MICHEL FOUCAULT

"Society Must Be Defended"

LECTURES AT THE COLLÈGE DE FRANCE, 1975-76

Edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana
General Editors: François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana

English Series Editor: Arnold I. Davidson

TRANSLATED BY DAVID MACEY

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

THIS VOLUME IS THE first in a series devoted to the lectures given at the Collège de France by Michel Foucault.

Michel Foucault taught at the Collège de France from January 1971 until his death in June 1984—with the exception of 1977, when he enjoyed a sabbatical year. His chair was in the History of Systems of Thought.

The chair was established on 30 November 1969 at the proposal of Jules Vuillemin and in the course of a general meeting of the professors of the Collège de France. It replaced the chair in the History of Philosophical Thought, which was held until his death by Jean Hyppolite. On 12 April 1970, the general meeting elected Michel Foucault to the chair.[1] He was forty-three.

Michel Foucault gave his inaugural lecture on 2 December 1970.[2]

Professors teaching at the Collège de France work under specific rules. They are under an obligation to teach for twenty-six hours a year (up

---

1 The candidacy presentation drawn up by Michel Foucault ends with the formula "[I]t would be necessary to undertake the history of systems of thought." "Titres et travaux," in *Dits et écrits*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard), vol. 1, p. 846; trans., "Candidacy Presentation: Collège de France," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1994), vol. 1, p. 9.

2 It was published by Éditions Gallimard in March 1971 under the title *L'Ordre du discours*. The English translation by Rupert Swyer, "Orders of Discourse," is appended to the U.S. edition of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*; it does not appear in U.K. editions.

to half the hours can take the form of seminars).[3] Each year, they are required to give an account of the original research that they have undertaken, which means that the content of their lectures must always be new. Anyone is free to attend the lectures and seminars; there is no enrollment, and no diplomas are required. The professors do not award any diplomas.[4] In the vocabulary of the Collège de France, its professors do not have students, but *auditeurs* or listeners.

Michel Foucault gave his lectures on Wednesdays from the beginning of January to the end of March. The very large audience, made up of students, teachers, researchers, and those who attended simply out of curiosity, many of them from abroad, filled two of the Collège de France's lecture theaters. Michel Foucault often complained about the distance this could put between him and his "audience" and about the way the lecture format left so little room for dialogue.[5] He dreamed of holding a seminar in which truly collective work could be done. He made various attempts to hold such a seminar. In his last years, he devoted long periods after his lectures to answering questions from his listeners.

This is how Gérard Petitjean, a journalist on *Le Nouvel Observateur*, captured the atmosphere:

> When Foucault quickly enters the arena with all the resolution of someone diving into the water, he scrambles over bodies to get to his dais, pushes the microphones aside to put his papers down, takes off his jacket, switches on a lamp and takes off at a hundred kilometers an hour. His loud, effective voice is relayed by loudspeakers, which are the sole concession to modernity in a room that is only dimly lit by the light that comes from the stucco lamp-holders. There are three hundred seats, and five

> hundred people are crammed into them, taking up all the available space ... No oratorical effects. It is lucid and extremely effective. Not the slightest concession to improvisation. Foucault has twelve hours to explain, in a series of public lectures, the meaning of the research he has carried out over the year that has just ended. So he crams in as much as possible, and fills in the margins like a letter writer who has too much to say when he has reached the bottom of the sheet. 19.15. Foucault stops. The students rush to his desk. Not to talk to him, but to switch off their tape recorders. No questions. Foucault is alone in the crush. Foucault comments: "We ought to be able to discuss what I have put forward. Sometimes, when the lecture has not been good, it would not take a lot, a question, to put everything right. But the question never comes. In France, the group effect makes all real discussion impossible. And as there is no feedback channel, the lecture becomes a sort of theatrical performance. I relate to the people who are there as though I were an actor or an acrobat. And when I have finished speaking, there's this feeling of total solitude."[6]

Michel Foucault approached his teaching as a researcher. He explored possibilities for books in preparation, outlined fields of problematization, as though he were handing out invitations to potential researchers. That is why the lectures given at the Collège de France do not reduplicate the published books. They are not outlines for books, even though the books and the lectures do sometimes have themes in common. They have a status of their own. They belong to a specific discursive regime within the sum total of the "philosophical acts" performed by Michel Foucault. Here he quite specifically outlines the program for a genealogy of the relations between power and knowledge. From the early 1970s onward, it is this, and not the ar-

3 Michel Foucault did so until the early 1980s.
4 In the context of the Collège de France.
5 In 1976, Michel Foucault changed the time of his lecture from 5:45 P.M. to 9:00 A.M. in a vain attempt to reduce the numbers present. Cf. the beginning of the first lecture (7 January 1976) in the present volume.

6 Gérard Petitjean, "Les Grands Prêtres de l'université française," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 7 April 1975.

chaeology of discursive formations that had previously been his dominant concern, that provides the framework for his discussion of his own work.[7]

The lectures also had a contemporary function. The *auditeurs* who followed them were not simply captivated by the narrative that was being constructed week after week; they were not simply seduced by the rigor of the exposition; they found that they were also listening to a commentary on current events. Michel Foucault knew the secret of how to use history to cut through current events. He might well have been speaking of Nietzsche or Aristotle, of psychiatric appraisal in the nineteenth century or of Christian pastoralism, but his audience was also learning about the present day and contemporary events. It is this subtle interplay among erudite scholarship, personal commitment, and work on current events that gives Michel Foucault's lectures their great power.

❧

The 1970s saw the development and the refinement of cassette tape recorders. Michel Foucault's lecture theater was quickly invaded by them. It is thanks to them that the lectures (and some of the seminars) have been preserved.

This edition is based upon the words pronounced in public by Michel Foucault. It gives the most literal transcription possible.[8] We would have liked to publish his words exactly as they were spoken. But the transition from the oral to the written does require some editorial intervention. At least some punctuation has to be introduced, and paragraph breaks have to be added. The principle has always

---

7 Cf. in particular "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, p. 137. English translation by Donald F. Brouchard and Sherry Simon, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in James Faubion, ed., *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Volume II* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), pp. 369-92.

8 Particular use has been made of the recordings made by Gilbert Burlet and Jacques Lagrange. These have been deposited at the Collège de France and in the Fonds Michel Foucault held by Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine.

been to remain as close as possible to the lecture that was actually given.

When it seemed absolutely essential, repetitions have been cut; sentences that break off have been completed, and incorrect constructions have been rectified.

Ellipses indicate that the tape recording is inaudible. In the case of obscure phrases, brackets indicate a conjectural interpolation or addition.

Asterisks indicate significant variations between the notes used by Michel Foucault and what he actually said.

Quotations have been checked, and references to the texts used have been supplied. The critical apparatus is restricted to the elucidation of obscure points, the explanation of certain allusions, and the clarification of critical points.

For the reader's benefit, each lecture is preceded by a brief summary indicating its main articulations.

The text of the lectures is followed by the course summary published in the *Annuaire du Collège de France*. Michel Foucault usually wrote his course summaries in the month of June, or in other words some time after the end of his lecture course. He saw them as an opportunity to use the benefit of hindsight to clarify his own intentions and objectives. They are the best introduction to the lectures.

Each volume ends with a "situation" written by the editor: this is designed to provide the reader with contextual, biographical, ideological, and political information that situates the lectures in relation to Michel Foucault's published works. It situates the lectures in relation to the corpus used by Michel Foucault so as to facilitate an understanding of it, to avoid misunderstandings, and to preserve the memory of the circumstances in which each lecture was prepared and delivered.

❧

This edition of the lectures given at the Collège de France marks a new stage in the publication of the "works" of Michel Foucault.

These are not unpublished texts in the strict sense of the word, as this edition reproduces words that were spoken in public by Michel Foucault, but not the written—and often very sophisticated—support he used. Daniel Defert, who owns Michel Foucault's notes, has allowed the editors to consult them. They are extremely grateful to him.

This edition of the lectures given at the Collège de France has been authorized by Michel Foucault's heirs, who wished to meet the great demand for their publication both in France and abroad. They wished this to be a serious undertaking. The editors have attempted to prove themselves worthy of the trust that has been placed in them.

FRANÇOIS EWALD AND ALESSANDRO FONTANA

INTRODUCTION

Arnold I. Davidson

THIS VOLUME INAUGURATES THE English-language publication of Michel Foucault's extraordinary courses at the Collège de France.

Claude Lévi-Strauss recounts that after he was elected to the Collège de France, an usher, who had grown old in his job, took him from room to room so that he could choose the room in which he would give his yearly course. After Lévi-Strauss had chosen a room the usher bluntly warned him: "Not that one!" to which Lévi-Strauss expressed surprise:

> "You see," [the usher] explained, "it is laid out in such a way that in order to reach the rostrum you have to make your way through the entire audience, and, you have to do likewise while leaving." "Does it really matter?" I said. Whereupon he shot back this response with a peremptory look: "Someone could speak to you." I stood by my choice, but, in the tradition of the Collège, it is indeed a matter of the professor dispensing his words, and not receiving them or even exchanging them.[1]

And Lévi-Strauss goes on to talk about the "mental concentration and nervous tension" involved in giving a course at the Collège de France.[2] In a 1975 interview Foucault himself noted the strange particularity of "teaching" at the Collège de France, remarking that he liked not having "the impression of teaching, that is, of exercising a relationship of power with respect to an audience."[3] The traditional teacher first makes his audience feel guilty for not knowing a certain number of

things they should know; then he places the audience under the obligation to learn the things that he, the professor, knows; and, finally, when he has taught these things, he will verify that the audience has indeed learned them. Culpabilization, obligation, and verification are the series of power relations exercised by the typical professor.[4] But, as Foucault points out, at the Collège de France, courses are open to anyone who wishes to attend: "If it interests him, he comes; if it doesn't interest him, he doesn't come."[5] At the Collège a professor is paid to present his work, and "it is up to the audience to say or to show whether or not it is interested":

> In any case when I am going to give my courses at the Collège, I have stage fright (*trac*), absolutely, like when I took exams, because I have the feeling that, really, people, the public, come to verify my work, to show that they are interested or not; if they don't have an interested look, I am very sad, you know.[6]

Nowhere were culpabilization, obligation, and verification less present than in Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France, and the interested public often gave way to an excited, enthusiastic public that made the very idea of presenting lectures a difficult task. Rather than an atmosphere of sadness, Foucault's courses produced a kind of frenzy, a frenzy of knowledge, that was intellectually and socially electrifying.

In an exceptional essay on Foucault, Gilles Deleuze has distinguished two dimensions of Foucault's writings: on the one hand, the lines of history, the archive, Foucault's analytic; on the other, the lines of the present, of what is happening now, Foucault's diagnostic: "In every apparatus, we have to disentangle the lines of the recent past and those of the future at hand."[7] According to Deleuze, the majority of Foucault's books establish "a precise archive with exceedingly new historical means," while in his interviews and conversations, Foucault explicitly confronts the other half of his task, tracing lines of actualization that "pull us toward a future, toward a becoming."[8] Analytical strata and diagnostic contemporaneity are two essential poles of Foucault's entire work. Perhaps nowhere more clearly than in Fou-

cault's lectures at the Collège de France do we see the balancing, the alternation, and the overlapping of these two poles. At one and the same time, these lectures exhibit Foucault's relentless erudition and his explosive force, giving further shape to that distinctive history of the present that so changed our twentieth-century landscape.

✦

One of the most emblematic, and often cited, lines of the first volume of Foucault's history of sexuality, *La Volonté de savoir*, published in 1976, the year of this course, is the trenchant remark "In thought and political analysis we have still not cut off the head of the king."[9] In studying the historico-political discourse of war in this course, Foucault shows us one way to detach ourselves from the philosophico-juridical discourse of sovereignty and the law that has so dominated our thought and political analysis. In an important lecture given in Brazil in 1976, and unfortunately still not translated into English, Foucault underscores his claim that "the West has never had another system of representation, of formulation, and of analysis of power than that of the law, the system of the law."[10] Many of Foucault's writings, lectures, and interviews of the mid- to late 1970s are responses to this conceptual impasse, are attempts to articulate alternative ways of analyzing power.

Foucault's concern during this period was both with the representation of power and with the actual functioning of power. The focus of this 1976 course is on one alternative conceptualization of power, a mode of thought that analyzes power relations in terms of the model of war, that looks for the principle of intelligibility of politics in the general form of war. Foucault himself, discussing the use of the notion of "struggle" in certain political discourses, posed the following question:

> [S]hould one, or should one not, analyze these "struggles" as the vicissitudes of a war, should one decipher them according to a grid which would be one of strategy and tactics? Is the

relation of forces in the order of politics a relation of war? Personally, I do not feel myself ready for the moment to respond in a definitive way with a yes or no.[11]

"Society Must Be Defended" is Foucault's most concentrated and detailed historical examination of the model of war as a grid for analyzing politics.

If this course is an answer to the question of who first thought of politics as war continued by other means, we must put it in the context of the development of Foucault's own thought with respect to this substantive claim. If in 1975, just before the lectures published here, Foucault seemed himself to take up the claim that politics is the continuation of war by other means,[12] by 1976, just after this course, Foucault had subtly but significantly modified his own attitude:

> Should one then turn around the formula and say that politics is war pursued by other means? Perhaps if one wishes always to maintain a difference between war and politics, one should suggest rather that this multiplicity of force-relations can be coded—in part and never totally—either in the form of "war" or in the form of "politics"; there would be here two different strategies (but ready to tip over into one another) for integrating these unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable, tense force-relations.[13]

As this quotation makes clear, Foucault's preoccupation with the schema of war was central to his formulation of the strategic model of power, of force-relations, a strategic model that would allow us to reorient our conception of power.

Although it is widely recognized that the articulation of this strategic model—with its notions of force, struggle, war, tactics, strategy, et cetera—is one of the major achievements of Foucault's thought during this time, the full scope and significance of this model has not been fully appreciated. Although a full study of the emergence of this

strategic model in Foucault's work would have to begin with texts written no later than 1971,[14] his course summary published here leaves no doubt that the examination of the historico-political discourse of war was an essential stage in the formulation of a model of analysis that is presented at greatest length in part 4 of *La Volonté de savoir*. Rather than trace the changing forms of this model, I want at least to outline a few aspects of it that deserve further attention in the study of Foucault's writings during this period.

In *La Volonté de savoir*, Foucault's strategic model takes as its most central field of application power relations (and resistances), that is to say, nondiscursive practices or the social field generally. It provides a model of strategic coherence, intelligibility, rationality that answers to what Foucault sometimes called the *logic* of strategies.[15] Arrangements of relations of forces have a strategic intelligibility, and their rationality, as well as the transformation of these arrangements into other coherent arrangements, obeys a logic distinct both from the logic of epistemic coherence and transformations studied by Foucault in his archaeological works, and from the logic of the model of sovereignty and the law that is the direct object of Foucault's criticisms here.

Although this strategic model is, first of all, intended to provide an alternative system of representation of the nondiscursive social field, a mode of representation that does not derive from the juridical conception of power, in order to assess its significance we must not forget that as early as 1967 Foucault recognized that the form of strategic intelligibility could also be applied to discursive practices. In an unpublished lecture, "Structuralisme et analyse littéraire," given in Tunisia in 1967, Foucault, invoking among others the name of J. L. Austin, argued that the description of a statement was not complete when one had defined the linguistic structure of the statement, that the analysis of discourse could not be reduced to the combination of elements according to linguistic rules, that therefore "discourse is something that necessarily extends beyond language."[16] As he put it in a 1967 letter to Daniel Defert, again appealing to *"les analystes anglaises,"* "they allow me indeed to see how one can do nonlinguistic

analyses of statements. Treat statements in their functioning."[17] This nonlinguistic level of the analysis of discourse is in fact the level of strategic intelligibility.

This model of analysis is developed further in Foucault's 1974 lectures at the Catholic Pontifical University of Rio de Janeiro, "La Vérité et les formes juridiques," where Foucault urges us to consider the facts of discourse as strategic games.[18] And in 1976, in a brilliant single-page text, "Le Discours ne doit pas être pris comme...," a text that appears in *Dits et écrits* just before the course summary of *"Society Must Be Defended,"* Foucault describes this level of analysis as the political analysis of discourse in which "it is a matter of exhibiting discourse as a strategic field."[19] Here discourse is characterized as a battle, a struggle, a place and an instrument of confrontation, "a weapon of power, of control, of subjection, of qualification and of disqualification."[20] Discourse does not simply express or reproduce already constituted social relations:

> Discourse battle and not discourse reflection... Discourse—the mere fact of speaking, of employing words, of using the words of others (even if it means returning them), words that the others understand and accept (and, possibly, return from their side)—this fact is in itself a force. Discourse is, with respect to the relation of forces, not merely a surface of inscription, but something that brings about effects.[21]

The strategic model of intelligibility, with a vocabulary one of whose primary sources is the schema of war, applies to the forces of discourse as well as to nondiscursive force-relations.[22] In *La Volonté de savoir,* this form of analysis of discourse is employed in part 4, chapter 2, when Foucault discusses the "rule of the tactical polyvalence of discourse," insisting that discourses should be examined at the two levels of their tactical productivity and of their strategic integration.[23] Indeed, speaking of the perspectival character of knowledge in a discussion of Nietzsche, Foucault recurs to this same terminology in

order to articulate the Nietzschean claim that "knowledge is always a certain strategic relation in which man finds himself placed":

> The perspectival character of knowledge does not derive from human nature, but always from the polemical and strategic character of knowledge. One can speak of the perspectival character of knowledge because there is a battle and knowledge is the effect of this battle.[24]

And in his course and his summary of *"Society Must Be Defended"* Foucault describes the historico-political discourse of war as putting forward a truth that "functions as a weapon," as speaking of a "perspectival and strategic truth." Discourse, knowledge, and truth, as well as relations of power, can be understood from within the strategic model. Hence the importance of seeing how this model functions at all of its levels of application.

Finally, I want to indicate that this course can be read within the framework of what Foucault called his "circular" project, a project that involves two endeavors that refer back to each other.[25] On the one hand, Foucault wanted to rid us of a juridical representation of power, conceived of in terms of law, prohibition, and sovereignty, a clearing away that raises the question of how we are to analyze what has taken place in history without the use of this system of representation. On the other hand, Foucault wanted to carry out a more meticulous historical examination in order to show that in modern societies power has not in fact functioned in the form of law and sovereignty, a historical analysis that forces one to find another form of representation that does not depend on the juridical system.

> Therefore, one must, at one and the same time, while giving oneself another theory of power, form another grid of historical decipherment, and, while looking more closely at an entire historical material, advance little by little toward another conception of power.[26]

"Society Must Be Defended" participates fully in this historico-theoretical project; it reminds us once again of Foucault's unrivaled conjunction of philosophical and historical analysis. And these lectures, as in the courses to follow, show us the unfolding of Foucault's thought in all of its vivacity, intensity, clarity, and precision.

❧

I am deeply indebted to Daniel Defert for his help and encouragement, to Michael Denneny and Christina Prestia, who initiated this project at St. Martin's Press, and to Tim Bent and Julia Pastore, who have followed it through.

1. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Paroles données* (Paris: Plon, 1984), p. 9.
2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. Michel Foucault, "Radioscopie de Michel Foucault," in *Dits et écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), vol. 2, p. 786.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Gilles Deleuze, "Qu'est-ce qu'un dispositif?" in *Michel Foucault, philosophe* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989), p. 191.
8. Ibid, pp. 192-93.
9. Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, vol. 1, *La Volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 117.
10. Michel Foucault, "Les Mailles du pouvoir," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 4, p. 186.
11. Michel Foucault, "L'Oeil du pouvoir," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 3, p. 206.
12. Michel Foucault, "La Politique est la continuation de la guerre par d'autres moyens," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, p. 704.
13. Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir*, p. 123.
14. See, for example, Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2. A complete study of this issue must await the publication of Foucault's 1971 course at the Collège de France, also entitled "La Volonté de savoir." The course summary can be found in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2. See also Daniel Defert, "Le 'dispositif de guerre' comme analyseur des rapports de pouvoir," in *Lectures de Michel Foucault: A propos de "Il faut défendre la société*," ed. Jean-Claude Zancarini (Lyon: ENS Éditions, n.d.).
15. See, among other texts, Michel Foucault, "Des Supplices aux cellules," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 3, pp. 426-27.
16. A tape recording of this lecture can be found in the Centre Michel Foucault.
17. Cited in the "Chronologie." *Dits et écrits*, vol. 1, p. 31. For further discussion see my essay, "Structures and Strategies of Discourse: Remarks Towards a History of Foucault's Philosophy of Language," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
18. Michel Foucault, "La Vérité et les formes juridiques," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, p. 539.
19. Michel Foucault, "Le Discours ne doit pas être pris comme . . .," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 3, p. 123.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p. 124.
22. See also Michel Foucault, "Dialogue sur le pouvoir," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 3, p. 465.
23. Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir*, pp. 132-35.
24. Michel Foucault, "La Vérité et les formes juridiques," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, p. 551.
25. Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir*, pp. 119-20.
26. Ibid., p. 120.