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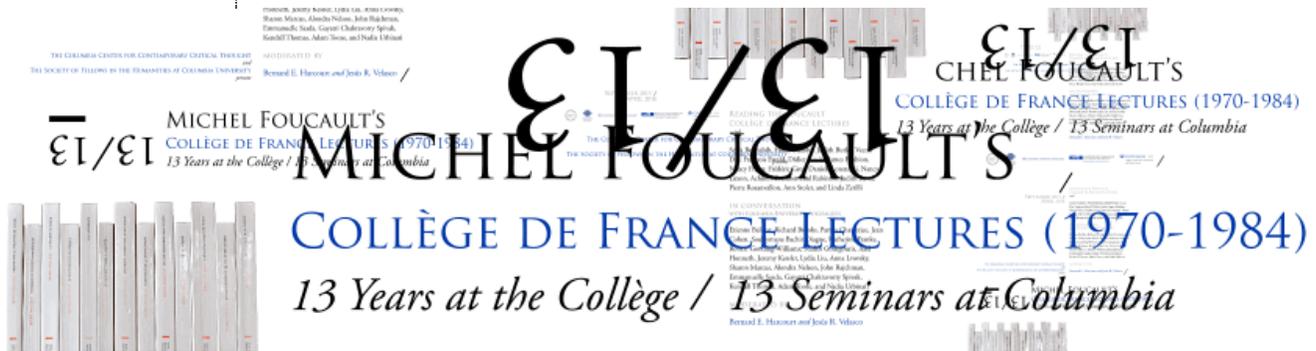
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ADAM TOOZE ON SECURITY, TERRITORY AND POPULATION

DECEMBER 1, 2015 ([HTTP://BLOGS.LAW.COLUMBIA.EDU/FOUCAULT1313/2015/12/01/FOUCAULT-713-ADAM-TOOZE-ON-SECURITY-TERRITORY-AND-POPULATION/](http://blogs.law.columbia.edu/foucault1313/2015/12/01/foucault-713-adam-tooze-on-security-territory-and-population/)) / JESUS R. VELASCO

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By Adam Tooze

In 1975-6 with *Society Must be Defended* (SMD) Foucault rebooted the project of the Collège de France lectures. The aim, as he states and restates in both SMD and *Security, Territory and Population* (STP) is a critical account of truth that is not trapped within the terms that philosophy and the will to truth set for themselves. In a remarkably direct way in STP Foucault identifies himself as a philosopher rather than historian, sociologist or economists, but he addresses himself to philosophy in terms that are not philosophy's own (STP, 3). This project is essential to Foucault's entire work from the *History of Madness* onwards. It was given particular argumentative urgency by the challenge to Foucault offered by Derrida. As Foucault put it in the reply that he finally published February 1972, Derrida was "Of all the people who currently philosophise in France ... without a shadow of a doubt ... the most profound and the most radical." [1] But he operated and his critique of Foucault operated in the shelter of basic postulates of which Foucault was determined to free himself. What he was determined to show was that philosophy was "neither historically nor logically a foundation of knowledge, but that there are conditions and rules for the formation of knowledge to which philosophical discourse is subject, in any given period, in the same manner as any other form of discourse with rational pretensions." Secondly he set himself to studying and analyzing "the "events" that can come about in the order of knowledge, and which cannot be reduced either to the general law of some kind of "progress", or the repetitions of an origin."

Looking back, Foucault accused himself in the *History of Madness* of not having freed himself sufficiently from the "postulates of philosophical teaching". The project of a history of truth that breaks the frame of a philosophy of truth is announced in the very first of the Collège de France lectures (1970-1971). In the *Lessons on the Will to Know* Foucault provides an extraordinary reinterpretation of the origin of Western philosophy that blows open the origin, to which Derrida again and again returns. In the second sequence of lectures that begins with SMD in 1975, Foucault, is centrally preoccupied with power. But as he is at pains to point out in STP: "what I am doing – I don't say what I am cut out to do, because I know nothing about that – is not history, sociology, or economics. However, in one way or another, and for simple factual reasons, what I am doing is something that concerns philosophy, that is to say, the politics of truth, for I do not see many other definitions of the word "philosophy" apart from this. So, insofar as what is involved in this analysis of mechanisms of power is the politics of truth, and not sociology, history, or economics, I see its role as that of showing the knowledge effects produced by the struggles, confrontations, and battles that take place within our society, and by the tactics of power that are the elements of this struggle." In SMD, reprising the opening drama of the *Will to Know*, Foucault will offer up a spectacular but violently contextualist reading of the emergence of the Hegelian dialectic. [2]

But if Foucault was bent on providing a non-philosophical account of the politics of truth, this was a risky undertaking. How did he avoid appearing “quite exterior and superficial” as he admitted in his reply to Derrida? More specifically, how did he avoid falling into a repetition of well-worn and reductive, Marxisant theories of ideology? How in the analysis of power/knowledge did he avoid falling into one or other form of economism (SMD, 14). As he put it in the opening of SMD, “Roughly speaking, I think that what is at stake in all this is this: Can the analysis of power(/knowledge AT), or the analysis of powers, be in” one way or another deduced from the economy?” (SMD, 13). In *Order of Things* he had been radically dismissive of Marxism. The tone changes as he begins the genealogical exercises of the Collège de France lectures. But this made the question of his affinity all the more pressing. His position remains unresolved and seems to oscillate in this second sequence of the lectures, beginning with SMD, as much as it did in the first.

In STP he remarks “Marx is our Machiavelli: the discourse does not stem from him, but it is through him that it is conducted.” (STP, 243) But this begs the question. In STP Machiavelli is assigned a complex role. Indeed, Foucault suggests three ways in which Machiavelli functioned in 17th and 18th century discussions of *raison d'état* (STP, 244-245). On the one hand Machiavelli provoked a violent counter-reaction on the part of those who accused him of godless cynicism. On the other hand advocates of *raison d'état* were tempted to argue that they had gone far beyond Machiavelli. And then there were those who sought to rescue a “better” Machiavelli for a new synthesis. If Marx was Foucault’s Machiavelli, it seems reasonable to ask in which of these three senses, or others, Marx served Foucault.

In SMD it is tempting to argue that Foucault’s approach to the problem of Marxism was like the second group of writers who sought to surpass and “overcome” Machiavelli. By moving from an “economic account of power” to an account in terms of war, he radicalized the analysis and was able in fact to subsume Marxism within a disturbing if contentious trajectory from race war to class war to state racism.

Set against this dramatic backdrop, STP can be read as a move towards restabilization, a synthesis perhaps in the manner of the third mode of appropriation of Machiavelli. The astonishing coup that Foucault pulls off in STP is to reinterpret both the two juxtaposed terms that launch the discussion in SMD – the economy & war/economy v. war – as correlates of the new regime of governmentality. In SMD “economy” stood for the looming force of Marxist determinism. Against an economic reading of power, Foucault set the doublet of repression and war. He then went on to derive an encompassing sense of historicity from the polemical confrontation of war. In STP the points of departure in SMD – economy & war/economy v. war – return, but they are now resituated as correlates of a regime of governmentality, within which Foucault situates himself as an analyst. “The economy” emerges as the privileged object of

policy from the critique of the cameralist police regime. War, which in SMD is the key to the analysis of power, reappears in STP as an instrument of conflict management under the *ius publicum Europaeum*.

What are we to make of this shift?

It is tempting to propose that in his account of the generation of the object of “the economy” in STP – something that is not real, but is nevertheless an object – Foucault is performing a dramatic historicizing, reflexive move. In SMD he held economism at arms length. But the questions he posed were urgent: “Is power always secondary to the economy? Are its finality and function always determined by the economy? Is power’s *raison d’être* and purpose essentially to serve the economy? Is it designed to establish, solidify, perpetuate, and reproduce relations that are characteristic of the economy and essential to its workings?” SMD 14. In STP this omnivorous demanding presence of the economy will be suspended and the economy will be put in its place as what it is that is to be explained. Foucault will show how “in the eighteenth century, through a series of complex processes that are absolutely crucial for our history” the economy came to be designated as “a level of reality and a field of intervention for government.” (STP, 134) One is tempted to say that this is the genealogical equivalent of the archaeological “reduction” that he performed on political economy and Marxism in *Order of Things*. But this does not seem true to the analytical architecture of STP. It fails to register a crucial discontinuity. The “economy” of SMD and “the economy” of STP are different things.

In STP Foucault is preoccupied with responding to the critique that what he offers is a self-enclosed ontology of power. The aim of the game is not, therefore, radical subsumption, but the proliferation, coagulation and correlation of different processes, techniques and objects. As Foucault himself repeatedly insists, the apparatus and technologies of power cannot be understood as self-sufficient. At the beginning of STP he identifies power as acting “through” three key social relations: relations of production, family relations and sexual relations (STP, 2). These relations appear as givens. Indeed, it is tempting to suggest that they form a matrix for each of Foucault’s three basic regimes of power.

Sovereignty, discipline and security each seem to entertain a privileged but non-exclusive relationship with one of these sets of social relations. The family is the matrix of sovereignty. Biopolitics and the government of population, whose basic law is desire, is closely related to sexual relations. Finally, for Foucault “relations of production” are linked in the most intimate way with the regime of disciplinary power. This makes sense when we think of the E.P. Thompson-esque moments in *Discipline and Punish* and *The Punitive Society*, the relationship between the prison and the factory form, the disciplining of labour etc. The relations of production are an “economic” matter. But “the economy”, an object whose

emergence in the 18th century Foucault will brilliantly analyse, is not reducible to the analytic of the relations of production and the associated regime of discipline. Nor is it the same “economy/economism” that haunts SMD.

If we retrace the logic of STP it reads like this: Power is constituted within relations of production, the matrix of family and relations of sexuality. Governmentality is the dominant regime of power by the 18th century. Disciplinary mechanisms are central to the rearticulation of the relations of production in the 18th century, but as Foucault remarks it was misleading to view the coupling of factory and prison in isolation. They can only be understood with regard to the wider regime of governmentality, which rearticulates both sovereignty and discipline.. The notion of “the economy” that Foucault describes emerging in the 18th century, is not a direct effect of the relations of production, or social forms based on them. It is rather a correlate of, or an effect of a regime of governmentality that rearticulates the couplets of (sovereignty-family) and (discipline-relations of production) around the new axis of security-population and the economy.

Ironically, this analytic in which an object like “the economy” appears as an effect within regime of power leads Foucault to a mode of analysis that is remarkably reminiscent of Althusser. One could cite many passages but the lecture of 1 March 1978 is a particularly clear instance:

“Fundamentally, the problem is why and how political or economic problems that arose in the Middle Ages, such as the movements of urban revolt and peasant revolt Were translated into a number of religious themes, forms, and concerns that finally result in the explosion of the reformation, of the great religious crisis of the sixteenth century (AT out of which arose the radical break in the regime of power). If we do not take the problem of the pastorate, of the structures of pastoral power, as the hinge or pivot of these different elements external to each other – the economic crises on one side and religious themes on the other – if we do not take it as a field of intelligibility, as the principle establishing relations between them, as the switch-point between these elements, then we are forced to return to the old conceptions of ideology to say that the aspirations of a group, a class, and so forth , are translated, reflected and expressed in something like religious belief. ... rather than say that each class, ... has its ideology that allows it to translate its aspirations into theory, aspiration and ideology from which corresponding institutional reorganizations are deduced, we should say: every transformation that modifies the relations of force between communities or groups, ever conflict that confronts them or brings them into competition calls for the utilization of tactics which allow the modification of relations of power and the bringing into play of theoretical elements which morally justify and give a basis to these tactics in rationality.” (STP 215-216).

As this long quote makes clear the aim of the game is not to evacuate struggle or social conflict or class from the analysis, but to precisely resituate their effectiveness, by insisting that they act through a grid of structural relations, a field, a hinge, a pivot. The geometry may be more loosely articulated than in the Althusserian version, but this, unmistakably, is the relational logic of structuralism.

It is this same motion that Foucault repeats in the finale to the lecture of 25 January where he recasts some of the most dramatic moments of *Order of Things* in his new idiom.

“To sum up, I think that if we look for the operator of transformation for the transition from natural history to biology from the analysis of wealth to political economy, and from general grammar to historical philology, if we look for the operator that upset all these systems of knowledge ... then we should look to population. Not in a way that would amount to saying that, finally understanding the importance of the population, the ruling classes set naturalists to work in this area, ... grammarians who were consequently transformed into philologists and financiers who became economists. It did not take place like this, but in the following form: a constant interplay between techniques of power and their object gradually carves out a reality, as a field of reality, ... a whole series of objects were made visible for possible forms of knowledge ... as the correlate of techniques of power. In turn, because these forms of knowledge constantly carve out new objects, the population could be formed, continue, and remain as the privileged correlate of modern mechanisms of power ...”. (STP 109-110).

This does not mean evacuating struggle altogether but analyzing its effects differently.

Furthermore, between SMD and STP there is a shift in the locus and types of struggle that Foucault is interested in that might be described as a shift from macro to micro or from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Foucault is not denying the continued importance of large-scale historical struggles in STP, but augmenting them with a new analytic. A passage that indicates the new tonality occurs at the beginning of 8 March 1978:

“All the same, since it is necessary to pay a minimum of homage to causality and the traditional principle of causality, I would just add that this transition from the pastoral of souls to the political government of men must be situated in a certain familiar context. In the first place, of course, the context of that of the great revolt, or trace the great series of pastoral revolts in the fifteenth century, and obviously especially in the sixteenth century, of what I call those “insurrections of conduct” This dimension of the revolt of conduct has also always been present in upheavals and revolutionary processes with completely different objectives and stakes.” (STP 227-228)

This remark then leads him forward to comment on the elements of the revolt of conduct involved in the great French and Russian revolutions. The themes of macroscopic struggle are not absent from STP. But they are relegated, with a sigh, to “the familiar context”.

What is at the center of Foucault's attention in STP is counter conduct in all its microscopic workings. His treatment of counter conduct against the Christian pastoral regime is the basic template. Nor at the very end of the lecture series, does he rule out the possibility of counter conduct aimed at the current regime of governmentality. Clearly it has existed as a historical force. In the hurried conclusion to the lecture course on 5 April 1978 he sketches three characteristic modes of counter conduct within governmentality (STP 356-357): the promise that civil society will displace the state, the right to revolt against obedience and idea that it will no longer be the state that knows, but society that will become transparent to itself. Clearly, Foucault derives this mode of analysis of modern counter conduct from his earlier account of the counter conduct directed against the pastoral regime of medieval and early modern Christian Europe. And he is aware of the conservative politics of deriving revolutionary movements in modern Europe from Christian origins. And so in a passage he did not leave himself time to deliver he refused any "direct" derivation of one from the other. He insisted that translation was complex. He filtered the derivation of counter conduct from religion through the same grid of structures that he had earlier applied to other political forms. (STP, 357).

If, to return to our starting point, the term "economy" is displaced between SMD and STP in crucial ways, the same is true for the concept of "war". In SMD war functioned as an explosive charge, both as an actual clash of forces and a polemical analytical scheme. A "primitive and permanent" struggle, Foucault insisted in discerning, beneath every appearance of order (SMD, 47). In SMD, Foucault's language was more vivid than usual in the lectures. He invoked the "noise and confusion of war, in the mud of battles" as "the principle that allows us to understand order, the State, its institutions, and its history". "The law is born of real battles, victories, massacres, and conquests which can be dated and which have their horrific heroes; the law was born in burning towns and ravaged fields. It was born together with the famous innocents who died at break of day." (SMD, 50)

By contrast with this dramatic rhetoric, in the cool enumerated analytic of governmentality offered by STP, war is neatly situated by Foucault as "the first instrument of this precarious, fragile, and provisional universal peace that takes on the aspect of a balance and equilibrium between a plurality of states."

Behind the tonal shift there is a substantive continuity in the analysis Foucault offers of the formation of the modern state and its war-machines. There is also a striking parallel in the way in which both SMD and STP derive historicity from the analytic of war and *raison d'état*. But at this point we also arrive at the truly defining break between the two texts.

In both cases Foucault turns to the 16/17th century as the moment at which a modern sense of historicity emerged. In SMD Foucault announces that the early modern discourse of war was the "the first discourse in postmedieval Western society that can be strictly described as being

historico-political. First because the subject who speaks in this discourse, who says “I” or “we,” cannot, and is in fact not trying to, occupy the position of the jurist or the philosopher, or in other words the position of a universal, totalizing, or neutral subject.” (SMD, 52) And this for Foucault is a crucial moment because it calls into question the basic premise of the philosophy of truth against which he took aim in the *Lessons on the Will to Know*: “Ever since Greek philosophy, philosophico-juridical discourse has always worked with the assumption of a pacified universality, but it is now being seriously called into question or, quite simply, cynically ignored.” (SMD, 53) Strikingly at this point the sophists, the repressed heroes of the *Will to Know* make a cameo appearance. The polemical discourse Foucault is talking about in SMD “this partisan discourse, this discourse of war and history, can therefore perhaps take the form of the cunning sophist of the Greek era. Whatever form it takes, it will be denounced as the discourse of a biased and naive historian, a bitter politician, a dispossessed aristocracy, or as an uncouth discourse that puts forward inarticulate demands.” It was doomed to be “basically or structurally kept in the margins by that of the philosophers and jurists” (SMD, 58). The echoes of the dispute with Derrida were still loud in 1975-1976.

In STP he revisits exactly the same moment, but with a very different consequence:

“In a few words, at a time when the quasi-imperial unity of the cosmos is breaking up, when nature is being made less dramatic, freed from the event and from the tragic, I think something like the reverse of this is taking place in the political order. In the seventeenth century, at the end of the wars of religion – precisely at the time of the Thirty Years War, ever since the great treaties, the great pursuit of the European balance – a new historical perspective opens up of indefinite governmentality and the permanence of states that will have neither final aim nor term, a discontinuous set of states appears doomed to a history without hope since it has no term, states that are not organized by reference to a reason whose law is that of dynastic or religious legitimacy, but rather by reference to the reason of a necessity that it must face up to with coups that, although they must always be concerted, are always risky ... At the same time as the birth of *raison d’État*, I think a certain tragic sense of history is born that no longer has anything to do with lament for the present or the past, with the lament of the chronicles, which was the form in which the tragic sense of history had previously appeared, but is linked rather to political practice itself, and, in a way, the coup d’État brings this tragedy into play on the stage of reality itself.” (STP 347-8).

As in SMD this new sense of history implies an irreducible plurality of perspectives and the impossibility of universality. “The plurality of states is not a transitional phase imposed on men for a time and as a punishment. In fact, the plurality of states is the very necessity of a history that is now completely open and not temporally oriented towards a final unity. The theory of *raison d’État* I talked about last week entails an open time and a multiple spatiality.” (STP 379)

But unlike in SMD the analysis of historicity in STP is given no resonant philosophical implication. Furthermore, and it is this that marks the most profound break with the dizzying energy of SMD, in STP this diagnosis of a new regime of historicity has no implication for Foucault's own position, or that of his readers. The contrast to SMD is stark. In 1975-6 he delivered an appeal with the same rallying force as the final sallies in *The Will to Know* or his polemics with Derrida:

“Everyone knows of course that historicism is the most dreadful thing in the world. Any philosophy worthy of the name, any theory of society, any self-respecting epistemology that has any claim to distinction obviously has to struggle against the platitudes of historicism. ... ever since the nineteenth century, all the great philosophies have, in one way or another, been antihistoricist. One could also, I think, demonstrate that all the human sciences survive, or perhaps even exist, only because they are antihistoricist. One could also demonstrate that when history, or the historical discipline, has recourse to either a philosophy of history or a juridical and moral ideality, or to the human sciences (all of which it finds so enchanting), it is trying to escape its fatal and secret penchant for historicism. But what is this historicism that everyone—philosophy, the human sciences, history—is so suspicious of? What is this historicism that has to be warded off at all cost, and that philosophical, scientific, and even political modernity have always tried to ward off? Well, I think that historicism is nothing other than what I have just been talking about: the link, the unavoidable connection, between war and history, and conversely, between history and war. No matter how far back it goes, historical knowledge never finds nature, right, order, or peace. However far back it goes, historical knowledge discovers only an unending war, or in other words, forces that relate to one another and come into conflict with one another, and the events in which relations of force are decided, but always in a provisional way. History encounters nothing but war, but history can never really look down on this war from on high; history cannot get away from war or discover its basic laws or impose limits on it, quite simply because war itself supports this knowledge, runs through this knowledge, and determines this knowledge. Knowledge is never anything more than a weapon in a war, or a tactical deployment within that war. War is waged throughout history, and through the history that tells the history of war. And history, for its part, can never do anything more than interpret the war it is waging or that is being waged through it. Well, then, I think it is this essential connection between historical knowledge and the practice of war ... that both is irreducible and always has to be sanitized, because of an idea, which has been in circulation for the last one thousand or two thousand years, and which might be described as “platonic” It is an idea that is probably bound up with the whole Western organization of knowledge, namely, the idea that knowledge and truth cannot not belong to the register of order and peace, that knowledge and truth can never be found on the side of violence, disorder, and war. I think that the important thing (and whether it is or is not platonic is of no importance) about this idea that knowledge and truth cannot belong to war, and can only belong to order and peace, is that the modern State has now reimplanted it in what we might call the eighteenth century’s “disciplinization” of knowledges. And it is this idea that makes historicism unacceptable to us, that means that we cannot accept something like an indissociable circularity between historical knowledge and the wars that it talks about and which at the same time go on in it. So this is the problem, and this, if you like, is our first task: We must try to be historicists, or in other words, try to analyze this perpetual and unavoidable relationship between the war that is recounted by history and the history that is traversed by the war it is recounting.” (SMD 172-174)

In 1975-76, Foucault thus restates the analysis of the *Will to Know* and the reply to Derrida in radical form, interlacing the emergence of modern historicity and the exclusions that founded classic philosophy, whilst pushing forward to a critique of 19th century dialectics.

Obviously, the notion of history described as a correlate of governmentality in STP is not the same as the notion of history emerging from the analysis of war in SMD. In this respect the movement between SMD and STP with regard to “history” is analogous to the translation that was preformed on the concepts of “the economy” and “war”. In part this is a matter of a shift of analytical object. But the challenge posed by SMD – “we must try to be historicists” – was presumably a general methodological injunction. It presumably remains binding in 1977-1978 as much as in 1975-76. It drives us to the question: how far is STP a historicist text? How far is it located and reflexive in the manner that SMD demands?

Certainly in STP Foucault does not position himself as if for combat. Indeed, he begins the lectures by enjoining that there should be no polemics (STP, 18). He does situate his analysis and his readers. But in more conventional and less explosive terms i.e. epochally. We live, we still live, he announces in 1977, in the regime of governmentality initiated in the 18th century. Its terms, its “driving forces” are still our own. With the trio of sovereignty, discipline and security and their articulation in the mode of governmentality first developed in the 18th century, it is as though Foucault has given us a map of modernity, which is all-encompassing and complete, though, of course, subject to shifting rearrangement. There is no sense in these lectures of the kind of historic threshold, or a threshold of history itself that gave the *Order of Things* such drama. *Order of Things* promised the end of historic man. There is no promise here of the end of governmentality, no commitment to the open-ended relentless struggle and reinterpretation that SMD would seem to imply. Might it be the case that Foucault in laying out and refining the analytic of our governmentality, succumbed to his own temptation to escape historicism?

Footnotes:

[1] ‘MICHEL FOUCAULT DERRIDA E NO KAINO’) FROM PAIDEIA, NO. 11: MICHEL FOUCAULT, 1 FEBRUARY 1972, pp. 131-147

[2] This reading of the lectures in terms of Foucault’s life-long struggle with Derrida is supported and illuminatingly elaborated by Judith Revel *Foucault avec Merleau-Ponty. Ontologie politique, présentisme et histoire*, (Paris, Vrin, 2015).

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