.” In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1975), it marks the contest between the organic and the anti-organic and incommensurability of the somatic and the psychosomatic. In *Discipline and Punish* (1979), it marks the opposition between the docility of the upright character and the savagery or corruption or intransigence of the criminal character. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, it marks the irrevocable difference between a vital sexuality—which can only be a heterosexuality—and the sterile sexualities of the inverted and the perverse. In every instance, the divide in question has served as the basis of an apparatus for the justification of intervention, domination, and exclusion. In every instance, the divide fosters a violence that is also ontological—a violence against the particularity of each body and of its experience of itself. Even so, it is only after the

* Sufficiently characteristic is Foucault’s comment to an Italian interviewer: “you know that it’s precisely . . . humanism that served to justify, in 1948, Stalinism and the hegemony of Christian Democracy, that it’s humanism itself that we find again in Camus or Sartre’s existentialism. In the end, this humanism constitutes a sort of little prostitute of all the thought, all the culture, all the morals, all the politics of the last twenty years” (Foucault 1994: 615–16).

completion of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* that nominalism comes fully to the surface in Foucault's writings. Only in an early draft of the preface to the second volume of that *History* does Foucault affirm that "a 'nominalist' reduction of philosophical anthropology and the notions that could rest upon it" had always been part of the task he had set himself in undertaking a critical "history of thought."*

Why so belated an affirmation? Is it too philosophical? Is it too Rousselian—though, once again, it includes no mention and no obvious allusion to either Roussel or his oeuvre? Is it thus too personal? Whatever else might be said, Foucault's relationship to Roussel is noticeably protective. Perhaps it is self-protective, but its most telling gesture is that of a hand—or pen—raised against any and all of those roving psychologists who would dismiss Roussel's madness as mere pathology or treat (and so invalidate) his oeuvre as a mere catalogue of symptoms. Indeed, Foucault proposes that Roussel's suicide in Palermo is such a gesture in its own right, a corporal demonstration of the imperative that the oeuvre "must be set free from the person who wrote it" (156). Whether or not Roussel's suicide—which may not have been quite so deliberate as Foucault would have it be—has just this illocutionary force, *Death and the Labyrinth* is true to it, under its influence. In its pages, Roussel's oeuvre includes both his life and his writings, but the life only as the most abstract of experiential impetuses and the most abstract of philosophical punctuations of the writings themselves. In fact, the liberation of the oeuvre from the person who wrote it

* See Foucault 1997a: 200. See also Foucault 1997b: 73–4, where nominalism is put forth merely as a "methodological" principle. See also my "Introduction" to the second volume of *Essential Works* (Faubion 1998: xxxvii). It is of interest that no mention of nominalism is to be found explicitly in the preface Foucault finally included in the second volume of *The History of Sexuality*.

is an imperative that Foucault had already taken as his own in *Madness and Civilization* (1965: 28–9). In 1962, he wielded it as a commandment in his review of a study of Hölderlin (1998h) and in his introduction to an edition of Rousseau's *Dialogues* (1998e). Seven years later, he remains obedient to it in proposing to put historically and sociologically under review the very idea of the author as an “originating subject” (1998k: 221). The imperative has thus become methodological, and will come shortly to drive both the design and the (suspended) conclusions of the collaborative efforts collected in *I, Pierre Rivière* (1982). Only if one fails to catch what is still a Rousselian echo might one fail to recognize that the imperative is also ethical, and that it is addressed specifically to the ethics of the relationship between a reader and what (or whom) he or she reads. If it is not the first, it is the most distinctive of the directives of Foucault's own ethics of reading.

Is there a bit of a Rousselian obsession with visibility in Foucault's fascination with the “medical gaze” in *The Birth of the Clinic* or his fascination with the panoptic in *Discipline and Punish*? Does a bit of Roussel's “radiant and sovereign sun” lie behind Foucault's conceptualization of the relation between the sovereign organization of power and the aesthetics of the spectacle, also in *Discipline and Punish*? Do Roussel's machines inspire Foucault's conceptualization of the “apparatus,” yet again in *Discipline and Punish*? Rather than risk descending into parlor games, it is best to return to a question that might more readily permit of something resembling an answer. Is the Rousselian cosmos actually Foucault's? Is it the cosmos contained in what is left to us as Foucault's own oeuvre? No, it is not. There is far too much being in the former and far too much history in the latter, far too much of the fabulous in the former and far too much of the ironical in the latter, for such an

equation to be anything more than partial. Roussel's oeuvre is rather a portion of Foucault's dark matter. It is the stuff of the occasional eruption, of the occasional black hole, of stars and planets largely faint and distant. Its elements endure, but never without synthesis. Its forces undulate to the farthest reaches of Foucauldean expanses, but never without modulation. These qualifications aside, it also populates those expanses with a youthful Eros, even with a Zeus, that god of lightning and justice. In the cosmos of Foucault's oeuvre, youthful and mature, these are powerful gods, besieged but immortal.

*Chronology of Foucault's Life and Work**

- 15 October, 1926 Born to Paul-Michel Foucault and Anne-Marie Malapert in Poitiers, France.
- Summer, 1946 Entry into the Ecole normale supérieure, Paris.
- 1948 Receives the *licence* in philosophy from the Sorbonne.
- 1949 Revises his thesis for the *diplôme d'études supérieures* in philosophy under one of his cherished mentors, Jean Hippolyte.
- 1952 Completes the *diplôme* in psychopathology at the Institut de psychopathologie in Paris; begins teaching in the Faculty of Letters at Lille.

* Derived from the Chronology compiled by Daniel Defert in Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald, Volume 1, pp. 13–64 (Bibliothèques des sciences humaines. Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

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