Phenomenology has been too pacifying, Deleuze tells us, and he suggests that we leave Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty for what they are and turn to Foucault in order to discover a more profound Heracliticism. Genealogy is too much a war-machine, others like Habermas respond, and they recommend different remedies. There is nothing extraordinary about this situation. We are, in fact, all too familiar with it. We have come across it in different philosophical settings, with different parties engaging one another and with different choices to be made. We all know from our own experience — and lest we forget, there will always be a flourishing para-philosophical literature to remind us — that this “originating” miracle we know as the philosophical tradition has been “breaking up” (cf. VI 124).

And, now as always, the question is not whether we will be able to live with it, but how we will do so, how we will “accompany this break-up, (…) this differentiation” (ibid.). Hence, perhaps, my hesitation and the uneasiness which haunted me at the thought of having to enter in this arena crowded by all those choices that, like the war, “have taken place” for or against “the” subject, for or against universality, for or against the origin of truth. Either Foucault or Merleau-Ponty, either discourse or existence — no doubt such apparently clear-cut choices confront us with questions ranging far beyond method. For does not the standard academic response against the kind of pseudo-politicization of philosophy which I have been evoking, suffer from the ills it is supposed to cure? Is there really such a difference between those who bid us to take sides and “merge” with one of the “existing” positions (VI 127) and those who, in refusing to do so, nestle themselves in the comfortable teichoscopic position from which they can observe the heroes at the foot of the wall (Iliad, III, 121-244) and report in

1. G. DELEUZE, Foucault, Paris, Minuit, 1986, p. 120 ("la phénoménologie est trop pacifiante, elle a bêni trop de choses") and passim.
a detached manner on the choices that others found themselves making? Did not Merleau-Ponty himself commit the best of his efforts to showing that both the attempt to retain an infinite distance and the attempt to replace it with an absolute proximity express — as a soaring over (survol) or as fusion — the same positivistic relationship to philosophy itself (e.g. VI 127)? Is it not the belief that the world of philosophy is an objective world, where the meditating subject is in no way implicated in that upon which it reflects, is it not paradoxically this same basic creed in the presence of a set of already available philosophical positions which underlies both the error of those who urge us to side with one of them, and the error of those who end up distorting philosophy’s internal structure by trying to look at it from above (survoler) and to think it from no point of view (PP 62,204)?

As one can see, these questions are not merely methodological. Rather, what they reveal is that the whole of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy is already implied in any attempt to approach it and that such an approach is always open to the risk of already belying by its very way of proceeding, the position which it tries to articulate. But since we have already shown ourselves that our topic here (‘raw being and violent discourse’; ‘Merleau-Ponty and Foucault’; ‘existence and discourse’) can only exist for those who are under the spell of a positivistic illusion, should we not by the same token accept that it is, in fact, perfectly superfluous once one has witnessed the issue itself become but another illustration of that web of problems Merleau-Ponty was referring to under the item ‘raw being’ and, in particular, of the fact that a certain kind of violence will be involved in each and every attempt to express it? In other words, shouldn’t we drop the reference to Foucault altogether and devote our efforts to bringing into the philosophy of reflection a moment of hyperreflection which would break the positivist’s curse by stumbling upon that unreflected given which “dispossesses” us (e.g. VI 266), since we can neither coincide with it nor constitute it? But it is precisely this conclusion which Merleau-Ponty drew from positivism’s failure, which should arouse our interest in Foucault’s “happy positivism” (AK 125).

For Foucault the problem of the kosmotheoros (VI 15) whose prejudice of the objective world makes him forget his own implication in it, derives not from the fact that he is too positivistic, but from the fact that he is not positivistic enough. Instead of wishing, like Merleau-Ponty, to bring positivism back to earth, Foucault tried to follow it way up into the sky, to those austere heights from which the archaeologist could detect, instead of a single continuous philosophical tradition, the cracks and the fissures which explode it from within and which let the space of global history drift apart into different epistemic “tables” on which things will be ordered ever anew, until it dawns on us “that we are difference, that our reason is the