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Tactical generalization of historical knowledge. ~ Constitution, Revolution, and cyclical history. ~ The savage and the barbarian. ~ Three ways of filtering barbarism: tactics of historical discourse. ~ Questions of method: the epistemological field and the antihistoricism of the bourgeoisie. ~ Reactivation of historical discourse during the Revolution. ~ Feudalism and the gothic novel.

LAST TIME, I SHOWED you how a historico-political discourse, or a historico-political field, took shape and was constituted around the nobiliary reaction of the early eighteenth century. I would now like to move to a different point in time, or in other words, to around the French Revolution and to a moment where we can, I think, grasp two processes. We can see, on the one hand, how this discourse, which was originally bound up with the nobiliary reaction, became generalized not so much, or not only, in the sense that is became, so to speak, the regular or canonical form of historical discourse, but to the extent that it became a tactical instrument that could be used not only by the nobility, but ultimately in various different strategies. In the course of the eighteenth century, and subject to a certain number of modifications at the level of its basic propositions, historical discourse eventually became a sort of discursive weapon that could be used by all the adversaries present within the political field. In short, I would like to show you how this historical instrument must not be seen as the ideology or an ideological product of the nobility or its

class position, and that we are not dealing with an ideology here; we are dealing with something else. What I am trying to identify is what might, if you like, be termed a discursive tactic, a deployment of knowledge and power which, insofar as it is a tactic, is transferable and eventually becomes the law governing the formation of a knowledge and, at the same time, the general form of the political battle. So the discourse on history is generalized, but in a tactical sense.

The second process we see taking shape at the time of the Revolution is the way in which this tactic is deployed in three directions which correspond to three different battles and produce three rather different tactics: One is centered on nationalities, and is therefore essentially in continuity with the phenomena of language and, therefore, philology; the second centers on social classes, views economic domination as the central phenomenon, and is therefore closely related to political economy; the third direction, finally, is centered on neither nationalities nor classes, but upon race, and views biological specification and selection as the central phenomenon; there is, then, a continuity between this historical discourse and the biological problematic. Philology, political economy, biology. Language, labor, life.[1] We will see all this being reinvested in or rearticulated around this historical knowledge and the tactics that are bound up with it.

The first thing I would like to talk to you about today is therefore this tactical generalization of historical knowledge; how was it displaced from its place of birth—the nobiliary reaction of the early eighteenth century—and how did it become an instrument that could be used in all the political struggles of the late eighteenth century, no matter how we look at them? Our first question concerns the reasons for this tactical polyvalence: How and why did such a particular instrument, such a singular discourse which sang the praises of invaders, become a general instrument to be used in the political tactics and confrontations of the eighteenth century?

I think the explanation is something along these lines. Boulainvilliers made national duality history's principle of intelligibility. Intelligibility meant three things. Boulainvilliers was primarily interested in finding the initial conflict (battle, war, conquest, invasion, et cet-

era), the nucleus of war from which he could derive all the other battles, struggles, and confrontations because they were either its direct effects or the result of a series of displacements, modifications, or reversals of the relationship of force. So, a sort of great genealogy of the struggles that go on in all the various conflicts recorded by history. How could he find the basic struggle, trace the strategic thread running through all these battles? The historical intelligibility that Boulainvilliers wanted to supply also meant that he not only had to locate that basic kernel of war and the way in which every conflict derived from it; he also had to trace the betrayals, the unnatural alliances, the ruses that were used on all sides, all the negations of right, all the inadmissible calculations, and all the unforgivable lapses of memory that made possible this transformation, and, at the same time, the watering down of that relationship of force and that basic confrontation. He had to undertake a sort of great examination of history ("who's to blame?") and therefore trace not only the strategic thread, but also the line—sometimes sinuous but never broken—of ethical divisions that runs through history. Historical intelligibility also had a third meaning; it meant getting beyond these tactical displacements and all these historico-ethical misappropriations in order to demonstrate that a certain relationship of force was both right and fair. Boulainvilliers was concerned with the true relationship of force—in the sense that he had to rediscover a relationship of force that was not ideal but real, and that had, in this case, been recorded and inscribed by history in the course of a decisive ordeal by strength: the Frankish invasion of Gaul. A relationship of force, then, that was historically true and historically real and which was, secondly, a good relationship of force because it could be extricated from all the distortions to which betrayals and various displacements had subjected it. The theme of his search for historical intelligibility was this: to rediscover a state of affairs that was a state of force in its primal rightness. And you will find that Boulainvilliers and his successors formulate this project very clearly. Boulainvilliers, for example, said: We have to relate our modern customs to their true origins, discover the principles of the nation's common right, and then look at what

has changed over time. A few years later, Buat-Nançay would say that if we can understand the primitive spirit of government, we will be able to lend a new vigor to certain laws, moderate those laws that are so vigorous as to shift the balance, and reestablish harmony and social relations.

This project of analyzing the intelligibility of history therefore implies three tasks: finding the strategic thread, tracing the thread of ethical divisions, and reestablishing the rectitude of what might be called the "constituent point" of politics and history, or the constituent moment of the kingdom. I say "constituent point" or "constituent moment" so as to try to avoid, without erasing it altogether, the word "constitution." As you can see, it is indeed a matter of constitution; the point of studying history is to reestablish the constitution, but not at all in the sense of an explicit body of laws that were formulated at some given moment. Nor is the goal to rediscover a sort of foundational juridical convention which, at some point in time—or architime—had been established between the king, the sovereign, and his subjects. The point is to rediscover something that has its own consistency and its own historical situation, and it is not so much of the order of the law as of the order of force, not so much of the order of the written word as of the order of an equilibrium. This something is a constitution, but almost in the sense that a doctor would understand that term, or in other words, in the sense of a relationship of force, an equilibrium and interplay of proportions, a stable dissymmetry or a congruent inequality. When eighteenth-century doctors evoked the notion of "constitution," they were talking about all these things.[2] We can see this idea of a "constitution"—in both the medical and the military sense—taking shape in the historical literature relating to the nobiliary reaction. It designates both a relationship of force between good and evil, and a relationship of force between adversaries. If we are able to understand and reestablish a basic relationship of force, we will be able to get back to this constituent point. We have to establish a constitution, and we will not get back to that constitution by reestablishing the laws of old, but thanks to something resembling a revolution—a revolution in the

sense of a transition from night to day, from the lowest point to the highest point. From Boulainvilliers onward—and this is, I think, the important point—it is the linking together of the two notions of constitution and revolution that makes this possible. So long as historico-juridical literature, which had essentially been written by the *parlementaires,* understood "constitution" to mean essentially the basic laws of the kingdom, or in other words, a juridical apparatus or something of the order of a convention, it was obvious that the return of the constitution meant swearing an oath to reestablish the laws that had been revealed. Once "constitution" no longer meant a juridical armature or a set of laws, but a relationship of force, it was quite obvious that such a relationship of force could not be reestablished on the basis of nothing; it could be reestablished only when there existed something resembling a cyclical historical pattern, or at least something that allowed history to revolve around itself and brought it back to its starting point. You can therefore see how this medico-military idea of a constitution, or in other words, a relationship of force, reintroduces something resembling a cyclical philosophy of history, or at least the idea that the development of history is circular. And when I say that his idea "is introduced," I am really saying that it is reintroduced at the point where the old millenarian theme of the return of the past intersects with an articulated historical knowledge.

This philosophy of history as philosophy of cyclical time becomes possible from the eighteenth century onward, or in other words, once the two notions of a constitution and a relationship of force become established. With Boulainvilliers, we see—I think for the first time—the idea of a cyclical history appearing within an articulated historical discourse. Empires, says Boulainvilliers, rise and fall into decadence depending on how the light of the sun shines upon their territory.[3] The revolution of the sun, and the revolution of history: as you can see, the two things are now linked. So we have a pair, a link among three things: constitution, revolution, and cyclical history. That, if you like, is one aspect of the tactical instrument that Boulainvilliers perfected.

Second aspect: When he is looking for the constituent point—which is both good and true—what is Boulainvilliers trying to do? It is quite obvious that he refuses to look for that constituent point in the law, but he also refuses to find it in nature: antijuridicalism (which is what I have just been telling you about), but also naturalism. The great adversary of Boulainvilliers and his successors is nature, or natural man. To put it a different way, the great adversary of this type of analysis (and Boulainvilliers's analyses will become instrumental and tactical in this sense too) is, if you like, natural man or the savage. "Savage" is to be understood in two senses. The savage—noble or otherwise—is the natural man whom the jurists or theorists of right dreamed up, the natural man who existed before society existed, who existed in order to constitute society, and who was the element around which the social body could be constituted. When they look for the constituent point, Boulainvilliers and his successors are not trying to find this savage who, in some sense, exists before the social body. The other thing they are trying to ward off is the other aspect of the savage, that other natural man or ideal element dreamed up by economists: a man without a past or a history, who is motivated only by self-interest and who exchanges the product of his labor for another product. What the historico-political discourse of Boulainvilliers and his successors is trying to ward off is both the savage who emerges from his forests to enter into a contract and to found society, and the savage *Homo economicus* whose life is devoted to exchange and barter. The combination of the savage and exchange is, I think, basic to juridical thought, and not only to eighteenth-century theories of right—we constantly find the savage-exchange couple from the eighteenth-century theory of right to the anthropology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In both the juridical thought of the eighteenth century and the anthropology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the savage is essentially a man who exchanges. He is the exchanger: he exchanges rights and he exchanges goods. Insofar as he exchanges rights, he founds society and sovereignty. Insofar as he exchanges goods, he constitutes a social body which is, at the same time, an economic body. Ever since the eighteenth century,

the savage has been the subject of an elementary exchange. Well, the historico-political discourse inaugurated by Boulainvilliers creates another figure, and he is the antithesis of the savage (who was of great importance in eighteenth-century juridical theory). This new figure is just as elementary as the savage of the jurists (who were soon followed by the anthropologists) but is constituted on a very different basis: he is the barbarian.

The barbarian is the opposite of the savage, but in what sense? First, in this sense: The savage is basically a savage who lives in a state of savagery together with other savages; once he enters a relation of a social kind, he ceases to be a savage. The barbarian, in contrast, is someone who can be understood, characterized, and defined only in relation to a civilization, and by the fact that he exists outside it. There can be no barbarian unless an island of civilization exists somewhere, unless he lives outside it, and unless he fights it. And the barbarian's relationship with that speck of civilization—which the barbarian despises, and which he wants—is one of hostility and permanent warfare. The barbarian cannot exist without the civilization he is trying to destroy and appropriate. The barbarian is always the man who stalks the frontiers of States, the man who stumbles into the city walls. Unlike the savage, the barbarian does not emerge from some natural backdrop to which he belongs. He appears only when civilization already exists, and only when he is in conflict with it. He does not make his entrance into history by founding a society, but by penetrating a civilization, setting it ablaze and destroying it. I think that the first point, or the difference between the barbarian and the savage, is this relationship with a civilization, and therefore with a history that already exists. There can be no barbarian without a pre-existing history: the history of the civilization he sets ablaze. What is more, and unlike the savage, the barbarian is not a vector for exchange. The barbarian is essentially the vector for something very different from exchange: he is the vector for domination. Unlike the savage, the barbarian takes possession and seizes; his occupation is not the primitive cultivation of the land, but plunder. His relationship with property is, in other words, always secondary: he always seizes

existing property; similarly, he makes other serve him. He makes others cultivate his land, tend his horses, prepare his weapons, and so on. His freedom is based solely upon the freedom others have lost. And in his relationship with power, the barbarian, unlike the savage, never surrenders his freedom. The savage is a man who has in his hands, so to speak, a plethora of freedom which he surrenders in order to protect his life, his security, his property, and his goods. The barbarian never gives up his freedom. And when he does acquire a power, acquire a king or elect a chief, he certainly does not do so in order to diminish his own share of right but, on the contrary, to increase his strength, to become an even stronger plunderer, a stronger thief and rapist, and to become an invader who is more confident of his own strength. The barbarian establishes a power in order to increase his own individual strength. For the barbarian, the model government is, in other words, necessarily a military government, and certainly not one that is based upon the contracts and transfer of civil rights that characterize the savage. The type of history established by Boulainvilliers in the eighteenth century is, I think, that of the figure of the barbarian.

So we can well understand why, in modern juridico-anthropological thought—and even in today's bucolic and American utopias—the savage is, despite it all and even though it has to be admitted that he has done a few bad things and has a few faults, always the noble savage. Indeed, how could he not be noble, given that his specific function is to exchange and to give—in accordance with his own best interests, obviously, but in a form of reciprocity in which we can, if you like, recognize the acceptable—and juridical—form of goodness? The barbarian, in contrast, has to be bad and wicked, even if we have to admit that he does have certain qualities. He has to be full of arrogance and has to be inhuman, precisely because he is not the man of nature and exchange; he is the man of history, the man of pillage and fires, he is the man of domination. "A proud, brutal people, without a homeland, and without laws," said Mably (who was, as it happens, very fond of barbarians); "it tolerates atrocious acts of violence because they are regarded as being publicly

acceptable."[4] The soul of the barbarian is great, noble, and proud, but it is always associated with treachery and cruelty (all this is in Mably). Speaking of barbarians, Bonneville said: "[T]hese adventurers lived only for war ... the sword was their right and they exercised it without remorse."[5] And Marat, another great admirer of barbarians, described them as "poor, uncouth, without trade, without arts, but free."[6] The barbarian as natural man? Yes and no. No, in the sense that he is always bound up with a history (and a preexisting history). The barbarian appears against a backdrop of history. And if he is related to nature, said Buat-Nançay (who was getting at his closest enemy, namely Montesquieu), it is because—well, what is the nature of things? "It is the relationship between the sun and the mud it dries, between the thistle and the donkey that feeds on it."[7]

Within this historico-political field where knowledge of weapons is constantly being used as a political instrument, the great tactics that are developed in the eighteenth century can, I think, be characterized by the way they use the four elements present in Boulainvilliers's analysis: constitution, revolution, barbarism, and domination. The problem is basically this: How can we establish the best possible fit between unfettered barbarism on the one hand, and the equilibrium of the constitution we are trying to rediscover on the other? How can we arrive at the right balance of forces, and how can we make use of the violence, freedom, and so on that the barbarian brings with him? In other words, which of the barbarian's characteristics do we have to retain, and which do we have to reject, if we are to get a fair constitution to work? What is there in barbarism that we can make use of? Basically, the problem is that of filtering of the barbarian and barbarism: how can barbarian domination be so filtered as to bring about the constituent revolution? It is this problem, and the different solutions to the problem of the need to filter barbarism so as to bring about the constituent revolution, that will define—both in the field of historical discourse and in this historico-political field—the tactical positions of different groups and the different interests of the nobility, monarchic power, or different tendencies within the bourgeoisie. It will define where the center of the battle lies.

I think that in the eighteenth century, this whole set of historical discourses is overshadowed by this problem: not revolution *or* barbarism, but revolution *and* barbarism, or the economy of barbarism in the revolution. A text someone gave me the other day as I was leaving the lecture, if not proves, at least confirms my belief that this is the case. It is a text by Robert Desnos, and it shows perfectly how, right up to the twentieth century, the problem of revolution *or* barbarism—I almost said socialism or barbarism[8]—is a false problem, and that the real problem is revolution *and* barbarism. I take as my witness this text by Robert Desnos, which appeared, I assume, in *La Révolution surréaliste*—I don't know because no reference is given here. Here is the text. You'd think it was straight from the eighteenth century.

Having come from the shadowy East, the men who had been civilized continued the same westward march as Attila, Tamburlaine and so many other famous men. Any man who can be described as "civilized" was once a barbarian. They were, in other words, the bastard sons of the adventurers of the night, or those the enemy (the Romans, the Greeks) had corrupted. Driven away from the shores of the Pacific and the slopes of the Himalayas, and unfaithful to their mission, they now found themselves facing those who drove them out in the not so distant times of the invasions. Sons of Kalmouk, grandsons of the Huns, if you just stripped off the robes borrowed from a wardrobe in Athens or Thebes, the breastplates collected in Sparta and Rome, you would look as your fathers looked on their little horses. And you Normans who work the land, who fish for sardines and who drink cider, just get back on those flimsy boats that traced a long wake beyond the Arctic Circle before they reached these damp fields and these woods that teem with game. Mob, recognize your master! You thought you could flee it, flee that Orient that drove you away by vesting you with the right to destroy what you could not preserve, and now that you have traveled around the world, you find it snapping at your heels again. I beg you, do not imitate a dog trying to catch its tail:

you would be running after the West forever. Stop. Say something to explain your mission to us, great oriental army, you who have now become *The Westerners*.[9]

Right, in an attempt to resituate in concrete terms the various historical discourses and political tactics from which they derive, Boulainvilliers all at once introduces into history the great blond barbarian, the juridical and historical fact of the invasion, the appropriation of lands and the enslavement of men, and, finally, a very limited royal power. Of all the important and interrelated features that constitute the fact of barbarism's irruption into history, which have to be eliminated? Which have to be retained so as to establish the right relationship of force that will uphold the kingdom? I will look at the three great models that were used to filter barbarism. There were many others in the eighteenth century; I will take these examples because they were, in political terms, and probably in epistemological terms too, the most important, and because each of them corresponds to a very different political position.

The first way of filtering it is the most vigorous, the most absolute, and it tries to allow no aspect of the barbarian into history: this position is an attempt to show that the French monarchy is not descended from some Germanic invasion which brought it to France or which, in some sense, gave birth to it. It attempts to show that the nobility's ancestors were not conquerors from across the Rhine and that the privileges of the nobility—the privileges that placed it between the sovereign and other subjects—were either granted to it later or were usurped by it in some obscure way. In a word, the point is not to relate the privileged nobility to the barbarian horde that founded it, but to avoid the issue of the horde, to make it disappear and to leave the nobility in abeyance—to make it look like both a late and an artificial creation. This thesis is, of course, the thesis of the monarchy, and you will find it in a whole series of historians from Dubos[10] to Moreau.[11]

When articulated as a basic proposition, this thesis gives roughly this: The Franks—says Dubos and then Moreau—are at bottom simply

a myth, an illusion, something that was created from scratch by Boulainvilliers. The Franks never existed, which quite clearly means that the invasion never took place at all. So what did happen? There were invasions, but they were the work of others: the Burgundians invaded, and the Goths invaded, and the Romans could do nothing about it. And it was in the face of these invasions that the Romans appealed—as allies—to a small population that had some military virtues. They were of course the Franks. But the Franks were not greeted as invaders, as great barbarians with a propensity for plunder and domination, but as a small population of useful allies. As a result, they immediately received the rights of citizenship; not only were they immediately made Gallo-Roman citizens; they were also granted the instruments of political power (and in this connection, Dubos recalls that Clovis was, after all, a Roman consul). So there was neither an invasion nor a conquest, but there was immigration and there was an alliance. There was no invasion, but it cannot even be said that there was a Frankish people, with its own legislation or customs. First, there were quite simply too few of them, says Dubos, for them to able to treat the Gauls "as Turk to Moor"[12] and to force them to adopt their habits and customs. Being lost in the midst of the Gallo-Roman masses, they could not even preserve their own habits. So they literally dissolved. And besides, how could they fail to be dissolved into this Gallo-Roman political apparatus, given that they really had no understanding of either administration or government? Dubos even claims that their art of war had been borrowed from the Romans. Be that as it may, the Franks were careful not to destroy the mechanisms of what Dubos calls the admirable administration of Roman Gaul. Dubos says that the Franks did not alter the nature of anything in Roman Gaul. Order triumphed. So the Franks were absorbed and their king simply remained, so to speak, at the pinnacle of, on the surface of, a Gallo-Roman edifice that could scarcely be penetrated by a few immigrants of Germanic origin. So the king alone remained at the pinnacle of the edifice, precisely because he was a king who had the Caesarian rights of the Roman emperor. There was, in other words, no barbarian-type aristocracy, as Boulainvilliers believed. The absolute monarch ap-

peared immediately. And it was several centuries later that the break occurred, that something like the invasion's analogue took place, but it was a sort of invasion from within.[13]

At this point, Dubos's analysis moves on to the end of the Carolingian period and the beginning of the Capetian period, where he detects a weakening of the central power, of the Caesar-like absolute power that the Merovingians initially enjoyed. The officers appointed by the king, on the other hand, illegitimately acquired more and more power; they treated everything that came within their administrative remit as though it were their fief, as though it were their own property. And so it was that this decomposition of central power gave birth to something known as feudalism. As you can see, this feudalism was a late phenomenon, and it was related not to the invasion, but to the destruction from within of central power. It was an effect, and it had the same effects as an invasion, but it was an invasion that was launched from within by people who had usurped a power that had been delegated to them. "The dismembering of sovereignty and the transformation of offices into seigneuries"—I am citing a text by Dubos—"had very similar effects to a foreign invasion, created a domineering caste between the king and the people, and turned Gaul into a land that really had been conquered."[14] Dubos rediscovers elements that were, according to Boulainvilliers, typical of what happened at the time of the Franks—invasion, conquest, and domination—but he sees them as internal phenomena due—or correlative—to the birth of an aristocracy. And as you see, it was an aristocracy that was artificial, and completely protected from, completely independent of, the Frankish invasion and the barbarism that came with it. And so the struggles against this conquest began: struggles against this usurpation and this invasion from within. The monarch and the towns which had retained the freedom of the Roman *municipes* will fight side by side against the feudal lords.

In the discourse of Dubos, Moreau, and all the monarchist historians, you have a complete inversion of Boulainvilliers's discourse, but they also transform it in one important sense. The focus of the historical analysis is displaced from the fact of the invasion and the early

Merovingians to this other fact: the birth of feudalism and the first Capetians. You can also see—and this is important—that the invasion of the nobility is analyzed not as the effect of a military invasion and of the irruption of barbarism, but as the result of usurpation from within. The fact of the conquest is still there, but it is stripped of its barbarian context and the right-effects that might have resulted from the military victory. The nobles are not barbarians, but they are crooks, political crooks. Here we have the first position, the first tactical—and inverted—use that is made of Boulainvilliers's discourse.

Now for another, different way of filtering barbarism. The goal of this different type of discourse is to dissociate a Germanic freedom, or in other words, a barbarian freedom, from the exclusive nature of the privileges of the aristocracy. Its goal is, in other words—and to this extent, this thesis, this tactic remains very close to Boulainvilliers's—to go on laying claim to the freedoms the barbarians and Franks brought to France by resisting the Roman absolutism of the monarchy. The hairy bands from across the Rhine did indeed enter Gaul, and they did bring their freedoms with them. These hairy bands were not, however, bands of German warriors who made up the nucleus of an aristocracy that remained an aristocracy within the body of Gallo-Roman society. Those who flooded in were certainly warriors, but they were also a whole people in arms. The political and social form that was introduced into Gaul was not that of an aristocracy but, on the contrary, that of a democracy, that of the widest possible democracy. You will find this thesis in Mably,[15] in Bonneville,[16] and even in Marat, in *Les Chaînes de l'esclavage*. So, the barbarian democracy of the Franks, who know no form of aristocracy, and who know only an egalitarian people of soldier-citizens. "A proud, brutal people with no homeland and no law," said Mably,[17] and every citizen-soldier had only his booty to live on, but would not tolerate any kind of punishment. There is no consistent authority over this people, no rational or constituted authority. And according to Mably, it was this brutal, barbarian democracy that was established in Gaul. And its establishment was the basis, the starting point for a series of processes. The avidity and egoism of the barbarian Franks, which were virtues when

it was a matter of crossing the Rhine and invading Gaul, become vices once they settled there: the Franks are no long interested in anything but looting and pillage. They neglect both the exercise of power and the yearly March or May gatherings which placed permanent controls on royal power. They allow the king to do as he likes, and they allow a monarchy, which has absolutist tendencies, to establish itself over them. And according to Mably, the clergy—though this was presumably a reflection of its ignorance and not its cunning—interprets Germanic customs in terms of Roman right: they believe themselves to be the subjects of a monarchy, when they are in fact the body of a republic.

The sovereign's officer-officials also acquire more and more power. And so we begin to move away from the general democracy that Frankish barbarism had brought with it, and toward a system which is both monarchic and aristocratic. This is a slow process, and there is a moment of reaction. This occurs when Charlemagne, who felt increasingly dominated and threatened by the aristocracy, once more turns for support to the people his predecessors had neglected. Charlemagne reestablishes the Champ de Mars and the May gatherings; he allows everyone, including nonwarriors, to attend the assemblies. For a brief moment we have, then, a return to Germanic democracy, and the slow process that leads to the disappearance of democracy begins again after this brief interlude. Twin figures now appear. On the one hand, that of a monarchy, [the monarchy of Hugh Capet]. How does the monarchy succeed in establishing itself? It can do so to the extent that the aristocrats reject barbarian and Frankish democracy and agree to choose a king who has increasingly absolutist tendencies; on the other hand, the Capetians reward the nobles for having consecrated Hugh Capet king by putting them in charge of the administration and turning the offices with which they had been entrusted into fiefs. The complicity between the nobles who created the king and the king who created feudalism thus gives birth to the twin figures of a monarchy and an aristocracy, and they dominate a barbarian democracy. Germanic democracy is thus the starting point for a twofold process. The aristocracy and the absolute monarchy will

of course eventually come into conflict, but it must not be forgotten that, basically, they are twin sisters.

Third type of discourse, third type of analysis, and, at the same time, third tactic. This is the most subtle tactic and, in historical terms, the most successful, even though, at the time of its formulation, it had much less impact than the theses of Dubos or Mably. The goal of this third tactical operation is to make a distinction between two forms of barbarism: the barbarism of the Germans will become the bad barbarism from which we have to be freed; and then there is a good barbarism, or the barbarism of the Gauls, which is the only real source of freedom. This performs two important operations: on the one hand, freedom and Germanity, which had been linked together by Boulainvilliers, are dissociated; on the other, Romanity and absolutism are dissociated. We will, in other words, find in Roman Gaul elements of the freedom which, as all previous theses had more or less accepted, had been imported by the Franks. Broadly speaking, Mably arrived at his thesis by transforming Boulainvilliers's thesis: German freedoms were destroyed democratically. Bréquigny,[18] Chapsal,[19] and others arrive at this new thesis by intensifying and displacing the sort of passing comment Dubos made when he said that the king and then the towns, which had resisted feudal usurpation, rebelled against feudalism.

The Bréquigny-Chapsal thesis, which will, because it is so important, become that of the bourgeois historians of the nineteenth century (Augustin Thierry, Guizot), basically consists in saying that there were two tiers to the political system of the Romans. At the level of central government, of the great Roman administration, we are, of course—at least from the time of the empire onward—dealing with an absolute power. But the Romans left the Gauls to enjoy their own primal freedoms. As a result, Roman Gaul was indeed in one sense part of a great absolutist empire, but it was also permeated or penetrated by a whole series of pockets of freedom: the Gaulish or Celtic freedoms of old. The Romans left them alone, and they continued to function in the towns, or in the famous *municipes* of the Roman Empire where the archaic freedoms, the ancestral freedoms of the Gauls and

the Celts, continued to function in forms that were, as it happens, more or less borrowed from the old Roman city. Freedom is therefore a phenomenon that is compatible with Roman absolutism (and this is, I think, the first time this argument appears in these historical analyses); it is a Gaulish phenomenon, but it is above all an urban phenomenon. Freedom belongs to the towns. And it is to the precise extent that it belongs to the towns that freedom can struggle and become a political force. The towns will of course be destroyed when the Frankish and Germanic invasions take place. But, being nomadic peasants or at least barbarians, the Franks and Germans neglect the towns and settle in the countryside. So the towns, which were neglected by the Franks, are rebuilt and enjoy a new prosperity at this point. When feudalism is established at the end of the reign of the Carolingians, the great secular-ecclesiastical lords will of course try to get their hands on the reconstituted wealth of the cities. But at this point, the towns, which had grown historically strong thanks to their wealth and their freedoms, but thanks also to the fact that they formed a community, are able to struggle, resist, and rebel. Hence all the great rebellious movements that develop in the free towns during the reign of the first Capetians. And they eventually forced both royal power and the aristocracy to respect their rights and, to a certain extent, their laws, their type of economy, their forms of life, their customs, and so on. This happened in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

So you see, this time we have a thesis which, much more than previous theses and even more than Mably's thesis, will become the thesis of the Third Estate, because this is the first time that the history of the town, the history of urban institutions, and the history of wealth and its political effects could be articulated within a historical analysis. This history creates, or at least begins to create, a Third Estate that is a product not merely of the concessions granted by the king, but of its own energy, its wealth, its trade, and of a highly sophisticated urban law that is in part borrowed from Roman law, but which is also articulated with the freedom of old, or in other words, the Gaulish barbarism of old. From this point onward, and

for the first time, a Romanity which, in the historical and political thought of the eighteenth century, had always been tinged with absolutism and had always been on the side of the king, now becomes tinged with liberalism. And far from being the theatrical form in which royal power reflects its history, Romanity will, thanks to the analyses I am discussing, become an issue for the bourgeoisie itself. The bourgeoisie will be able to recuperate—in the form of the Gallo-Roman *municeps*—a Romanity that supplies, so to speak, its letters of nobility. The Gallo-Roman municipality is the Third Estate's nobility. And it is this municipality, this autonomy, and this form of municipal freedom that the Third Estate will demand. All this must, of course, be seen in the context of the debate that took place in the eighteenth century around, precisely, municipal freedoms and autonomy. I refer you, for example, to a text by Turgot that dates from 1776.[20] But you can also see that on the eve of the Revolution, Romanity can also lose all the monarchist and absolutist connotations it had had throughout the eighteenth century. A liberal Romanity becomes possible, and even those who are not monarchists or absolutists can revert to it. Even the bourgeois can revert to Romanity. And as you know, the Revolution will have no hesitation in doing so.

The other important thing about the discourse of Bréquigny, Chapsal, and the rest of them is that it allows, you see, the historical field to be greatly extended. With the English historians of the seventeenth century, and with Boulainvilliers too, we basically start with the small nucleus of the invasion, with the few decades, or at most the century, during which the barbarian hordes flooded into Gaul. So you see, we have a gradual extension of the field. We have seen, for instance, the importance Mably ascribes to a figure such as Charlemagne; we have also seen how Dubos extended the historical analysis to include the early Capetians and feudalism. With the analyses of Bréquigny, Chapsal, and others, the domain of historically useful and politically productive knowledge can, on the one hand, be extended upward, as it now goes back to the municipal organization of the Romans and, ultimately, to the ancient freedoms of the Gauls and the Celts. On the other hand, history can be extended downward to include all the

struggles, all the urban rebellions which, ever since the beginning of feudalism, led to the emergence, or at least the partial emergence, of the bourgeoisie as an economic and political force in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The field of historical and political debate now covers one and a half thousand years of history. The juridical and historical fact of the invasion has now been completely shattered, and we are now dealing with an immense field of generalized struggles covering fifteen hundred years of history and involving a great variety of actors: kings, the nobility, the clergy, soldiers, royal officers, the Third Estate, the bourgeoisie, the peasants, the townspeople, and so on. This is a history that takes as its support institutions such as Roman freedoms, municipal freedoms, the church, education, trade, language, and so on. A general explosion in the field of history; and it is in this precise field that the historians of the nineteenth century will begin their work.

You might ask: Why all the details, why locate these different tactics within the field of history? It is true that I could quite simply have moved directly on to Augustin Thierry, Montlosier, and all the others who used this instrumentation of knowledge to try to think about the revolutionary phenomenon. I lingered over this for two reasons. First, for methodological reasons. As you have seen, one can very easily, from Boulainvilliers onward, trace the constitution of a historical and political discourse whose domain of objects, pertinent elements, concepts, and methods of analysis are all closely interrelated. The eighteenth century saw the formation of a sort of historical discourse which was common to a whole series of historians, even though their theses, hypotheses, and political dreams were very different. One can quite easily, and without any breaks at all, trace the entire network of basic propositions that subtend each type of analysis: all the transformations that take us from a history that [praises] the Franks (such as Mably, such as Dubos) to the very different history of Frankish democracy. One can quite easily move from one of these histories to the next by identifying a few very simple transpositions at the level of their basic propositions. We have then all these historical discourses, and they form a very closely woven web, no matter what

their historical theses or political objectives may be. Now the fact that this epistemic web is so tightly woven certainly does not mean that everyone is thinking along the same lines. It is in fact a precondition for not thinking along the same lines or for thinking along different lines; and it is that which makes the differences politically pertinent. If different subjects are to be able to speak, to occupy different tactical positions, and if they are to be able to find themselves in mutually adversarial positions, there has to be a tight field, there has to be a very tightly woven network to regularize historical knowledge. As the field of knowledge becomes more regular, it becomes increasingly possible for the subjects who speak within it to be divided along strict lines of confrontation, and it becomes increasingly possible to make the contending discourses function as different tactical units within overall strategies (which are not simply a matter of discourse and truth, but also of power, status, and economic interests). The tactical reversibility of the discourse is, in other words, directly proportional to the homogeneity of the field in which it is formed. It is the regularity of the epistemological field, the homogeneity of the discourse's mode of formation, that allows it to be used in struggles that are extradiscursive. That, then, is the methodological reason why I emphasized that the different discursive tactics are distributed across a historico-political field that is coherent, regular, and very tightly woven.[21]

I also stress it for a second reason—a factual reason—pertaining to what happened at the time of the Revolution. What I mean is this: Leaving aside the last form of discourse that I have just been telling you about (Bréquigny or Chapsal), you can see that, basically, those who had the least interest in investing their political projects in history were of course the people of the bourgeoisie or the Third Estate, because going back to a constitution or demanding a return to something resembling an equilibrium of forces implies in some way that you know where you stand in that equilibrium of forces. Now it was quite obvious that the Third Estate or the bourgeoisie could scarcely, at least until the middle of the Middle Ages, identify itself as a historical subject within the play of relations of force. So long as history

concentrated on the Merovingians, the Carolingians, the Frankish invaders, or even Charlemagne, how could it find anything relating to the Third Estate or the bourgeoisie? Which is why, whatever has been said to the contrary, the bourgeoisie was, in the eighteenth century, certainly the class that was most hostile, most resistant to history. In a profound sense, it was the aristocracy that was historical. The monarch was historical, and so too were the *parlementaires*. But for a long time, the bourgeoisie remained antihistoricist or, if you like, antihistoric.

The antihistoric character of the bourgeoisie manifests itself in two ways. First, throughout the whole of the first half of the eighteenth century, the bourgeoisie tended to be in favor of an enlightened despotism, or in other words, of a way of moderating monarchical power that was not grounded in history but in the restrictions imposed by knowledge, philosophy, technology, and administration. And then in the second half of the eighteenth century, and especially before the Revolution, the bourgeoisie tried to escape the ambient historicism by demanding a constitution which was precisely not a re-constitution and which was essentially, if not antihistorical, at least ahistorical. Hence, as you can understand, the recourse to natural right, the recourse to something like the social contract. The Rousseauism of the bourgeoisie at the end of the eighteenth century, before and during the Revolution, was a direct response to the historicism of the other political subjects who were fighting in the field of theory and historical analysis. Being a Rousseauist, appealing to the savage and appealing to the contract, was a way of escaping an entire landscape that had been defined by the barbarian, his history, and his relationship with civilization.

This antihistoricism of the bourgeoisie obviously did not remain unchanged, and it was no obstacle to a complete rearticulation of history. You will see that at the moment when the Estates General were called, the registers of grievances are full of historical references, but the most important are, of course, those made by the nobility itself. And when the bourgeoisie in its turn reactivated a whole series of historical knowledges, it was simply responding to the multiple

references that had been made to the capitulars, to the Edict of Piste,[22] and to the practices of the Merovingians and the Carolingians. It was a sort of polemical reply to the multiplicity of historical references you find in the nobility's register of grievances. And then you have a second reactivation of history, which is probably more important and more interesting. I refer to the reactivation, during the Revolution itself, of a certain number of moments or historical forms that function as, if you like, the splendors of history. Their reappearance in the Revolution's vocabulary, institutions, signs, manifestations, festivals made it possible to visualize it as a cycle and a return.

So the juridical Rousseauism that had long been its main theme led, in some sense, to the reactivation of two great historical forms during the Revolution. On the one hand, you have the reactivation of Rome, or rather of the Roman city, or in other words, of an archaic Rome that was both republican and virtuous, rather than the Gallo-Roman city with its freedoms and its prosperity. Hence the Roman festival, or the political ritualization of a historical form which, in constitutional or basic terms, derived from those freedoms. The other figure to be reactivated is that of Charlemagne; we have seen the role Mably gave him and how he became the point where Frankish and Gallo-Roman freedoms merged; Charlemagne was the man who summoned the people to the Champ de Mars. Charlemagne as sovereign-warrior, but also as the protector of trade and the towns. Charlemagne as both Germanic king and Roman emperor. Right from the beginning of the Revolution, a whole Carolingian dream unfolds, and it goes on unfolding throughout the Revolution, but much less has been said about it than about the Roman festival. The festival held on the Champ de Mars on 14 July 1789 is a Carolingian festival; it takes place on the Champ de Mars itself, and it permits the reconstitution or reactivation of a certain relationship between the people gathered there and their sovereign. And the modality of that relationship is Carolingian. That kind of implicit historical vocabulary is at least present in the festival of 14 July 1789. The best proof of that is that in June 1789, or a few weeks before the festival, someone in the Jacobin Club demanded that in the course of the festival, Louis

XVI should forfeit the title of king, that the title of king should be replaced by that of emperor, that when he passed by, the cry should not be "Long live the king!" but "Louis the Emperor!" because the man who is emperor *"imperat sed not regit"*: he commands but does not govern, because he is an emperor and not a king. According to this project, Louis XVI should return from the Champ de Mars with the imperial crown on his head.[23] And it is of course at the point where the Carolingian dream (which is not very well known) and the Roman dream meet that we find the Napoleonic empire.

The other form of historical reactivation that we find in the Revolution is the execration of feudalism, or of what Antraigues, a noble who had rallied to the bourgeoisie, called "the most terrible scourge that heaven, in its anger, could have visited upon a free nation."[24] Now, this execration of feudalism takes several forms. First, a straightforward inversion of Boulainvilliers's thesis, or the invasion thesis. And so you find texts which say—this one is by Abbé Proyart: "Listen, you Frankish gentlemen. We outnumber you by a thousand to one; we have been your vassals for long enough, now you become our vassals. It pleases us to come into the heritage of our fathers."[25] That is what Abbé Proyart wanted the Third Estate to say to the nobility. And in his famous text on the Third Estate, to which I will come back next time, Sieyès said: "Why not send them all back to the forests of Franconia, all these families that still make the insane claim that they are descended from a race of conquerors, and that they have inherited the right of conquest?"[26] And in either 1795 or 1796—I can't remember—Boulay de la Meurthe said, after the mass emigration of the nobility: "The émigrés represent the last vestiges of a conquest from which the French nation has gradually liberated itself."[27]

What you see taking shape here will be just as important in the early nineteenth century: the French Revolution—and the political and social struggles that went on during it—are being reinterpreted in terms of the history of races. And it is no doubt this execration of feudalism that supplies the context for the ambiguous celebration of the gothic that we see appearing in the famous medieval novels of the revolutionary period, in those gothic novels that are at once tales of

terror, fear, and mystery, and political novels. They are always about
the abuse of power and exactions; they are fables about unjust sov-
ereigns, pitiless and bloodthirsty seigneurs, arrogant priests, and so
on. The gothic novel is both science fiction and politics fiction: politics
fiction in the sense that these novels essentially focus on the abuse of
power, and science fiction in the sense that their function is to re-
activate, at the level of the imaginary, a whole knowledge about feu-
dalism, a whole knowledge about the gothic—a knowledge that has,
basically, a golden age. It was not literature and it was not the imag-
ination that introduced the themes of the gothic and feudalism at the
end of the eighteenth century, and they were neither new nor reno-
vated in any absolute sense. They were in fact inscribed in the order
of the imaginary to the precise extent that the gothic and feudalism
had been an issue in what was now a hundred-year-long struggle at
the level of knowledge and forms of power. Long before the first
gothic novel, almost a century before it, there had been arguments
over what the feudal lords, their fiefs, their powers, and their forms
of domination meant in both historical and political terms. The whole
of the eighteenth century was obsessed with the problem of feudalism
at the level of right, history, and politics. And it was only at the time
of the Revolution—or a hundred years after all that work had been
done at the level of knowledge and the level of politics—that there
was finally a taking up again of these themes, at the level of the
imaginary, in these science-fiction and politics-fiction novels. It was
in this domain, therefore, that you had the gothic novel. But all this
has to be situated in the context of the history of knowledge and of
the political tactics that it makes possible. And so, next time, I will
talk to you about history as a reworking of the Revolution.

1. This is obviously a reworking and genealogical reformulation of the fields of knowledge
   and forms of discursivity that Foucault discusses in "archaeological" terms in *Les Mots
   et les choses* (*The Order of Things*).
2. The medical doctrine of "constitution" has a long history, but Foucault is presumably
   referring to the anatomo-pathological theory that was formulated in the eighteenth cen-
   tury on the basis of the work of Sydenham, Le Brun, and Bordeu, and which was further
   developed in the first half of the nineteenth century by Bichat and the Paris school. See
   Naissance de la clinique (*Birth of the Clinic*).
3. In his discussion of the "decline" and "decadence" of ancient Rome in his *Essai sur la
   noblesse de France contenant une dissertation sur son origine et abaissement* (which was probably
   written in about 1700, and which was published in 1730 in his *Continuation des mémoires
   de littérature*, vol. 10), Boulainvilliers accepts that decadence is "the common destiny of
   all States that exist for a long time," and then adds: "The world is the plaything of a
   continuous succession; why should the nobility and its privileges be an exception to the
   general rule?" Nevertheless, he remarks of this succession that "One of our children will
   no doubt pierce the darkness in which we live and restore its ancient luster to our
   name" (p. 85). A contemporary version of the idea of a cycle is also to be found in G. B.
   Vico's *Scienza nuova* (Naples, 1725). In his *Astrologie mondiale* of 1711 (which was published
   by Renée Simon in 1949), Boulainvilliers formulates what might be called the pre-
   Hegelian idea of "the transfer of monarchies from one country or nation to another."
   This, according to Boulainvilliers, involves an "order" in which "nothing is ever fixed,
   because no society will endure forever and because the greatest and most feared empires
   are subject to destruction by the same means as those who created them; other societies
   will be born of them, will wear them down by force and persuasion, will conquer the
   old societies and subdue them in their turn" (pp. 141-42).
4. "A proud, brutal people without a homeland and without laws... The French could
   even tolerate atrocious acts of violence on the part of their chief because, for them, they
   were in keeping with public morals." G. B. de Mably, *Observations sur l'histoire de France*
   (Paris, 1823), chap. 1, p. 6 (first ed., Geneva, 1765).
5. N. de Bonneville, *Histoire de l'Europe moderne depuis l'irruption des peuples du Nord dans
   l'Empire romain jusqu'à la paix de 1738* (Geneva, 1789), vol. 1, part 1, p. 20. The quotation
   ends: "The sword was their right, and they exercised it without remorse, as though it
   were a natural right."
6. "Poor, uncouth, without trade, without art, without industry, but free." *Les Chaines de
   l'esclavage. Ouvrage destiné à développer les noirs attentats des princes contre le peuple* (chapter
   entitled "Des vices de la constitution politique"), an I (reprinted: Paris: Union générale
   des éditions, 1988), p. 30.
7. C. L.G. comte du Buat-Nançay, *Éléments de la politique*, vol. 1, book 1, chaps. 1-11, "De
   l'égalité des hommes." We have been unable to trace this quotation (if it is a quotation),
   but this could be its context.
8. Foucault is alluding to the study group which, from 1948 onward, began to gather around
   Cornelius Castoriadis and which began to publish *Socialisme ou barbarie* in 1949. The
   journal ceased publication in 1965, with issue 40. Under the leadership of Castoriadis
   and Claude Lefort, this group of dissident Trotskyists, activists, and intellectuals (who
   included Edgar Morin, Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Laplanche, and Gérard Genette)
   developed such themes as the critique of the Soviet regime, the question of direct de-
   mocracy, and the critique of reformism.
9. Robert Desnos, "Description d'une révolte prochaine," *La Révolution surréaliste*, no. 3,
   April 1925, p. 25; reprinted in *La Révolution surréaliste* (*1924-1929*) (Paris, 1975 [facsimile
   edition]).

10. J.-N. Dubos, *Histoire critique de l'établissement de la monarchie française dans les Gaules* (Paris, 1734).

11. J.-N. Moreau, *Leçons de morale, de politique et de droit public, puisées dans l'histoire de la monarchie* (Versailles, 1773); *Exposé historique des administrations populaires aux plus anciennes époques de notre monarchie* (Paris, 1789); *Défense de notre constitution monarchique française, précédée de l'Histoire de toutes nos assemblées nationales* (Paris, 1789).

12. An old expression meaning "to treat someone as the Turks treat the Moors." Dubos writes: "I ask the reader to pay particular attention to the natural humor of the inhabitants of Gaul, who, in the absence of any proof to the contrary, have never been regarded in any century as being stupid or cowardly: as we shall see, it is impossible for a handful of Franks to treat the one million Romans living in Gaul *de turc à Maure.*" *Histoire critique,* vol. 4, book 6, pp. 212-13.

13. For Dubos's critique of Boulainvilliers, see ibid., chaps. 8 and 9.

14. It seems that only the last sentence is a direct quotation. Having spoken of the usurpation of royal offices and of how the commissions granted to the dukes and counts were converted into hereditary dignities, Dubos writes: "It was at this time that the Gauls became a conquered land." Ibid., book 4, p. 290 (1742 ed.).

15. G.-B. de Mably, *Observations sur l'histoire de France.*

16. N. de Bonneville, *Histoire de l'Europe moderne depuis l'irruption des peuples du Nord.*

17. Mably, *Observations,* p. 6.

18. L. G. O. F. de Bréquigny, *Diplomata, chartae, epistolae et alia monumenta ad res franciscas spectantia* (Paris, 1679-1783); *Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisième race* (Paris, vol. 11, 1769, vol. 12, 1776).

19. J.-F. Chapsal, *Discours sur la féodalité et l'allodialité, suivi de Dissertations sur le france-alleu des coutumes d'Auvergne, du Bourbonnais, du Nivernois, de Champagne* (Paris, 1791).

20. R.-J. Turgot, *Mémoire sur les municipalités* (Paris, 1776).

21. This passage makes a significant contribution to the debates and controversies provoked by the concept of the episteme, which Foucault elaborates in *Les Mots et les choses* and then reworks in *L'Archéologie du savoir,* part 4, chap. 6.

22. A council held in Pistes (or Pistres) in 864 under the influence of Archbishop Hincmar. Its resolutions are known as the Edict of Pistes. The organization of the monetary system was discussed, the destruction of castles built by seigneurs was ordered, and several towns were given the right to mint coins. The assembly put Pipin II of Aquitaine on trial and declared that he had forfeited his position.

23. The reference is to a motion put to the Jacobin Club on 17 June 1789. Cf. F.-A. Aulard, *La Société des jacobins* (Paris, 1889-1897), vol. 1, p. 153.

24. E. L. H. L., comte d'Antraigues, *Mémoires sur la constitution des États provinciaux* (Vivarois, 1788), p. 61.

25. L.-B. Proyart, *Vie du Dauphin père de Louis XV* (Paris and Lyon, 1872), vol. 1, pp. 357-58, cited in A. Devyer, *Le Sang épuré,* p. 370.

26. E.-J. Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-État,* chap. 2, pp. 10-11. In the original, the sentence begins: "Why shouldn't it [the Third Estate] ..."

27. A. J. Boulay de la Meurthe, *Rapport présenté le 25 Vendémiaire an VI au Conseil des Cinq-Cents sur les mesures d'ostracisme, d'exil, d'expulsion les plus convenables aux principes de justice et de liberté, et les plus propres à consolider la république,* cited in A. Devyer, *Le Sang épuré,* p. 415.

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The political reworking of the idea of the nation during the Revolution: Sieyès. ~ Theoretical implications and effects on historical discourse. ~ The new history's grids of intelligibility: domination and totalization. ~ Montlosier and Augustin Thierry. ~ Birth of the dialectic.

I THINK THAT IN the eighteenth century it was essentially, and almost exclusively, the discourse of history that made war the primary, and almost exclusive, analyzer of political relations. The discourse of history, then, and not the discourse of right and not the discourse of political theory (with its contracts, its savages, its men of the prairies and the forests, its states of nature and its war of every man against every man, and so on). It was not that; it was the discourse of history. So I would now like to show you how, in a rather paradoxical way, the element of war, which actually constituted historical intelligibility in the eighteenth century, was from the Revolution onward gradually, if not eliminated from the discourse of history, at least reduced, restricted, colonized, settled, scattered, civilized if you like, and up to a point pacified. This is because it was, after all, history (as written by Boulainvilliers, or Buat-Nançay, not that it matters) that conjured up the great threat: the great danger that we would be caught up in a war without end; the great danger that all our relations, whatever they might be, would always be of the order of domination. And it is this twofold threat—a war without