The heterotopic status of literature
Foucault, Borges and heterotopias

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Introduction

This thesis is about the relation between knowledge and literature in *The Order of Things* written by Michel Foucault. This book, in which Foucault explores the conditions of possibility of systems of knowledge, 'arose out of a passage of Borges', as Foucault states in the preface (xvi). Why did *The Order of Things* arise out of a passage of Jorge Luis Borges, an Argentine writer? This passage, which Foucault quotes in its entirety, is from Borges' text "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins", in which Borges cites 'a certain Chinese encyclopedia' in which is written that:

> Animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the emperor; (b) embalmed ones; (c) those that are trained; (d) suckling pigs; (e) mermaids; (f) fabulous ones; (g) stray dogs; (h) those that are included in this classification; (i) those that tremble as if they were mad; (j) innumerable ones; (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's-hair brush; (l) etcetera; (m) those that have just broken the flower vase; (n) those that at a distance resemble flies.
> (Borges *Selected Non-Fictions* 231)

The question that Foucault asks with regard to Borges' classification is: 'What is the ground on which we are able to establish the validity of this classification with complete certainty?' (xxi).

Foucault states that the aim of *The Order of Things*, which arose out of this passage of Borges, is to 'rediscover on what basis knowledge and theory become possible; within what space of order knowledge was constituted; on the basis of what historical a priori, and in the element of what positivity, ideas could appear, sciences be established, experience be reflected in philosophies, rationalities be formed, only, perhaps, to dissolve and vanish soon afterwards' (xxiii). It is an archeological inquiry that addresses 'itself to the general space of knowledge, to its configurations, and to the mode of being of the things that appear in it, defines systems of simultaneity, as well as the series of mutations necessary and sufficient to circumscribe the threshold of a new positivity' (xxv). Foucault is concerned with 'observing how a culture experiences the propinquity of things, how it establishes the tabula of their relationships and the order by which they must be considered' (xxvi). As such he is primarily concerned with how a culture establishes the relation between language and things, with how order is established: the order of things. This archeological inquiry, Foucault states, 'has

revealed two great discontinuities in the episteme of Western culture': the first marks the end of the Renaissance and 'inaugurates the Classical age, and the second […] marks the beginning of the modern age' (xxiv). With regard to the first discontinuity, Foucault discusses Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and with regard to the second Sade's *Justine* and *Juliette.*

Literature plays an important role in *The Order of Things*, because this book owes its existence to a passage of Borges, and because Cervantes and Sade are discussed in relation to the discontinuities. Why does Foucault ascribe such an important role to literature in a philosophical book that addresses itself to the general space of knowledge? By giving these literary examples, Foucault seems to imply that there is something that literature can do in relation to positive knowledge. The question: what is the status of literature?, is the central question of this thesis. What could the role and function of literature be with regard to these discontinuities Foucault establishes in the Western episteme? Such a discontinuity, Foucault states, 'probably begins with an erosion from outside, from that space which is, for thought, on the other side, but in which it has never ceased to think from the very beginning' (*The Order of Things* 56). What could Foucault mean with that? My hypothesis is that Foucault's notion of heterotopias, which are outside spaces that have the property of contestation, could elucidate this sentence that a discontinuity begins from a space which is for thought on the other side. Foucault mentions heterotopias only two times; first in the preface of *The Order of Things*, where he states that heterotopias are often found in Borges, and second in a lecture he gave in 1967, which formed the basis for the text "Different Spaces". Can literature be seen as a heterotopia? If so, could that mean that a discontinuity begins in literature?

In the first chapter of this thesis I will explain the three different epistemes as Foucault describes them; the Renaissance, in which language is thought of as resemblance, the Classical age, in which language is thought of as representation, and the modern age, in which language acquires its own being and structural linguistics plays a fundamental role. I will also examine why Foucault discusses Cervantes and Sade with regard to these two discontinuities. In the second chapter I will examine what the role of Borges could be in *The Order of Things.* In the preface as well as in the last few pages of *The Order of Things* Foucault hints at the possibility of a third rupture, the possibility of an entire new episteme in which the subject disappears and language regains its lost unity, due to structuralism which caused a fragmentation of language. Because Foucault only hints at a third discontinuity and does not extensively describe this new form of thought, apart from saying that language will regain its unity with at its cost the disappearance of the subject, I will examine in the second chapter of this thesis, if Foucault could mean post-structuralism with this new form of thought, of which

Derrida and Barthes are exemplary thinkers. Since Foucault discusses Cervantes with regard to the first discontinuity, because he intervenes with thinking in resemblances, and Sade with regard the second, because he intervenes with thinking in representation, could it be that Borges, since Foucault announces a third discontinuity, takes a similar position? I will analyze four short stories written by Borges and examine if Borges could indeed take a similar position between the modern age and this new episteme. Borges should then intervene with structuralism, just like Cervantes and Sade did with the thought of their time.

In the third and final chapter the questions what literature is, what its status is, and what it can do in relation to positive knowledge will be central. In order to answer these questions I will analyze Foucault's notion of heterotopias, and I will analyze two essays which Foucault has written before *The Order of Things,* called "Language to Infinity" and "The Thought of the Outside" in which he addresses the being of literary language and asks what literature is.

Chapter 1: About *The Order of Things*

In *The Order of Things* Foucault analyzes the experience of order and its modes of being, and shows its development throughout the Western episteme since the beginning of the sixteenth century. Order, Foucault states, is 'at one and the same time, that which is given in things as their inner law, the hidden network that determines the way they confront one another, and also that which has no existence except in the grid created by a glance, an examination, a language' (xxi). It is a table upon which language intersects space and 'that enables thought to operate upon the entities of our world, to put them in order, to divide them into classes, to group them according to names that designate their similarities and their differences' (xix). Foucault explores the conditions of possibility of systems of knowledge, which is why he calls it an 'archaeological inquiry' (xxiv). On this account, Foucault states, 'what should appear are those configurations within the space of knowledge which have given rise to the diverse forms of empirical science' (xxiv). This means that according to Foucault, knowledge is historical a priori and is as such subject to change and discontinuous.

Foucault distinguishes three systems of knowledge, or epistemes, and states that two great discontinuities can be seen in the way in which order is established and on what ground knowledge is founded, in the history of Western culture. The first major change, Foucault argues, marks the end of the Renaissance and 'inaugurates the Classical age' during the seventeenth century, and the second major change, marks the 'beginning of the modern age' at the beginning of the nineteenth century (xxiv). These discontinuities do not mean, Foucault states, that reason made any progress: 'it was simply that the mode of being of things, and of the order that divided them up before presenting them to the understanding, was profoundly altered' (xxiv). What Foucault means with such a discontinuity is 'the fact that within the space of a few years a culture sometimes ceases to think as it had been thinking up till then and begins to think other things in a new way' (56). With regard to the first discontinuity, Foucault discusses Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and with regard to the second Sade's *Justine* and *Juliette.* In this chapter I am going to explain the three different epistemes, the Renaissance, the Classical age, and the modern age, as described by Foucault. I am also going to explore why Foucault discusses the literature of Cervantes and Sade with regard to these discontinuities he establishes in the systems of knowledge.

1.1   The Renaissance

Up to the sixteenth century, Foucault states, 'resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture' (19). The world was ordered on the basis of similarity between things. It was resemblance which was the primary form of knowledge, of knowing things. Resemblance, Foucault states, 'was the invisible form of that which, from the depths of the world, made things visible; but in order that this form may be brought out into the light in its turn there must be a visible figure that will draw it out from its profound invisibility' (30). This visible figure was a sign. Resemblances required a signature, for without a sign, without being legibly marked, resemblances would never become observable (32). The world of similarity, Foucault states, could 'only be a world of signs' (29). The world was seen as if it was covered with signs that had to be deciphered, and those signs 'which reveal resemblances and affinities, are themselves no more than forms of similitude' (36). In the Renaissance, language was thought of as a sign of things and formed a part of the world. Language and things were seen as interwoven, because language resembled those things. As such the relation of language to the world was 'one of analogy rather than of signification', Foucault states (41). 'To search for a meaning is to bring to light a resemblance' (33). Resemblance was at the same time the form and content of signs (47). It was in this 'reciprocal cross-reference of signs and similitudes', in which the fundamental configuration of knowledge consisted during the period of the Renaissance (37).

1.2   The Classical age

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Foucault states, 'the profound kinship of language with the world' became dissolved (47). Because of 'an essential rupture in the Western world', Foucault states, a field of knowledge has opened up, in which it is no longer resemblances but identities and differences which is what has become important (55). On the threshold of the Classical age, Foucault states, 'thought ceases to move in the element of resemblance. Similitude is no longer the form of knowledge but rather the occasion of error, the danger to which one exposes oneself when one does not examine the obscure region of confusions' (56). Things and words were separated from each other, and the sign ceases to be a form of the world, it is no longer bound 'to what it marks by the solid and secret bonds of resemblance or affinity' (64). Instead, the sign represents an idea and it is within the domain of knowledge 'that the sign is to perform its signifying function' (66). Thinking in terms of resemblance is replaced by a binary structure of the sign and the signified whereby the relation of the sign to its content 'is not guaranteed by the order of things in themselves' (70).

The signifying element, Foucault states, 'has no content, no function, and no determination other than what it represents: it is entirely ordered upon and transparent to it […] and that which is signified resides, without residuum and without opacity, within the representation of the sign' (71). As such, Foucault states, 'the entire episteme of Western culture found its fundamental arrangements modified' (60).

'With all their twists and turns', Foucault states, the adventures of Don Quixote in Cervantes' novel of the same name, form the boundary of thought by resemblance: 'they mark the end of the old interplay between resemblance and signs and contain the beginnings of new relations'(51). The whole journey of Don Quixote, Foucault argues, 'is a quest for similitudes: the slightest analogies are pressed into service as dormant signs that must be reawakened' (52). But these resemblances and signs 'have dissolved their former alliance; similitudes have become deceptive and verge upon the visionary or madness; things still remain stubbornly within their ironic identity: they are no longer anything but what they are; words wander off on their own, without content, without resemblance to fill their emptiness; they are no longer the marks of things; they lie sleeping between the pages of books and covered in dust' (53). As such Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Foucault states, 'is a negative of the Renaissance world' (53). The endless search for similitudes, which was exemplary for Renaissance thought, and the decipherment of signs that would reveal the resemblances between things, is taken to its ultimate limit by Cervantes.

Don Quixote, Foucault states, construed 'the relations of world and language as people had done in the sixteenth century, decoding inns into castles and farm girls into ladies with no other key than the play of resemblance', but this relation of language to the world is taken to its ultimate limit because Don Quixote sees nothing but resemblances and is alienated in analogy (228). In *Don Quixote*, Foucault argues, 'identities and differences make endless sport of signs and similitudes, [and] language breaks of its old kinship with things' (54). Signs and things, Foucault states, 'no longer resemble each other. And between them, Don Quixote wanders off on his own' (53). Yet language, Foucault states, 'has not become entirely impotent. It now possesses new powers', and contains the beginning of new relations (53). In the second part of the book, Foucault argues, 'Don Quixote meets characters who have read the first part of his story and recognize him, the real man, as the hero of the book. Cervantes' text turns back upon itself, thrusts itself back into its own density, and becomes the object of its own narrative' (53). Don Quixote, Foucault argues, has achieved his reality between the first and the second part of the novel, which is 'a reality he owes to language alone, and which resides entirely inside the words. Don Quixote's truth is not in the relation of the words to the

world but in that slender and constant relation woven between themselves by verbal signs. The hollow fiction of epic exploits has become the representative power of language. Words have swallowed up their own nature as signs' (54). As such, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* marks the end of the interplay of resemblances and contains the beginning of new relations, the relation between the sign and representation, which is what becomes important, according to Foucault, in the Classical age.

In the Classical age, Foucault states, 'words have been allotted the task and power of "representing thought"; […] language represents thought as thought represents itself' (86). According to Classical thought, Foucault argues, there is 'no meaning exterior or anterior to the sign; no implicit presence of a previous discourse that must be reconstituted in order to reveal the autochthonous meaning of things. Nor, on the other hand, any act constitutive of signification or any genesis interior to consciousness. This is because there is no intermediary element, no opacity intervening between the sign and its content' (73). It is completely transparent. In the Classical age, Foucault states, 'the pure science of signs has value as the direct discourse of that which is signified' (74). The fundamental task of Classical 'discourse' was to ascribe a name to things: 'to name is at the same time to give the verbal representation of a representation, and to place it in a general table. The entire Classical theory of language is organized around this central and privileged entity' (128). In that name that was ascribed to things, their being was named (132). As such, what is characteristic for Classical thought is that the ordering of things is linked to ontology. From the very outset, Foucault states, 'this thought exists within an ontology rendered transparent by the fact that being is offered to representation without interruption; and within a representation illuminated by the fact that it releases the continuity of being' (224).

According to Foucault, the essential problem of Classical thought 'lay in the relations between name and order' (226). The main concern was: 'how to discover a nomenclature that would be a taxonomy, or how to establish a system of signs that would be transparent to the continuity of being' (226). As such, the limit of knowledge in the Classical age 'would be the perfect transparency of representations to the signs by which they are ordered' (84). The whole Classical system of order, Foucault states, 'the whole of that great taxinomia that makes it possible to know things by means of the system of their identities, is unfolded within the space that is opened up inside representation when representation represents itself, that area where being and the Same reside' (227). The end of Classical thought, Foucault states, 'will coincide with the decline of representation, or rather with the emancipation of language, of the living being, and of need, with regard to representation' (227).

1.3   The modern age

The last years of the eighteenth century, Foucault states, 'are broken by a discontinuity similar to that which destroyed Renaissance thought at the beginning of the seventeenth; then, the great circular forms in which similitude was enclosed were dislocated and opened so that the table of identities could be unfolded; and that table is now about to be destroyed in turn, while knowledge takes up residence in a new space' (235). Because of this rupture, language 'has lost its transparency and its major function in the domain of knowledge' (322). In the Classical age Foucault states, language was a form of knowing, and as such knowing was automatically discourse:

> it was the immediate and spontaneous unfolding of representations; it was in that order in the first place that representations received their primary signs, patterned and regrouped their common features, and established their relations of identity or attribution […] Thus, language occupied a fundamental situation in relation to all knowledge: it was only by the medium of language that the things of the world could be known. Not because it was a part of the world, ontologically interwoven with it (as in the Renaissance), but because it was the first sketch of an order in representations of the world; because it was the initial, inevitable way of representing representations. It was in language that all generality was formed.
> (322)

Classical knowledge, Foucault states, 'was profoundly nominalist' (322). The fundamental task of language was to name things and to establish a system of signs which would be transparent to the continuity of being of these things. This relation of meaning with the form of truth and the form of being is what modern thought throws fundamentally into question (226).

From the nineteenth century, Foucault states, 'language began to fold in upon itself, to acquire its own particular density, to deploy a history, an objectivity, and laws of its own' (322). It acquired a being proper to itself and became one object of knowledge among others (322). The threshold between the Classical age and the modern age had been crossed when discourse ceased to function within representation as the means of ordering it, when 'words ceased to intersect with representations and to provide a spontaneous grid for the knowledge of things' (331). The idea that language acquires a being proper to itself and should be

detached from representation, is also characteristic for structuralism, of which Saussure is the founding father. Foucault mentions Saussure several times, but does not explain his ideas into full detail. Saussure exposed the arbitrary and differential character of the sign. The sign, according to Saussure, consists of the signified; the idea or concept, and the signifier; the written or spoken word. The signified and the signifier together form the sign, and they are both arbitrary and based on conventions. Representation of an object in the world plays no role within the relation between the signifier and the signified, there is no direct link between the sign and the thing. The identity of the sign is based upon difference with all the other signs. This principle of difference is the condition for signification.

Foucault also mentions Nietzsche several times, of whom he says that he is 'the first to connect the philosophical task with a radical reflection on language' (332). Again Foucault does not explain it into full detail. In his text "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense", published in 1873, Nietzsche states for example that truth does not exist. His thoughts on truth are based upon the traditional definition of truth, namely truth as adequatio rei et intellectus, which means that knowledge and reality correspond, that the thing in reality corresponds to the intellect. Truth as such, according to Nietzsche, does not exist, because between the thing in reality and the intellect, there is language. He asks: 'are designations congruent with things [and] is language the adequate expression of all realities?' (*The Nietzsche Reader* 116). His answer is no. A word is, according to Nietzsche, a metaphor of a metaphor. What happens is the following: first 'a nerve stimulus is transferred into an image: first metaphor. The image, in turn, is imitated in a sound: second metaphor' (116). Words are nothing but metaphors of things and do not correspond at all with the actual things in reality, because of the generality of language and the uniqueness of each thing. A leaf is never totally the same as another leaf. Still we call both leafs a 'leaf'. Every concept, Nietzsche states, arises 'from the equation of unequal things' and thereby that which is different is forgotten (117). Truths, Nietzsche writes, 'are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force' (117). Truth cannot exist because the correspondence between knowledge and reality does not exist, because language does not represent.

These questions that Saussure and Nietzsche both ask, like what is language, what is a sign, what is the relation between language and being, were made possible, Foucault states, by the fact that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, language became detached from representation (*The Order of Things* 333). In the modern age , Foucault states, 'the reign of representative discourse, the dynasty of a representation signifying itself and giving voice in

the sequence of its words to the order that lay dormant within things' comes to an end (227). Once language became detached from representation, it has existed, Foucault states, 'right up to our own day, only in a dispersed way' and appeared in a multiplicity of modes of being (332).

This reversal of knowledge and thought, is, Foucault argues, 'contemporaneous' with Sade's literature, and especially his novels *Justine* and *Juliette* (227). These works, Foucault states, manifest 'the precarious balance between the law without law of desire and the meticulous ordering of discursive representation. Here, the order of discourse finds its Limit and its Law; but it is still strong enough to remain coextensive with the very thing that governs it' (227). Foucault argues that *Justine* and *Juliette* take, on the threshold of the modern age, the same position as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* occupied between the Renaissance and the Classical age (228). Whereas Don Quixote, with his quest for similitudes, marked the limit of thinking in resemblances, Justine and Juliette mark the limit of representation. In the second part of the novel, Foucault states, Don Quixote 'received his truth and his law' from the represented world in the first part, in which he decoded inns into castles and farm girls into ladies by the play of resemblances (228). 'He had only to allow himself to live in a castle in which he himself, having penetrated by means of his madness into the world of pure representation, finally became a mere character in the artifice of a representation' (228). Sade's characters correspond to Don Quixote, Foucault states, 'at the other end of the Classical age, at the moment of its decline. It is no longer the ironic triumph of representation over resemblance; it is the obscure and repeated violence of desire battering at the limits of representation' (228).

According to Foucault, Sade presents in his novels a rigid sequence of 'scenes', which are 'profligacy subjected to the order of representation' (228). *Justine*, Foucault argues, corresponds to the second part of *Don Quixote*: 'she is the unattainable object of the desire of which she is the pure origin, just as Don Quixote is, despite himself, the object of the representation which he also is in the depth of his being' (228). In *Justine*, Foucault states, 'desire and representation communicate only through the presence of Another who represents the heroine to himself as an object of desire, while she herself knows nothing of desire other that its diaphanous, distant, exterior, and icy form as representation. Such is her misfortune: her innocence acts as a perpetual chaperone between desire and its representation'(228 -229).

Foucault states that in *Juliette* 'nomination is at last posited in its starkest nudity, and the rhetorical figures, which until then had been holding it in suspense, collapse and become the endless figures of desire – and the same names, constantly repeated, exhaust themselves in

their effort to cross those figures, without ever being able to reach their end' (130). In *Juliette* 'every desire must be expressed in the pure light of a representative discourse' (228). She is, Foucault states, 'no more than the subject of all possible desires; but those desires are carried over, without any residuum, into the representation that provides them with a reasonable foundation in discourse and transforms them spontaneously into scenes' (229). But desire in Sade's literature is so thin and transparent, that it batters at the limits of representation. *Juliette* undermines the 'inspissation of the represented so that, without the slightest blemish, the slightest reticence, the slightest veil, all the possibilities of desire may rise to the surface' (229). Sade takes representation to its ultimate limit, by presenting the ceaselessly, rigid sequence of scenes in which every desire, every concatenation of reasons, has to be named. As such, *Juliette,* 'closes the Classical age upon itself, just as *Don Quixote* had opened it' (229). Sade, Foucault states, 'attains the end of Classical discourse and thought. He holds sway precisely on their frontier' (229). But it does not only mark the end of old relations, it also contains the beginnings of new relations, because with the 'violence of the name being uttered at last for its own sake, language emerges in all its brute being as a thing' (130).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Foucault states, the law of discourse had been detached from representation, and the being of language itself became fragmented (333). But the disappearance of the primacy of representation had also another consequence.

In Classical thought, Foucault states, 'the personage for whom the representation exists, and who represents himself within it, recognizing himself therein as an image or reflection, he who ties together all the interlacing threads of the "representation in the form of a picture or table" – he is never to be found in that table himself' (336). Before the end of the Classical age, 'man did not exist – any more than the potency of life, the fecundity of labor, or the historical density of language' (336). Language in so far as it represents existed only in order to be transparent; it named, patterned, combined, and connected and disconnected things as it made 'them visible in the transparency of words' (338). In this role, Foucault states, language transformed 'the sequence of perceptions into a table, and cut up the continuum of beings into a pattern of characters' (338). In the Classical experience, the possibility of knowing things and their order passed, 'through the sovereignty of words' which formed 'a colorless network on the basis of which beings manifest themselves and representations are ordered' (339). This had as an essential consequence that 'Classical language, as the common discourse of representation and things, as the place within which nature and human nature intersect, absolutely excludes anything that could be "a science of man"' (339).

It is only in the modern age, when language is detached from representation and the relation between name and being is severed, that man appeared in his 'ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows' (340). The human sciences, that take 'as its object man as an empirical entity', emerge in the modern age (375). Man was included among the objects of science and the human sciences appeared 'when man constituted himself in Western culture as both that which must be conceived of and that which is to be known' (376). The human sciences are 'an analysis that extends from what man is in his positivity (living, speaking, laboring being) to what enables this same being to know (or seek to know) what life is, in what the essence of labor and its laws consist, and in what way his is able to speak' (385). It is the 'first time since human beings have existed and have lived together in societies' that they become an object of science, and this, Foucault states, is not an opinion or phenomenon, it 'is an event in the order of knowledge' (376). This event itself was 'produced in a general redistribution of the episteme: when, abandoning the space of representation, living beings took up their places in the specific depths of life, wealth in the onward thrust of new forms of production, and words in the development of languages' (376).

At the same time, Foucault argues, there appear also three 'counter-sciences'; psychoanalysis, ethnology and structural linguistics (414). What they have in common, is that they do not question man himself, as he appears in the human sciences, 'but the region that makes possible knowledge about man in general', they span 'the whole field of knowledge in a movement that tends to reach its boundaries' (412). They are not so much three human sciences among others, but they span the entire domain of these sciences and what illuminates the space of their discourse, Foucault states, is 'the historical a priori of all the sciences of man – those great caesuras, furrows, and dividing-lines which traced man's outline in the Western episteme and made him a possible area of knowledge' (413). Not only, Foucault states, 'are they able to do without the concept of man, they are also unable to pass through it for they always address themselves to that which constitutes his outer limits […] They dissolve man' (413). They are 'counter-sciences', not because they are less 'rational' or 'objective' than the human sciences, but because 'they flow in the opposite direction, they lead them back to their epistemological basis, and they ceaselessly "unmake" that very man who is creating and re-creating his positivity in the human sciences' (414).

As a pure theory of language, linguistics plays a fundamental role; it provides psychoanalysis and ethnology their formal model. In linguistics, Foucault states, 'one would have a science perfectly founded in the order of positivities exterior to man (since it is a question of pure language), which after traversing the whole space of the human sciences,

would encounter the question of finitude (since it is through language, and within it, that thought is able the think: so that it is in itself a positivity with the value of a fundamental)' (415). Like psychoanalysis and ethnology, linguistics makes visible, Foucault states, 'the frontier-forms of the human sciences; like them, it would situate its experience in those enlightened and dangerous regions where the knowledge of man acts out, in the form of the unconscious and of historicity, its relation with what renders them possible' (416). In exposing that, 'these three counter-sciences threaten the very thing that made it possible for man to be known' (416). But linguistics plays a more fundamental role than the other two, because, Foucault states, 'it permits – or in any case strives to render possible – the structuration of contents themselves […] It is the principle of a primary decipherment: to a gaze forearmed by linguistics, things attain to existence only in so far as they are able to form the elements of a signifying system' (416). Linguistic analysis as such is constitutive of its very object. The question of the being of language appears as a result of 'the importance of linguistics and of its application to the knowledge of man' (417). And, Foucault states, 'the question of the being of language, which, as we have seen, is so intimately linked with the fundamental problems of our culture, reappears in all its enigmatic insistence' (417). The question what language essentially is in its being, 'is once more of the greatest urgency' (417).

1.4   Conclusion chapter 1

So far, I have explained the configurations within the space of knowledge throughout the Western episteme and how Foucault describes the two great discontinuities that can be seen in the way in which order is established and on what ground knowledge is founded, in the history of Western culture. During the period of the Renaissance, resemblance played a constructive role within the field of knowledge. What was characteristic for Renaissance thought, was the endless search for similitudes and the decipherment of signs that would reveal those resemblances. At the beginning of the seventeenth century this configuration of knowledge in which resemblance played a constructive role, changes entirely. It is no longer resemblance, but representation which is what has become important. And it is this configuration that, Foucault states, 'from the nineteenth century onward, changes entirely; the theory of representation disappears as the universal foundation of all possible orders; language as the spontaneous tabula, the primary grid of things, as an indispensible link between representation and things, is eclipsed in its turn' (xxv).

Foucault discusses Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Sade's *Justine* and *Juliette* with regard to these discontinuities because they both take a certain position between two epistemes. Foucault discusses Cervantes with regard to the first discontinuity, because thinking in resemblances is taken in *Don Quixote* to its ultimate limit. But not only is the relation between language and things, as it was thought of during that period, taken to its ultimate limit, *Don Quixote* also already contains the beginnings of new relations between language and things as it will be thought of in the Classical age. On the threshold of the modern age, Sade's novels *Justine* and *Juliette* take the same position as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* took between the Renaissance and the Classical age. Now it is representation which is what is taken to its ultimate limit by Sade, by presenting the ceaselessly, rigid scenes in which every desire, presented as so thin and transparent, has to be named. Just like *Don Quixote* formed the boundary of Renaissance thought, *Justine* and *Juliette* form the boundary of Classical thought. And just like *Don Quixote*, they also already contain the beginnings of new relations between language and things, as it will be thought of in the modern age.

In the modern age, Foucault states, 'language loses its privileged position and becomes, in its turn, a historical form coherent with the density of its own past. But as things become increasingly reflexive […], abandoning the space of representation, man enters in his turn, and for the first time, the field of Western knowledge' (xxv). The one thing we can say in all certainty, Foucault states, 'is that in Western culture the being of man and the being of language have never, at any time, been able to coexist and to articulate themselves one upon the other. Their incompatibility has been one of the fundamental features of our thought' (369). The entire modern episteme, Foucault argues, 'which was formed towards the end of the eighteenth century and still serves as the positive ground of our knowledge, that which constituted man's particular mode of being, and the possibility of knowing him empirically – that entire episteme was bound up with the disappearance of Discourse and its featureless reign, with the shift of language towards objectivity, and with its reappearance in multiple form' (420 – 421). But since the question of the being of language becomes more and more urgent and 'language is now emerging with greater and greater insistence in a unity that we ought to think but cannot as yet do so, is this not the sign' Foucault asks, 'that the whole of this configuration is now about to topple, and that man is in the process of perishing as the being of language continues to shine ever brighter upon our horizon?' (421). Will man, Foucault asks, 'since man was constituted at a time when language was doomed to dispersion, […] not be dispersed when language regains its unity?' (421).

Foucault implies several times that the ground on which modern knowledge is founded 'is once more stirring under our feet' (xxvi). And since he states at the very beginning of the book, that 'this book arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought – our thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our and age and our geography', could it be that Borges' literature takes the same position as Cervantes occupied between the Renaissance and the Classical age, and Sade between the Classical age and the modern age, now that the configuration of knowledge in the modern age might be about to topple and Foucault announces the possibility of entire new episteme?

Chapter 2 : About the postmodern episteme and Borges

In the last few pages of *The Order of Things*, Foucault announces the possibility of an entire new episteme in which language regains its unity and in which man disappears in its turn. The configuration of knowledge might be about to topple again, and there may be formed a third rupture in the Western episteme. My hypothesis is that this third rupture, could be the break between structural linguistics, of which Saussure is the founding father, and post-structural linguistics; a label which is often put on Derrida's theory of language. If that is what Foucault implies or could imply, since he does not say it as such, does language regains its unity in Derrida's theory of language in such a way that it could be an example of this new form of thought which Foucault announces? As I have shown in the previous chapter, literature plays an important role in *The Order of Things*, because Foucault discusses Cervantes' *Don Quixote* with regard to the first discontinuity, and Sade's *Justine* and *Juliette* with regard to the second. Could it be that Borges takes the same position as Cervantes occupied between the Renaissance and the Classical age, and Sade between the Classical age and the modern age, now that the configuration of knowledge in the modern age might be about to topple and Foucault announces a third discontinuity? If so, Borges should intervene with structural linguistics, which is according to Foucault fundamental for modern thought, and take it to its ultimate limit, just like Cervantes did with resemblance and Sade with representation, and also already contain the beginnings of relations between language and things.

2.1   The new episteme

Questions like: what is language? What is a sign? What is the relation between language and being, and 'is it really to being that language is always addressed – at least, language that speaks truly'?, were, Foucault states, made possible by the fact that since the nineteenth century discourse had been detached from representation and the being of language became fragmented (333). But these questions became inevitable Foucault states, 'when, with Nietzsche, and Mallarmé, thought was brought back and violently so, towards language itself, towards its unique and difficult being. The whole curiosity of our thought now resides in the question: What is language, how can we find a way round it in order to make it appear in itself, in all its plenitude?' (333-334). The question Foucault asks with regard to this is: are such questions on the subject of language 'no more than a continuance, or at most a culmination, of the event that, as archaeology has shown, came into existence and began to take effect at the end of the eighteenth century?' (334). If that is the case, Foucault argues:

The fragmentation of language, occurring at the same time as its transition to philological objectivity, would [then] be no more than the most recently visible (because the most secret and most fundamental) consequence of the breaking up of Classical order; by making the effort to master this schism and to make language visible in its entirety, we would bring to completion what had occurred before us, and without us, towards the end of the eighteenth century. But what, in that case, would that culmination be? In attempting to reconstitute the lost unity of language, is one carrying to its conclusion a thought which is that of the nineteenth century, or is one pursuing forms that are already incompatible with it? The dispersion of language is linked, in fact, in a fundamental way, with the archeological event we may designate as the disappearance of Discourse. To discover the vast play of language contained once more within a single space might be just as decisive a leap towards a wholly new form of thought as to draw to a close a mode of knowing constituted during the previous century.

(334)

Is the attempt to reconstitute the lost unity of language the conclusion of thought of the modern age, or is it already incompatible with it?

One of the fundamental features of our thought, Foucault states, is that throughout the Western culture the being of man and the being of language have never been able to coexist (369). The figure of man occurred between two modes of language; 'he was constituted only when language, having been situated within representation and, as it were, dissolved in it, freed itself from that situation at the cost of its own fragmentation: man composed his own figure in the interstices of that fragmented language' (421). Since man was constituted at a time when language was dispersed, will he, Foucault asks, 'not be dispersed when language regains its unity?' (421). The question as to what language is in its being, Foucault states, is now 'once more of the greatest urgency' (417). At this point, Foucault argues, 'where the question of language arises again with such heavy over-determination, and where it seems to lay siege on every side to the figure of man (that figure which had once taken the place of Classical Discourse), contemporary culture is struggling to create an important part of its present, and perhaps of its future' (417). The appearance of man, Foucault states, 'was not the liberation of an old anxiety, the transition into luminous consciousness of an age-old concern,

the entry into objectivity of something that had long remained trapped within beliefs and philosophies: it was the effect of a change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge. As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date' (422). And perhaps it is an invention 'nearing its end' (422).

If the question of language indeed arises with such a heavy over-determination, if language regains its unity with at its cost the disappearance of man, then there could be seen, Foucault states several times, a third rupture in the Western world. But how could this new form of thought, of which Foucault announces its possibility, with its unity of language and disappearance of man, look like? What could Foucault mean with this unity of language? Foucault does not mention Derrida, and his post-structuralist linguistics, at all, but I think that Derrida's ideas about language, could elucidate this new form of thought of this new episteme, as Foucault describes it.

2.2   Derrida on language: writing and différance

In his book *Of Grammatology*, Derrida puts into question the assumptions of Western metaphysics which are according to him at the same time logocentric as well as phonocentric. Throughout the history of philosophy, writing, Derrida states, has been confined 'to a secondary and instrumental function: translator of a full speech that was fully present (present to itself, to its signified, to the other, the very condition of the theme of presence in general)' (8). Derrida relates this phonocentrism, the primacy of speech, of spoken words, to logocentrism, which is the belief that, as Spivak puts it in his preface to *Of Grammatology,* 'the first and last things are the Logos, the Word, the Divine Mind, the infinite understanding of God, and infinitely creative subjectivity, and, closer to our time, the self-presence of full self-consciousness' (lxviii). Derrida's suggestion is, Spivak states, 'that this phonocentrism-logocentrism relates to centrism itself – the human desire to posit a "central" presence at beginning and end' (lxviii). What Derrida puts into question is this idea of presence and the secondary and derivative function ascribed to writing.

Throughout the history of philosophy, the spoken word has been seen as more fundamental than the written word, Derrida states, because 'the essence of the phonè would be immediately proximate to that which within "thought" as logos relates to "meaning", produces it, receives it, speaks it, "composes" it' (11). For Aristotle for example, Derrida argues, spoken words are the symbols of mental experience whereas written words are symbols of spoken words, because 'the voice, producer of the first symbols, has a relationship of essential and immediate proximity with the mind' (11). The voice, as the producer of the

first signifier, is not just a simple signifier among others, it is closest to the signified. All signifiers, Derrida states, 'and first and foremost the written signifier, are derivative with regard to what would wed the voice indissolubly to the mind or to the thought of the signified sense, indeed to the thing itself' (11). The written signifier, Derrida states, is 'always technical and representative', and this derivation 'is the very origin of the notion of the "signifier"' (11).

The notion of the sign, Derrida states, 'always implies within itself the distinction between signifier and signified, even if, as Saussure argues, they are distinguished simply as the two faces of one and the same leaf' (11). Even Saussure remains, according to Derrida, 'within the heritage of that logocentrism which is also a phonocentrism: absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of being, of voice and the ideality of meaning', because he prescribed linguistics to be a study of speech, rather than of speech and writing (11-12). Throughout the history of philosophy, reading and writing, are seen as being preceded by 'a truth, or a meaning already constituted by and within the element of the logos' (14). The signified has had 'at any rate an immediate relationship with the logos in general, and a mediated one with the signifier, that is to say with the exteriority of writing' (15). The 'formal essence' of the signified is seen as presence, Derrida states, and 'the privilege of its proximity to the logos as phonè is the privilege of presence' (18). Due to this privilege, a secondary and derivative function is ascribed to the written signifier: 'a sign signifying a signifier itself signifying an eternal verity, eternally thought and spoken in the proximity of a present logos' (15).

According to Derrida, Saussure does not recognize in writing 'more than a narrow and derivative function. Narrow because it is nothing but one modality among others […] Derivative because representative: signifier of the first signifier, representation of the self-present voice, of the immediate, natural, and direct signification of the meaning (of the signified, of the concept, of the ideal object)' (30). Writing, Derrida states, or 'the letter, the sensible inscription, has always been considered by Western tradition as the body and matter external to the spirit, to breath, to speech, and to the logos' (35). In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida turns against the phonocentrism-logocentrism and the derivative function of writing. What is more fundamental is not speech, but writing. Derrida uses the name writing not only to designate writing in the narrow sense, a graphic notion, but 'to an entire structure of investigation', as Spivak puts it (lxix).

By a slow movement, Derrida states, 'whose necessity is hardly perceptible, everything that for at least some twenty centuries tended toward and finally succeeded in

being gathered under the name of language is beginning to let itself be transferred to, or at least summarized under, the name of writing' (6). It seems as though, Derrida argues, that 'the concept of writing – no longer indicating a particular, derivative, auxiliary form of language in general, no longer designating the exterior surface, the insubstantial double of a major signifier, the signifier of the signifier – is beginning to go beyond the extension of language. In all senses of the word, writing thus comprehends language' (6-7). That does not mean that:

> the word "writing" has ceased to designate the signifier of the signifier, but it appears, strange at it may seem, that "signifier of the signifier" no longer defines accidental doubling and fallen secondarity. "Signifier of the signifier" describes on the contrary the movement of language: in its origin, to be sure, but one can already suspect that an origin whose structure can be expressed as "signifier of the signifier" conceals and erases itself in its own production. There the signified always already functions as a signifier. The secondarity that it seemed possible to ascribe to writing alone affects all signifieds in general, affects them always already, the moment they enter the game. There is not a single signified that escapes, even if recaptured, the play of signifying references that constitute language.
>
> (7)

As such, the way in which Derrida uses the name writing, is not just a simple reversal of hierarchy, but it designates the structure of writing, which applies not only to writing itself, but to language and the sign in general. The rationality, Derrida states, 'which governs a writing thus enlarged and radicalized, no longer issues from a logos. Further, it inaugurates the destruction, not the demolition but the de-sedimentation, the de-construction, of all the significations that have their source in that of the logos. Particularly the signification of truth' (10).

What Derrida puts at stake here, is the idea of presence. In his text "Différance", Derrida argues that the 'sign is usually said to be put in the place of the thing itself', that the sign, 'represents the present in its absence', and as such is deferred presence (*Margins of Philosophy* 9). According to classical semiology, Derrida states, 'the substitution of the sign for the thing itself is both secondary and provisional: secondary due to an original and lost presence from which the sign thus derives; provisional as concerns this final and missing presence toward which the sign in this sense is a movement of mediation' (9). Derrida puts

the provisional secondariness of the substitute into question and opposes to it the play of 'différance' (10). Différance refers simultaneously to the two meanings of the Latin verb différer: to defer and to differ. The condition for signification is the principle of difference, which 'affects the totality of the sign, that is the sign as both signified and signifier', and at the same time there is a deferring, a putting off until later, of presence, of the signified, because the signifier refers to all the other signifiers from which it differs, and the signified as such is never present (10). The signified concept, Derrida states, 'is never present in and of itself, in a sufficient presence that would refer only to itself. Essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences' (11).

These differences, Derrida states, 'are "produced" – deferred – by différance' (14). But this 'does not mean that the différance that produces differences is somehow before them, in a simple and unmodified – indifferent – present. Différance is the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences. Thus, the name "origin" no longer suits it' (11). Différance is a movement of deferring and differing, which does not have an origin and does not lead toward a final, and fixed meaning. It does not have an absolute point of departure nor a final endpoint. As such, the sign, the graphic sign as well as the phonic sign, is a structure of difference, and Derrida suggests, Spivak states, 'that what opens the possibility of thought is not merely the question of being, but also the never-annuled difference from "the completely other". Such is the strange "being" of the sign: half of it always "not there" and the other half always "not that". The structure of the sign is determined by the trace or track of that other which is forever absent' (*Of Grammatology* xvii). Derrida gives the name "trace", Spivak states, 'to the part played by the radically other within the structure of difference that is the sign', it is the 'mark of the absence of a presence, an always already absent present, of the lack of origin that is the condition of thought and experience' (xvii).

The trace, Derrida states in *Of Grammatology*, is 'the absolute origin of sense in general. Which amounts to saying once again that there is no absolute origin of sense in general. The trace is the difference which opens appearance and signification' (65). The trace, Derrida argues, affects the totality of the sign, that is both the signifier as well as the signified. 'The signified is ordinarily and essentially (and not only for a finite and created spirit) trace, that it is always already in the position of the signifier, is the apparently innocent proposition within which the metaphysics of the logos, of presence and consciousness, must reflect upon writing as its death and its resource' (73). The way in which Derrida thus uses the concept "writing", is much broader than the empirical concept of writing, it is, Spivak states, 'the

name of the structure always already inhabited by the trace' (xxxix). The usual notion of writing in the narrow sense, Spivak states, 'does contain the elements of the structure of writing in general: the absence of the "author" […] We "recognize" all this in writing in the narrow sense and "repress" it, this allows us to ignore that everything else is also inhabited by the structure of writing in general, that the "thing itself always escapes"' (lxix). Writing in general, Derrida states, 'covers the entire field of linguistic signs' (44). 'There is no linguistic sign before writing' (14). Or as Derrida puts it further on in his book: 'there is nothing outside of the text [there is no outside-text]' (158).

How could Derrida's ideas about language elucidate, as I have said above, this new form of thought in this new episteme, of which Foucault announces its possibility? Does language in Derrida's philosophy regains its unity in some way? Is the 'vast play of language contained once more within a single space' (*The Order of Things* 334)? By deconstructing binary oppositions like the signifier and signified, the sensible and intelligible, speech and writing, as they are distinguished in Saussure's linguistics, what Derrida puts at stake is the idea of presence and meaning. By putting these binary oppositions into question, which are not only exemplary for Saussure's linguistics but for the whole metaphysical tradition in general, which is according to Derrida both logocentric and phonocentric, by stating that not speech is more fundamental but writing, he does not simply reverse these hierarchies but shows that everything is always already inhabited by the structure of writing, the play of différance, the trace. Not only writing is marked by absence, the absence of the author, everything else is also already marked by absence, and as such inhabited by the structure of writing, because the presence, the thing itself, is never present as such, the presence is always absent. The signified always already functions like the signifier, it is always already inhabited by the trace, inscribed in a chain in which it refers to all others by means of the systematic play of differences, and this play is the play of différance. Because the difference between "différence" with an e and "différance" with an a in French is inaudible, Derrida emphasizes the importance of writing as a structure. Différance is the movement of difference and deferral, every sign always differs from all the other signs while at the same time presence is being endlessly deferred. As such meaning is never fixed, is never stable, has no origin and no final endpoint.

You could say that language in Derrida's philosophy regains its unity in way, although not at all in the sense that there is a unified meaning, but because Derrida undoes and deconstructs these binary oppositions. There is no distinction between speech and writing; speech already functions like writing. There is no distinction between the signifier and

signified; the signified is always already in the position of the signifier. The whole sign, that is both signifier and signified, is determined by the trace of that other from which it differs and which is always absent. By stating that writing covers the whole field of language and signs, that there is no linguistic sign before writing, the play of language takes place in a way once more in a single space; the field of writing. There is no meaning outside the linguistic system, there are no significations that have their source in that of the logos, there is no transcendental signified, there is 'no transcendent truth outside the field of writing' (*Margins of Philosophy* 7). As such, this third rupture in the Western episteme, of which Foucault announces its possibility, which will occur when language regains its unity and takes place again in a single space, could be the break, although Foucault does not state it this way, between structural linguistics, which plays according to Foucault a fundamental role in the modern age, and post-structural linguistics, as Derrida's work is often characterized, and would then be the break between the modern age, and an episteme that could be described as the postmodern age.

2.3   Foucault on modern literature and Borges

Thus the question of the being of language, which, as we have seen, Foucault states in *The Order of Things*, 'is so intimately linked with the fundamental problems of our culture, reappears in all its enigmatic insistence' (417). These questions on the being of language 'concern a general formalization of thought and knowledge' (417). But the question of language is not only posed in formal reflection, it is also posed in literature. At the other extremity of our culture, Foucault states, 'the question of language is entrusted to that form of speech which has no doubt never ceased to pose it, but which is now, for the first time, posing it to itself' (418). 'That literature in our day is fascinated by the being of language', Foucault argues, 'is neither the sign of an imminent end nor proof of a radicalization: it is a phenomenon whose necessity has its roots in a vast configuration in which the whole structure of our thought and our knowledge is traced' (418). But, Foucault continues, if the question of formal languages:

> gives prominence to the possibility or impossibility of structuring positive
> contents, a literature dedicated to language gives prominence, in all their
> empirical vivacity, to the fundamental forms of finitude. From within
> language experienced and traversed as language, in the play of its possibilities
> extended to their furthest point, what emerges is that man has "come to an

end", and that, by reaching the summit of all possible speech, he arrives not at the very heart of himself but at the brink of that which limits him; in that region where death prowls, where thought is extinguished, where the promise of the origin interminably recedes.

(418)

In this new being of literature, the figure of finitude posits itself in language, Foucault states, 'as that which unveils itself within it, but also before it, preceding it, as that formless, mute, unsignifying region where language can find its freedom' (418). It is in this space that literature posits itself as experience: 'as experience of death (and in the element of death), of unthinkable thought (and in its inaccessible presence), of repetition (of original innocence, always there at the nearest and yet always the most distant limit of language); as experience of finitude (trapped in the opening and tyranny of that finitude)' (418-419). The fact that the question of language is being posed, Foucault states, 'in literature as well as in formal reflection […] prove no doubt that man is in the process of disappearing' (420). Which could be a sign that the whole configuration of the modern age is about to topple.

Although Foucault does not mention Borges in this respect, at the end of his book where he announces the possibility of a new episteme, he does quote a whole passage of Borges' text "John Wilkins' Analytical Language", in the preface of *The Order of Things*, and states that this passage shatters '*our* thought', which is thus the thought of the modern age, because it disturbs and threatens to collapse *our* 'age-old distinction between the Same and the Other' (xvi). In this passage of "John Wilkins' Analytical Language" which Foucault quotes, Borges quotes a certain Chinese encyclopedia in which is written that:

Animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the emperor; (b) embalmed ones; (c) those that are trained; (d) suckling pigs; (e) mermaids; (f) fabulous ones; (g) stray dogs; (h) those that are included in this classification; (i) those that tremble if they were mad; (j) innumerable ones; (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's-hair brush; (l) etcetera; (m) those that have just broken the flower vase; (n) those that at a distance resemble flies.

(Borges, *Selected Non-Fictions* 231)

In the wonderment of Borges' classification, Foucault states, 'the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of

another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*. But what is it impossible to think, and what kind of impossibility are we faced with here?' (xvi). What is impossible, are not the fabulous animals, Foucault states, since they are designated as such, but 'the narrowness of the distance separating them from (and juxtaposing them to) the stray dogs, or the animals that from a long way of look like flies. What transgresses the boundaries of all imagination, of all possible thought, is simply that alphabetical series (a,b,c,d) which links each of those categories to all the others' (xvii).

What is impossible, Foucault states, 'is not the propinquity of the things listed, but the very site on which their propinquity would be possible' (xviii). The 'monstrous quality' that runs through Borges' classification, Foucault argues, consists in the fact 'that the common ground on which such meetings are possible has itself been destroyed' (xviii). Where could, Foucault asks, the animals listed in this classification 'ever meet, except in the immaterial sound of the voice pronouncing their enumeration, or on the page transcribing it?' (xviii). Foucault continues:

> Where else could they be juxtaposed except in the non-place of language? Yet, though language can spread them before us, it can do so only in an unthinkable space. The central category of animals "included in the present classification", with its explicit reference to paradoxes we are familiar with, is indication enough that we shall never succeed in defining a stable relation of contained to container between each of these categories and that which includes them all: if all the animals divided up here can be placed without exception in one of the divisions of this list, then aren't all the other divisions to be found in that one division too? An then again, in what space would that single, inclusive division have its existence? Absurdity destroys the *and* of the enumeration by making impossible the *in* where the things enumerated would be divided up.
> (xviii)

Borges, Foucault states, does not add a figure to the impossible, 'he simply dispenses with the least obvious, but most compelling, of necessities; he does away with the *site*, the mute ground upon which it is possible for entities to be juxtaposed' (xviii). What Borges presents here is the unthinkable thought, because he destroys the ground upon which such meetings are possible.

The concept of language plays a significant role in many of Borges' short stories. The fact that in literature the question of language is being posed, could be, as I have said, according to Foucault a sign that the thought of the modern age has come to an end. Since Foucault discusses this passage of "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" of Borges extensively in the preface of *The Order of Things*, with regard to 'our thought', which is the thought of the modern age, could it be that Borges takes the same position as Cervantes occupied between the Renaissance and the Classical age, and Sade between the Classical age and the modern age, now that the thought of the modern age might come to its end? If Borges indeed takes up the same position, Borges should intervene with structural linguistics, which is according to Foucault fundamental for modern thought, and take it to its ultimate limit, just like Cervantes did with thinking in resemblances and Sade with representation, and also already contain the beginnings of relations between language and being. I will now analyze four of Borges' short stories, in which language plays a significant role, and also discuss his essay "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins", and examine if Borges indeed could take the same position as Cervantes and Sade.

2.4   Language in four short stories of Borges

In his essay "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins", Borges writes about John Wilkins' attempt to create a 'universal language' in which 'each word defines itself' (*Selected Non-Fictions* 230). John Wilkins divided, Borges writes, 'the universe into forty categories or classes, which were then subdivided into differences, and subdivided in turn into species. To each class he assigned a monosyllable of two letters; to each difference, a consonant; to each species, a vowel. For example, *de* means element; *deb*, the first of elements, fire; *deba*, a portion of the element of fire, a flame' (230). Whereas all the natural languages are all inexpressive, Wilkins tried to create an analytical language that would be expressive, that is a language 'in which the name of each being would indicate all the details of its fate, past and future' (232). While 'the word *salmon* tells us nothing', the corresponding word '*zana*', in Wilkins analytical language, 'defines (for the person versed in the forty categories and the classes of those categories) a scaly river fish with reddish flesh' (232). But, Borges argues, Wilkins' project is just as arbitrary and ambiguous as the classification of animals in this certain Chinese encyclopedia, which is quoted earlier. 'There is no classification of the universe that is not arbitrary and speculative', Borges writes (231). That is because: 'we do not know what the universe is' (231).

A project similar to Wilkins', occurs in Borges' short story "Funes, His memory". The narrator tells us about a boy named Ireneo Funes, who became 'crippled' after being bucked off a horse, but gained perfect perception and memory after his fall (*Collected Fictions* 132). Now Funes could remember, the narrator tells us, for example 'the forms of the clouds in the southern sky on the morning of April 30, 1882, and he could compare them in his memory with the veins in the marbled binding of a book he had seen only once' (135). The narrator tells us about two of Funes' projects, which are according to the narrator 'foolish, even preposterous, but […] reveal a certain halting grandeur' (136). The first project was the invention of 'an infinite vocabulary for the natural series of numbers' (136). He had invented, the narrator says, 'a numbering system original with himself', in which 'every word had a particular figure attached to it, a sort of marker' and within 'a very few days he had passed the twenty-four thousand mark (135-136). 'Instead of seven thousand thirteen (7013), he would say for instance, "Máximo Pérez"; instead of seven thousand fourteen (7014), "the railroad"; other numbers were "Luis Melián Lafinur", "Olimar", "sulfur", "clubs"' etc (136). The other project was creating a 'mental catalog of all the images of his memory' (136). The narrator tells us that:

> In the seventeenth century, Locke postulated (and condemned) an impossible language in which each individual thing – every stone, every bird, every branch – would have its own name; Funes once contemplated a similar language, but discarded the idea as too general, too ambiguous. The truth was, Funes remembered not only every leaf of every tree in every patch of forest, but every time he had perceived or imagined that leaf. He resolved to reduce every one of his past days to some seventy thousand recollections, which he would then define by numbers. Two considerations dissuaded him: the realization that the task was interminable, and the realization that it was pointless. He saw that by the time he died he would still not have finished classifying all the memories of his childhood.
> (136)

Funes remembered everything in full detail, was not able to forget anything, and because of that, he was, the narrator says, 'incapable of general, platonic ideas' (136). What is being suggested here, is that being able to generalize, that being able to abstract means being able to forget.

Because Funes was incapable of general ideas, the narrator states that 'he was not very good at thinking. To think is to ignore (or forget) differences, to generalize, to abstract. In the teeming world of Ireneo Funes there was nothing but particulars – and they were virtually *immediate* particulars' (137). Not only was it difficult for Funes, the narrator says, 'that the generic symbol "dog" took in all the dissimilar individuals of all shapes and sizes, it irritated him that the "dog" of three-fourteen in the afternoon, seen in profile, should be indicated by the same noun as the dog of three-fifteen, seen frontally' (136). Funes could not understand that to use language is to treat something as a member of a class, that to use language is to categorize. It annoyed Funes that in language, words do not represent or refer to things in reality, which is why he tried to create a language in which signs do refer to particular things, although he gave up when he realized that it was pointless. Funes, was, as the narrator describes him: 'the solitary, lucid spectator of a multiform, momentaneous, and almost unbearably precise world' (136). And the story ends with the notification that: 'Ireneo Funes died in 1889 of pulmonary congestion' (137).

Two or three times, the narrator tells us, Funes 'had reconstructed an entire day; he had never once erred or faltered, but each reconstruction had itself taken an entire day' (135). Such a reproduction becomes useless, just like the map in the short story "On Exactitude in Science", in which the narrator describes an Empire, in which the art of cartography 'attained such perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province' (*Collected Fictions* 325). In time, the narrator says, the 'unconscionable maps, no longer satisfied' and the cartographers 'struck a map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it' (325). But later generations were not so fond with it, they 'saw that the map was useless' and discarded the map (325). In his article "Borges/Derrida/Foucault", Toro states that this map, which 'is an exact replica of the empire's topography', becomes useless and worthless 'due to the saturation of meaning and to its exact duplication and simulation' (139).

In the story "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*", there occurs again such a repetition or reproduction. In this story, the narrator tells us about Pierre Menard's project of rewriting 'the ninth and thirty-eight chapters of Part I of *Don Quixote* and a fragment of Chapter XXII', which is, the narrator says, 'perhaps the most significant writing of our time' (*Collected Fictions* 90). Menard, we are told, 'dedicated his scruples and his nights "lit by midnight oil" to repeating in a foreign tongue a book that already existed' (95). His 'admirable ambition', the narrator says, 'was to produce a number of pages which coincided – word for word and line for line – with those of Miguel de Cervantes' (91). In order to achieve

his goal, Menard's initial method was 'relatively simple: Learn Spanish, return to Catholicism, fight against the Moor or Turk, forget the history of Europe from 1602 to 1918 – *be* Miguel de Cervantes' (91). But Menard 'discarded it as too easy' (91). 'Being, somehow, Cervantes', the narrator tells us, 'and arriving thereby at the Quixote – that looked to Menard less challenging (and therefore less interesting) than continuing to be Pierre Menard and coming to the Quixote *trough the experiences of Pierre Menard*' (91).

While 'Cervantes text and the Menard text are verbally identical', Menard's text, the narrator says 'is almost infinitely richer. (More ambiguous, his detractors will say – but ambiguity is richness)' (94). Why is Menard's exact duplication 'infinitely richer'? What is being put into question here is meaning. Who gives meaning? Is it the author? Or the reader? These questions are also posed by Roland Barthes, years later, in his text "The Death of Author". This text is directed against the power of the author and his intentions, is directed against the idea of the author as subject who provides his text with a meaning, which the reader has to discover. According to Barthes the author does not stand at the origin of a text, as if the text is a message from the 'Author-God', and of which you, as a reader, could give, if you read well, the perfect interpretation that would explain the text precisely as the author has meant it. Writing, Barthes states, 'is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin' (*Image, Music, Text* 142). It is the reader who interprets, who writes while he is reading. The reader is born, at the cost of the author because 'to give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close writing' (147). The birth of the reader has as a consequence the death of the author, the author as subject who gives meaning and who stands at the origin of a text. With the death of the author, the idea that the text holds a 'secret', that there is an ultimate meaning which can be discovered, disappears. Meaning is never fixed, has no origin.

What is being put at stake in Borges' story "Pierre Menard, the Author of the *Quixote*", is meaning and the notion of the origin, since Menard's text is an exact reproduction of Cervantes', but endlessly richer. It is as such about the act of reading, because it is Menard who interprets the text, who comes to the Quixote, not by becoming Cervantes, but 'through the experiences of Pierre Menard', that is, he reads the Quixote in light of all the events in history that occurred after 1602 (*Collected Fictions* 91). While, the narrator says, 'Cervantes crudely juxtaposes the humble provincial reality of his country against the fantasies of the romance, […] Menard chooses as his "reality" the land of Carmen during the century that saw the Battle of Lepanto and the plays of Lope the Vega' (93). That is why, although identical, Menard's text is not the same as Cervantes'; it is read within another

context. What the story implies, is that there is no original meaning, given by the author to a text, that can be discovered. By undermining the primacy of the author, this story is an example of Barthes notion of a text, which is according to him 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash' (*Image, Music, Text* 146). The place in which this multiplicity is focused is not the author, but the reader, it is the reader who, Barthes states, without history, biography, and psychology, is simply 'that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted' (148). It is Menard, the reader, and not Cervantes, the author, who, by re-writing the 'original' text word for word, interprets the text and gives a meaning to it.

Meaning is also being put at stake, though in a different way, in Borges' short story "The Library of Babel". In this story, the universe, 'which others call the Library', is described as being 'composed of an indefinite, perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries' (*Collected Fictions* 112). The arrangement of the galleries, the narrator tells us, 'is always the same: Twenty bookshelves, five to each side, line four of the hexagon's six sides' (112). And 'each wall of each hexagon is furnished with five bookshelves; each bookshelf holds thirty-two books identical in format; each book contains four hundred ten pages; each page, forty lines; each line; approximately eighty black letters' (113). Though the content of most books is chaotic and random, consists of mostly 'senseless cacophony, verbal nonsense, and incoherency', a librarian once posited the following fact: the library contains all possible books (114). The narrator tells us that:

> *In all the Library, there are no two identical books.* From those incontrovertible premises, the librarian deduced that the Library is "total" – perfect, complete, and whole – and that its bookshelves contain all possible combinations of the twenty-two orthographic symbols (a number which, though unimaginably vast, is not infinite) – that is, all that is able to be expressed, in every language.
> (114-115)

Thus, the Library contains every possible book, contains everything that can be thought or expressed. 'There was no personal problem, no world problem, whose eloquent solution did not exist – somewhere in some hexagon' (115).

It is argued, the narrator tells us, that a 'total book' exists (117), somewhere on some shelf in some hexagon, there is a book which is 'the cipher and perfect compendium *of all*

other books, and some librarian must have examined that book; this librarian is analogous to a god' (116). People have searched endlessly in order to find this 'total book', the narrator says, and used the following method: 'To locate book A, first consult book B, which tells where book A can be found; to locate book B, first consult book C, and so on, to infinity…' (117). The certainty, the narrator says, that somewhere in the Library some bookshelf contained such a precious book like the 'total book', or a book in which the origin of the Library and time is revealed, 'yet that those precious books were forever out of reach, was almost unbearable' (116). Because these books endlessly refer to each other, it is impossible to find that one book which would explain everything. The final signified is forever out of reach. And because the Library contains everything: 'the faithful catalog of the Library', for example, and 'thousands and thousands of false catalogs, the proof of the falsity of those false catalogs, a proof of the falsity of the *true* catalog', because the Library contains everything that can be thought or expressed, in every possible language, because the Library is total, you could say that there is as such nothing outside the Library (115). There is, the narrator says, 'no combination of characters one can make – *dhcmrlchtdj*, for example – that the divine Library has not foreseen and that in one or more of its secret tongues does not hide a terrible significance' (117). To speak, the narrator says:

> Is to commit tautologies. This pointless, verbose epistle already exists in one of the thirty volumes of the five bookshelves in one of the countless hexagons – as does its refutation. (A number *n* of the possible languages employ the same vocabulary; in some of them, the symbol "library" possesses the correct definition "everlasting, ubiquitous system of hexagonal galleries," while a library – the thing – is a loaf of bread or pyramid or something else, and the six words that define it themselves have other definitions. You who read me – are you certain you understand my language?)
> (117-118)

What is being put at stake in this story, is a final signified, a fixed and stable meaning.

2.5   Borges' literature and the new (postmodern) episteme

As I have shown, language and meaning plays a significant role in those four stories of Borges. What is being put at stake in these stories, as well as in his essay, is the notion of the origin. In both his essay "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" as in his story "Funes,

His Memory", the projects of John Wilkins and Funes, their attempt to create an ideal taxonomy in which signs would refer to and name particular things, are criticized. Whereas Borges points out that in Wilkins's analytical language, the 'whale appears in the sixteenth category: it is a viviparous, oblong fish'(*Non Fictions* 231) , and is as such still ambiguous, redundant, and deficient, the narrator in "Funes, his Memory", tries to explain to Funes that 'his rhapsody of unconnected words was exactly the opposite of number *system*. I told him that when one said "365" one said "three hundreds, six tens, and five ones", a breakdown impossible with the "numbers" *Nigger Timoteo* or a *ponchoful of meat*. Funes either could not or would not understand me' (*Collected Fictions* 136). Every language, natural as well as analytical, is always provisional, an 'exercise in chaos', and imperfect, as Borges states it in his essay (*Non Fictions* 231). All classifications are arbitrary and ambiguous because we 'do not know what the universe is', that is the thing outside language (231). And he adds: 'we must go even further, and suspect that there is no universe in the organic, unifying sense of that ambiguous word. If there is, then we must speculate on its purpose; we must speculate on the words, definitions, etymologies, and synonymies of God's secret dictionary' (*Selected Non-Fictions* 231).

In both stories "On Exactitude in Science" and "Pierre Menard, the Author of the *Quixote*", the origin is put at stake due to exact duplications. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida states that:

> Representation mingles with what it represents […] In this play of representation, the point of origin becomes ungraspable. There are things like reflecting pools, and images, an infinite reference from one to the other, but no longer a source, a spring. There is no longer a simple origin. For what is reflected is split *in itself* and not only as an addition to itself of its image. The reflection, the image, the double, splits what it doubles.
>
> (36)

This statement, that the reflection splits what it doubles, is reflected in both "On Exactitude in Science" and "Pierre Menard, the Author of the *Quixote*", where the exact reproduction, which is in the latter considered as 'infinitely richer', destructs the original (*Collected Fictions* 94). Toro states in his article "Borges/Foucault/Derrida", that by repeating and reproducing the *Don Quixote* by Cervantes, the "original" text becomes absent because: 'it has not been reanimated: not to be reanimated means that a dialogicity in the signified, from

yesterday and today, is not established because there is no mimesis in the sense of transformation or reactualization: Pierre Menard simulates it, that is, replaces it, obliterates it, commits parricide, does away with the origin' (148).

As such Borges addresses the problem of absence, which is exemplary for post-structuralist thinkers like Derrida, the absence of an origin or of a final signified. In his story "The Library of Babel", books endlessly refer to each other, functioning as signifiers, without ever reaching that one book that would explain everything, that is, without reaching a final and fixed signified. As such this story illustrates Derrida's play of différance, in which meaning, the signified is being constantly deferred. The signifiers no longer search for a signified, but instead only refer to other signifiers from which they differ. This is also the case in Borges' imaginary classification of animals in a certain encyclopedia. What Borges presents here, in this classification, is the absence of a presence: the signifiers no longer search for signifieds, that is a presence, from which their meaning could be derived. He presents signs without referentiality to the world, that is without referentiality to a place where such meetings would be possible. The 'signifieds err without meaning', as Torres states in his article "Postmodern and Postcolonial Discourse in Borges" (73).

This absence could be the reason why Foucault states in *The Order of Things*, that Borges 'shatters our thought', that is our language. These signs, in this classification, as well as in the library, float without any purpose, and, as Foucault argues with regard to the Chinese encyclopedia, 'lack all life and place' which leads 'to a kind of thought without space' (*The Order of Things* xx). This classification is monstrous, according to Foucault, because Borges creates a 'disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry, of the *heteroclite*; and that word should be taken in its most literal, etymological sense: in such a state, things are "laid", "placed", "arranged" in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of residence for them, to define a common locus beneath them all' (xix). Borges shatters 'our' language, that is language as it is thought of in the modern age, because language in Borges' short stories already contains the beginnings of new relations, like the unstable, infinite play of signification, which is exemplary for post-structuralism.

In her article "Modernism/Postmodernism in 'The Library of Babel'", Keiser argues that Borges can be seen as a 'transitional figure' between modernism and postmodernism (39). What Borges shares with modernist thought, she argues, is 'the longing for unity amidst plurality' (40). The narrator of "The Library of Babel" says, with regard to this to this total book that would explain everything, for example: 'Let heaven exist, though my own place be

in hell. Let me be tortured and battered and annihilated, but let there be one instant, one creature, wherein thy enormous Library may find its justification' (*Collected Fictions* 117). But unlike modernists, Borges questions in "The Library of Babel", Keiser states, 'the concept of a total signifier constituted by an ideal, preexisting, independent signified', just like Derrida in *Of Grammatology* (Keiser 41). But Borges, Keiser states, 'only hints at its absence, rather than proclaiming its nonexistence', like Derrida does (41). Borges' fiction, Keiser states, 'resembles a borderland' between modernism and postmodernism (45).

2.6   Conclusion chapter 2

At the end of *The Order of Things*, published in 1966, Foucault announces a third rupture in the Western episteme. He announces the possibility of a whole new form of thought, due to the over-determination of questions on the subject of language. In this whole new configuration of knowledge, language regains its lost unity and takes place once more within a single space. I argued that this new episteme could be called the post-modern episteme and that Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, published in 1967, and his text "Différance", published in 1972, could be an example of this new form of thought which is incompatible with modern thought, in which structuralism played a fundamental role.

Borges' stories "Funes, His Memory", "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*", and "The Library of Babel", were published in 1944, and "On Exactitude in Science" was first published in 1946. Chronologically seen, it could be possible that Borges takes, between the modern age and the new episteme, the same position as Cervantes and Sade occupied. As I have shown, Borges poses in his stories questions on the origin and meaning, which are similar to the questions Derrida asks years later. Borges intervenes with structuralism, which is fundamental for modern thought, and takes it to its ultimate limit, just like Sade did with classical thought, and Cervantes with Renaissance thought, by taking the notion of the sign and its arbitrary and differential character, and presenting in his stories signifiers that no longer search for signifieds. As such Borges' stories already contain new relations between language and things, that are incompatible with structural linguistics, because the signified, the notion of the origin, and a final and fixed meaning are being put at stake. Borges' literature can be seen as transitional, just like the literature of Cervantes and Sade's literature was, and could as such take indeed the same position between the modern age and the new episteme, which, as I argued, is the postmodern age, as Sade occupied between the Classical age and the modern age, and Cervantes occupied between the Renaissance and the Classical age.

Literature thus plays an important role in *The Order of Things* because the literature of Cervantes and Sade, and as I have argued also the literature of Borges, take a certain position between two epistemes, between two different systems of knowledge. But what does this position that literature apparently can take, mean for the status of literature in *The Order of Things*? Since Foucault gives these literary examples with regard to the discontinuities in the way in which order, the relation between language and things, is established, what does that mean for the role and function of literature? What is literature and what is it that literature can do in relation to positive knowledge?

Chapter 3: About heterotopias and the status of literature

So far, I have discussed the fact that Foucault states that the literature of Cervantes and Sade take a certain position between two epistemes. They occupy a position between two epistemes, between two different systems of knowledge, because they take the relation between language and things as it was thought of to its ultimate limit, and already contain the beginnings of new relations as it will be thought of in the next episteme. As such their literature can be seen as transitional. Because Foucault announces a third discontinuity and discusses Borges extensively in the preface, I examined in the previous chapter if Borges could take a similar position between the modern age and the new episteme, as Cervantes occupied between the Renaissance and the Classical age, and Sade occupied between the Classical age and the modern age. I argued that this could indeed be said, because Borges takes structural linguistics to its ultimate limit, just like Cervantes did with thinking in resemblances, and Sade did with representation, and language in Borges' short stories, already contains the beginnings of new relations.

But why does Foucault ascribe such a special place to literature? Why does he give these literary examples in a philosophical text that addresses itself to the general space of knowledge and its configurations? By giving these literary examples in relation to the discontinuities in the Western episteme, Foucault seems to imply that there is something that literature can do in relation to positive knowledge. What is the status of literature? What could the role and function of literature be with regard to these discontinuities? My hypothesis is that the answer may be found in Foucault's notion of heterotopias, which are outside-places but are, as opposed to utopias which are always unreal, nevertheless real spaces. The answer may be found in Foucault's notion of heterotopias, because Foucault states that a discontinuity, which forms a radical break with the previous way of thinking things 'probably begins with an erosion from outside, from that space which is, for thought, on the other side' (*The Order of Things* 56). Can literature be seen as a heterotopia? If so, could Foucault then imply that a discontinuity starts in literature?

3.1   Foucault's descriptions of heterotopias

Foucault mentions heterotopias only two times, first in the preface of *The Order of Things* and in 1967 he gave a lecture about heterotopias, which formed the basis of the text "Different Spaces". In both texts Foucault opposes heterotopias to utopias; whereas utopias are always unreal and imaginary, heterotopias are always real. But the description of what heterotopias

are and what they do, differs from each other in these two texts, which makes the definition of the term problematic. Whereas in the preface of *The Order of Things*, Foucault writes about heterotopias in relation to Borges' classification in the Chinese encyclopedia, and heterotopias seem to have something to do with order and language, in "Different Spaces" heterotopias are physical spaces.

In the text "Different Spaces", Foucault states that he is interested in spaces that 'have the curious property of being connected to all the other emplacements, but in such a way that they suspend, neutralize, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected, or represented by them' (*Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology* 178). These spaces, which are linked with all the other spaces, but contradict them or are at variance with them, are, Foucault states, 'of two great types' (178). These two types of spaces are utopias and heterotopias. Utopias, Foucault states, are emplacements that have 'no real place. They are emplacements that maintain a general relation of direct or inverse analogy with the real space of society. They are society perfected or the reverse of society, but in any case these utopias are spaces that are fundamentally and essentially unreal' (178). As opposed to utopias, which are unreal places, heterotopias are real, actual and localizable places, but are 'utterly different from all the emplacements that they reflect or refer to' (178). Heterotopias, Foucault states, are places 'that are designed into the very institution of society, which are sorts of actually realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed' (178). They are places that do exist but are 'sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable' (178). As such, heterotopias are 'different spaces, other places'; places that are, Foucault states, 'a kind of contestation, both mythical and real, of the space in which we live' (179).

Foucault gives six principles of heterotopias, in order to describe and explain what they are exactly. The first principle is that heterotopias are universal: there is, Foucault states, 'probably not a single culture in the world that does not establish heterotopias' (179). These heterotopias are of two major types. First there are 'crisis heterotopias', which can be found in primitive societies, and are 'privileged or sacred or forbidden places reserved for individuals', like women in labor, menstruating women, etc, 'who are in a state of crisis with respect to society' (179). In our society, Foucault states, these heterotopias of crisis have disappeared and are being replaced by 'heterotopias of deviation', which are places 'in which individuals are put whose behavior is deviant with respect to the mean or the required form', such as prisons and psychiatric hospitals (180). The second principle is that the function or use of a

certain heterotopia can be refashioned over time. A society, Foucault states, 'can make a heterotopia that exists and has not ceased to exist operate in a very different way' (180). Foucault gives the cemetery as an example. The third principle is that the heterotopia 'has the ability to juxtapose in a single real place several emplacements that are incompatible in themselves' (181). The garden and the carpet, which was, Foucault argues, originally a reproduction of the garden, are examples of such a heterotopia in which several, incompatible, emplacements are juxtaposed. The garden, Foucault states, 'is a carpet in which the entire world attains its symbolic perfection, and the carpet is a kind of garden that moves through space. The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and the whole world at the same time' (182).

The fourth principle is that heterotopias are connected with time. First there are heterotopias that accumulate time indefinitely, like libraries and museums (182). Opposite to these heterotopias, Foucault states, there are heterotopias that are linked 'to time in its most futile, most transitory and precarious aspect, and in the form of the festival' (182). They are absolutely temporal, instead of being oriented towards the eternal like the first. The fifth principle is that heterotopias 'always presuppose a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at the same time' (183). And the sixth and last principle is that heterotopias 'have a function in relation to the remaining space' (184). This function, Foucault states, 'is spread between two extreme poles' (184). Either, heterotopias, Foucault argues, have the role 'of creating a space of illusion that denounces all real space, all real emplacements within which human life is partitioned off, as being even more illusory' (184). Foucault gives brothels as an example of such a heterotopia of illusion. Or, heterotopias have the role of 'creating a different space, a different real space as perfect, as meticulous, as well-arranged as ours is disorganized, badly arranged, and muddled' (184). It could be that colonies, Foucault states, functioned in this way, not as heterotopias of illusion, but of compensation (184).

Thus, as Foucault describes them in "Different Spaces", heterotopias are real, physical spaces. They contest or reverse all the other places to which they refer or reflect, which makes them different or other. But this description of heterotopias differs from how heterotopias are described in the preface of *The Order of Things*. Although Foucault also opposes heterotopias to utopias, these notions are here applied to language instead of to space. He writes that although utopias 'have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted

gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical' (*The Order of Things* xix). Whereas utopias 'afford consolation', Foucault states, heterotopias are:

> disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy "syntax" in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to "hold together".
>
> (xix)

Whereas, Foucault states, 'utopias permit fables and discourse: [because] they run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimension of the *fabula*; heterotopias (such as those to be found so often in Borges) desiccate 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' (xix).

There seems to be a tension between the only two texts in which Foucault mentions heterotopias, because the notion of heterotopias in "Different Spaces" is applied to physical places, while it is in the preface of *The Order of Things* applied to language. What both texts have in common, is the opposition of utopias and heterotopias, and in both texts heterotopias have the property of being a kind of contestation. But whereas in "Different Spaces" heterotopias are places that contest the space in which we live, in *The Order of Things* heterotopias contest language. Do these two texts contradict each other? Or is it possible to make a connection between them? And why are heterotopias so often found in Borges?

3.2 Literature as heterotopia

In what sense are heterotopias so often found in Borges' literature? Is it in the sense of physical spaces? Does Foucault mean heterotopic spaces as he describes them in his text "Different Spaces", of which the library was an example? Borges' short story "The Library of Babel", which I have analyzed in the previous chapter, takes place in a library. But the library, as example of an heterotopic place, does not explain why Foucault in *The Order of Things*, with regard to Borges' classification of a Chinese encyclopedia, states that heterotopias undermine language, desiccate speech, shatter common names, and destroy the syntax which causes words and things to hold together, and that such heterotopias are so often found in

Borges' literature. As such, I do not think that Foucault means that heterotopias in the sense of physical spaces, of which the library is an example, are often found in Borges' literature.

'The uneasiness that makes us laugh when we read Borges', Foucault states, 'is certainly related to the profound distress of those whose language has been destroyed: loss of what is "common" to place and name' (xx). According to Foucault's description of what heterotopias do in *The Order of Things*, heterotopias undermine language because they shatter common names and destroy the syntax which causes words and things to hold together. That is exactly what happens in Borges' short stories. In the previous chapter I argued that the reason why Foucault states that Borges' classification of a Chinese encyclopedia shatters 'our thought', that is, the thought of the modern age, is because this classification already contains new relations between language and things, like the infinite play of signification, the play of différance. I argued that Borges intervenes with structuralism, which is fundamental for modern thought, and takes it to ultimate limit, by presenting signifiers that no longer search for signifieds. That is why, I argued, Foucault states that Borges disturbs and threatens 'with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other' (xvi). Language as it is thought of in the modern age is being undermined. I think Foucault states that heterotopias are often found in Borges, because Borges' short stories threaten and disturb the way in which the relations between things and language, the way in which things are ordered, as it is thought of in the modern age. These stories contest, which is what heterotopias do according to Foucault in "Different Spaces", the space in which we live; the modern age. But if that is the reason why heterotopias are often found in Borges stories, because modern language is being contested and undermined, are heterotopias then not also found in Sade and Cervantes? Are heterotopias not also found in Sade's *Justine* and *Juliette*, and in Cervantes' *Don Quixote* because they, just like Borges with regard to the modern age, contest and undermine language as it was thought in their age?

What Borges, Sade and Cervantes have in common, as I have argued in the previous chapter, is that all three of them can be seen as transitional figures between two epistemes. What they have in common is that they all three, in their literature, take the previous way of thinking things, of ordering things, the way in which things and language are related, to its ultimate limit and already contain the beginnings of new relations as they will be thought of in the next episteme. They all three contest the old way of ordering things; Cervantes takes thinking in resemblances to its ultimate limit by presenting uncontrolled similitudes, Sade takes thinking in representations to its ultimate limit by presenting ceaselessly, rigid sequences of scenes in which every desire has to be named, and Borges takes structuralism to

its ultimate limit by presenting uncontrolled signifiers that no longer search for signifieds. In doing that they also reverse the old way of ordering things, by presenting uncontrolled resemblances, language already functions as representation, by presenting uncontrolled representations, language already emerges as a brute thing, as a being proper to itself, and by presenting uncontrolled signifiers, language already functions as the play of différance. By contesting and reversing the old way of thinking and ordering things, they all three, undermine, disturb and destroy language as it was thought of before. As such, I think you could say that heterotopias are found in the literature of not only Borges, but also in Sade and Cervantes.

In his article "Foucault, Borges, Heterotopia: Producing Knowledge in Other Spaces", Topinka argues that 'heterotopias are sites in which epistemes collide and overlap' (55). By juxtaposing and combining many spaces in one site, Topinka states, 'heterotopias problematize received knowledge by revealing and destabilizing the ground, or operating table, on which knowledge is built' (56). This is what happens in the literature of Cervantes, Sade and Borges. By taking on the one hand the old way of thinking to its ultimate limit, and on the other hand already containing the beginnings of new relationships, Cervantes, Sade and Borges, all three juxtapose two ways of thinking things, of ordering things. They juxtapose within a single work, the old table upon which language intersects space, and a new table upon which language will intersect space, while these different tables are in themselves incompatible. As such, the third principle of heterotopias, which was that they have 'the ability to juxtapose in a single real place several emplacements that are in themselves incompatible', can be applied to the literature of Cervantes, Sade and Borges (*Aesthetics* 181).

Not only the third principle, but also the sixth principle can be applied to the literature of Cervantes, Sade and Borges. Heterotopias, Topinka argues, are 'sites of reordering' (56) According to the sixth principle, heterotopias either create 'a space of illusion that denounces all real space […] as being even more illusory', or they create 'a different real space as perfect, as meticulous, as well-arranged as ours is disorganized, badly arranged, and muddled' (*Aesthetics* 184). The literary works of Cervantes, Sade and Borges, do not, I think, create a space of illusion, although these works are fictions, that denounce all other spaces as even more illusory, rather, they create within these works a different space, by taking the old of way of ordering things to its limit and already containing new relationships between language and things. In doing that these works show that the old table, the old way of ordering things is muddled and disorganized.

While there seems to be a tension between "Different Spaces", in which heterotopias are physical spaces, and *The Order of Things*, in which heterotopias are related to language, these texts do not necessarily contradict each other. When Foucault states in *The Order of Things* that heterotopias are disturbing because they undermine language, and that such heterotopias are found in Borges' literature, I argued, it is because these short stories provide a different space of ordering, because they provide a different table upon which language intersects space. As such Borges' stories contest and reverse the relation between language and things as it is thought of in the modern age. But this is what happens not only in the literature of Borges, but also in Cervantes' *Don Quixote* with regard to the Renaissance and Sade's *Justine* and *Juliette* with regard to the Classical age. These works of all three writers, which Foucault discusses, can be seen as heterotopias. But since he discusses these works with regard to the discontinuities that can be seen in the Western episteme, what could the function of literature be in relation to these discontinuities? Such a discontinuity, which forms a radical break with the previous way of thinking things, Foucault states, 'probably begins with an erosion from outside, from that space which is, for thought, on the other side, but in which it has never ceased to think from the very beginning' (56). Isn't such an outside place exactly what the description of a heterotopia is, according to Foucault in "Different Spaces"? If literature can be seen as a heterotopia, what does that mean for the role and function of literature in relation to a discontinuity?

3.3   The status of literature

What is the status of literature? And what is the relation between literature and knowledge? Before his book *The Order of Things*, Foucault has written two essays about literature, called "Language to Infinity" and "The Thought of the Outside". In "Language to Infinity" Foucault addresses the being of literary language. In this text Foucault states that 'one of the most decisive ontological events of language' is 'its mirrored reflection upon death and the construction, from this reflection, of a virtual space where speech discovers the endless resourcefulness of its own image, and where it can represent itself as already existing behind itself, already active beyond itself, to infinity. The possibility of a work of language finds its original fold in this duplication' (*Aesthetics* 90-91). A work of language, in which language reflects and duplicates itself, Foucault states, 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 any 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.

(93)

In a work of language, language is taken to infinity. It seeks its own limits, by exhausting its own possibilities.

The literature of Sade, is, Foucault states, an example of such a work of language in which language is taken to infinity. 'Through so many bodies consummated in their actual existence', Foucault argues, this language 'devours all eventual words, all those words which have yet to be born […] Each scene in its visible aspect is doubled by a demonstration that repeats it and gives it value as a universal element' (96). What is being consumed in his literature, Foucault states, is 'not all future languages but every language that has been effectively pronounced: everything, before Sade and in his time, that could have been thought, said, practiced, desired, honored, flouted, or condemned in relation to man, God, the soul, the body, sex, nature, priests, or women finds itself meticulously repeated' (96). Everything is being 'repeated, combined, dissociated, reversed, and reversed once again, not in view of a dialectical reward but toward a radical exhaustion' (96). Sade's 'impossible book', Foucault states, 'stands in the place of every book', because it contains everything that could have possibly been said at his time (96). Under the obvious pastiche, Foucault states, 'of all the philosophies and stories of the eighteenth century, beneath this immense double that is not without analogy to *Don Quixote*, the totality of language finds itself sterilized by the single and identical movement of two inseparable figures: the strict, inverted repetition of what has already been said and the simple naming of that which lies at the limit of what we can say' (96). Thus, just as in *The Order of Things*, Foucault mentions the works of Cervantes and Sade in which language as it is thought of is taken to its limit.

In another essay, "The Thought of the Outside", Foucault asks the question of what literature is. Literature, Foucault states in this text is 'not language approaching itself until it reaches the point of its fiery manifestation; it is, rather, language getting as far away from itself as possible' (*Aesthetics* 149). In this 'setting "outside of itself"', Foucault states, language 'unveils its own being' (149). We are now standing, Foucault states, 'on the edge of an abyss that had long been invisible: the being of language only appears for itself with the

disappearance of the subject' (149). As I have shown in the second chapter, this is why Foucault announces in *The Order of Things* a third rupture in the Western episteme, why he announces the possibility of a new form of thought, in which language regains its unity with at its cost the disappearance of the subject. In "The Thought of the Outside", Foucault states, that perhaps we can gain access to this strange relation between the being of language and the disappearance of the subject through:

> a thought that stands outside subjectivity, setting its limit as though from without, articulating its end, making its dispersion shine forth, taking in only its invincible absence; and that, at the same time, stands at the threshold of all positivity, not in order to grasp its foundation or justification but in order to regain the space of its unfolding, the void serving as its site, the distance in which it is constituted and into which its immediate certainties slip the moment they are glimpsed – a thought that, in relation to the interiority of our philosophical reflection and the positivity of our knowledge, constitutes what in a phrase we might call "the thought of the outside".
> (150)

The thought of the outside thus stands, in relation to philosophical reflection and positive knowledge, on the threshold of all positivity.

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault states that between the 'already "encoded" eye', which are the fundamental codes of a culture which 'establish for every man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home', and reflexive knowledge, which 'are scientific theories or the philosophical interpretations which explain why order exists in general, what universal law it obeys, what principle can account for it, and why this particular order has been established and not some other', Foucault states, lies a middle region (xxii). It is in this domain, Foucault states, 'that a culture, imperceptibly deviating from the empirical orders prescribed for it by its primary codes, instituting an initial separation from them, causes them to lose their original transparency, relinquishes its immediate and invisible powers, frees itself sufficiently to discover that these orders are perhaps not the only possible ones or the best ones' (xxii). This middle region 'liberates order itself' (xxii). Between the two extremities of thought, Foucault states, between 'the use of what one might call the ordering codes and reflections upon order itself, there is the pure experience of order and its modes of being' (xxiii).

I think you could say that literature can be located in this middle region. In "The Thought of the Outside", Foucault states that the language of fiction can be a power that undoes images, 'that lessens their overload, that infuses them with an inner transparency that illuminates them little by little until they burst and scatter in the lightness of the unimaginable' (153). The fictitious, Foucault states, 'is never in things or in people but in the impossible verisimilitude of what lies between them – encounters, the proximity of what is most distant, the absolute dissimulation in our very midst. Therefore, fiction consists not in showing the invisible, but in showing the extent to which the invisibility of the visible is invisible' (153). From the moment, Foucault states, that discourse starts 'addressing the very being of language, [it] returns thought to the outside', which is thus a thought that stands, in relation to philosophical reflection and positive knowledge, on the threshold of all positivity (154). And from that moment, Foucault continues, it becomes in a single stroke 'a meticulous narration of experiences, encounters, and improbable signs – language about the outside of all language, speech about the invisible side of words' (154). Then it 'becomes attentiveness to what in language already exists, has already been said, imprinted, manifested – a listening less to what is articulated in language than to the void circulating between its words, to the murmur that is forever taking it apart; a discourse on the nondiscourse of all language; the fiction of the invisible space in which it appears' (154). The thought of the outside is the radical exhaustion of language, of all that can potentially be said, it is language as it is thought of taken to infinity.

As I have said, Foucault states in "Language to Infinity", that the works of Sade are an example of a work of language in which language is taken to infinity. These works, Foucault states:

> inhabit a strange limit, which they nevertheless persist in transgressing – or, rather, which they transgress because of the fact that they speak: they deny themselves the space of their language – but by confiscating it in a gesture of repetitive appropriation; and they evade not only their meaning (a meaning constructed at every turn) but their possible being; the indecipherable play of ambiguity within them is nothing but the serious sign of this conflict which forces them to be the double of every language (which, in their repetition, they set to fire) and of their own absence (which they constantly manifest).
> (*Aesthetics* 96-97)

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault states that Sade's *Juliette* is the 'last language' that 'undertakes to "represent", to name', but simultaneously 'reduces this ceremony to the utmost precision (it calls things by their exact name, thus eliminating the space occupied by rhetoric) and extends it to infinity (by naming everything, including the slightest of possibilities)' (229). By taking language thought of as representation to infinity, Sade's works deny the space of their language, they eliminate the space occupied by rhetoric. As such, they present a language that sets outside of itself, a language that transgresses its limit, because they already, by taking language to its ultimate limit, contain the beginnings of new relations between language and things. Seen as such, the thought of the outside, which is reached when language is taken to infinity, could be the thought of the next episteme. By taking language thought of as representation to infinity, and as such eliminating the space occupied by rhetoric, Sade's works inaugurate the relation between language and things as it will be thought of in the modern age, in which language is no longer thought of as representation.

Whereas Sade's works inhabit the limit of language thought of as representation, Foucault states in "Language to Infinity" that Borges' story "The Library of Babel" inhabits a new limit. In this story, Foucault states:

> everything that can possibly be said has already been said: it contains all conceived and imagined languages, and even those which might be conceived or imagined; everything has been pronounced, even those things without meaning, so that the odds of discovering even the smallest formal coherence are extremely slight, as witnessed by the persevering search of those who have never been granted this dispensation. And yet standing above all these words is the rigorous and sovereign language that recovers them, tells their story, and is actually responsible for their birth: a language that is itself poised against death, because it is at the moment of falling into the shaft of an infinite Hexagon that the most lucid (and consequently the last) of the librarians reveals that even the infinity of language multiplies itself to infinity, repeating itself without end in the divided structures of the Same. (99-100)

The space of language is nowadays defined, Foucault states, by Borges' Library; 'the ranging to infinity of fragmentary languages, substituting for the double chain of Rhetoric the simple, continuous, and monotonous line of language left to its own devices, a language fated to be

infinite because it can no longer support itself upon the speech of infinity' (100). But within itself, Foucault continues, language 'finds the possibility of its own division, of its own repetition, the power to create a vertical system of mirrors, self images, analogies. A language that repeats no other speech, no other promise, but postpones death indefinitely by ceaselessly opening a space where it is always the analogue of itself' (100).

What is taken to infinity, according to Foucault, in Borges' story, is thus the infinity of fragmentary languages, which was exemplary for modern thought. Like Sade's works, what is being consumed in Borges' story is all that can possibly said. But because it is impossible to find that one book that contains everything, this story already illustrates the infinite play of signification and the absence of a final signified and origin. Literature, nowadays, Foucault states, begins 'when the book is no longer the space where speech adopts a form (forms of style, forms of rhetoric, forms of language) but the site where books are all recaptured and consumed: a site that is nowhere, since it gathers all the books of the past in this impossible "volume" whose murmuring will be shelved among so many others – after all the others, before all the others' (100-101).

Cervantes, Sade and Borges are examples of writers of a work of language, in which language as it is thought of is taken to infinity, in which language seeks its limits by radically exhausting its own possibilities. Such works of language, Foucault states, 'continue without interruption, in a murmuring that has no other ontological status than that of a similar conflict' (97). Thus, works of language have no other status than that of a conflict, or in other words contestation. This is also the status of heterotopias; works of language have a heterotopic status. By taking language as it is thought of to infinity, by radically exhausting all of its possibilities, works of language present a language sets outside of itself, a language that transgresses its own limits, presenting monstrous figures, reaching that which is unimaginable, unthinkable, unspeakable. As such language, which is taken to infinity denies its own space, it turns thought to the outside, and inaugurates the thought of the next episteme, because it already contains the beginnings of new relations between language and things.

When language is taken to infinity, to its limit, and 'arrives at its own edge', Foucault states in "Thought of the Outside", 'what it finds is not a positivity that contradicts it but the void that will efface it' (152). What it finds is 'not reflection, but forgetting; not contradiction, but a contestation that effaces; not reconciliation, but droning on and on; not mind in laborious conquest of its unity, but the endless erosion of the outside, not truth finally shedding light on itself, but the streaming and distress of language that has always already begun' (152). Thus, when Foucault states in *The Order of Things* that a discontinuity 'begins

with an erosion from outside, from that space which is, for thought, on the other side, but in which it has never ceased to think from the beginning', he could mean that it begins in literature, or more specifically in a work of language, which has a heterotopic status.

3.4   Conclusion chapter 3

Cervantes, Sade and Borges are writers of a work of language, according to Foucault in his text "Language to Infinity", written before *The Order of Things*. In such a work of language, language as it is thought of is taken to infinity, it is taken to its limit. Cervantes takes Renaissance language, thinking in resemblances to infinity, Sade takes Classical language, language as representation to infinity, and Borges takes modern language, language that became fragmented, to infinity. They all three radically exhaust language, by repeating everything that could have potentially been said at their time. The language of fiction, Foucault argues in "The Thought of the Outside", can be a power that undoes images. As such, literature can be located in a domain which lies between philosophical reflection and positive knowledge, a domain which liberates order and relinquishes its invisible powers. In a work of language in which language is taken to infinity, language sets outside of itself, it transgresses its own limits. It turns thought to the outside, which is a thought that stands, in relation to philosophical reflection and positive knowledge, on the threshold of all positivity. By taking language to infinity and radically exhausting all of its possibilities, a work of language eliminates the space of its own language, and in presenting a language that sets outside of itself, language already contains the beginnings of new relations. As such, works of language have the status of conflict or contestation.

These works of language by Cervantes, Sade and Borges, have the status of contestation. These works have a heterotopic status. They all three contest language as it is thought of at their time. As such, these works are heterotopias, which are outside spaces that contest the space of language as it is thought of. Fiction, Foucault states in "The Thought of the Outside", 'bears a profound relation to space; understood in this way, space is to fiction what the negative is to reflection' (153). Heterotopias are outside spaces that undermine, disturb and destroy language, they contest and reverse language as it is thought of by taking language to its ultimate limit, by taking language to infinity. Heterotopias, which are works of language, destabilize the ground, or operating table, that is the table upon which language intersects space, upon which knowledge is built. They destabilize the ground upon which knowledge is built, by taking language to infinity, and as such presenting a language that sets outside of itself, already containing the beginnings of new relations. As such literature, or

more specifically works of language, which have a heterotopic status, can liberate order, by relinquishing its invisible powers, and can inaugurate the thought of the next episteme. Literature can turn thought to the outside by taking language to infinity, to its ultimate limit, causing an endless erosion of the outside, because language then transgresses its own limits, already containing beginnings of new relations. As such literature can inaugurate a new form of thought, which forms a radical break with the previous way of thinking things. Thus, such a discontinuity, which begins, as Foucault states, from an erosion from outside, can begin, can be inaugurated in heterotopic literature.

Coda

This thesis was about the strange epistemological status of literature in Foucault's earlier work, *The Order of Things*. Important questions of my thesis were: what is literature and what is it that literature can do in relation to positive knowledge? In "Distance, Aspect, Origin", Foucault devoted a long, beautiful passage on the word fiction, which explains once more in other words, what fiction is and what it can do:

> What if the fictive was precisely not the beyond nor the intimate secret of the everyday, but the flight of the arrow which hits us right in the eyes and offers us everything which appears. In that case the fictive would be also that which names things, makes them speak and gives them in language their being already split by the sovereign power of words [...] This is not to say, then, that fiction is language: this trick would be too simple, despite its familiarity. It is rather to say with more prudence that between them there is a complex adherence, a dependence and a contestation, and that, maintained for as long as it can keep its word, the simple experience which consists in taking up a pen and writing, disengages (in the sense of liberates, un-buries) a distance which belongs not to the world nor to the unconscious, nor to the gaze, nor to interiority: a distance which, in its naked state offers a grid of lines of ink and at the same time a labyrinth [...] And if I was asked in the end to define fiction I would say, without skill: the verbal nervure of what does not exist, as it is.
>
> I would efface, in order to leave this experience to what it is (in order to threat it, therefore, as a fiction, since it does not exist, that we know), I would efface all the oppositions by which it might be easily dialecticized: confrontation or abolition of the subjective and the objective, of the interior and the exterior, reality and imaginary. This whole vocabulary of dualism, needs to be replaced by one of distance, thus allowing the fictive to appear as a distancing specific to language – a distancing which has its place within it, but which, at the same time stretches out, disperses it, divides it up and opens it. Fiction does not arise because language is at a distance from things; language is their distance, the light in which they appear and their inaccessibility, the simulacra where only their presence is given; and any

language which rather than forget this distance maintains itself within it and maintains it within itself, is a language of fiction.

(*The Tel Quel Reader* 103-104)

Literature takes a privileged position in *The Order of Things,* because it can occupy a position between two epistemes. This might seem strange at first sight, but is maybe not that strange at all. Foucault is in this book concerned with how a culture establishes the table upon which language intersects space, how it experiences the relationships and order of things, and is as such primarily interested in how a culture establishes the relation between language and things. Order is at the same time the table of how the relationships of things is defined, which enables thought to operate upon the entities of the world, while it is also that which has no existence except in the grid created by language. The ground upon which knowledge is founded, thus depends on how a culture experiences the relation between language and things. And it is precisely this relation that changes sometimes. Foucault implies, I argued, that this change starts in literature. It starts in a work of language, which has a heterotopic status. Works of language take language to infinity, presenting a language that sets outside of itself, and as such eliminate the space of their language by contesting and reversing the relations of language and things. The power of the language of fiction is that it can destabilize the ground upon which knowledge is built, it can liberate order and relinquish its invisible powers. That is why literature takes a privileged position in *The Order of Things* because it can inaugurate a discontinuity, it can inaugurate the thought of the next episteme, it can inaugurate a new relationship between language and things.

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