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Theory of sovereignty and operators of domination. - War as analyzer of power relations. - The binary structure of society. - Historico-political discourse, the discourse of perpetual war. - The dialectic and its codifications. - The discourse of race struggle and its transcriptions.

LAST TIME, WE SAID a sort of farewell to the theory of sovereignty insofar as it could—and can—be described as a method for analyzing power relations. I would like to show you that the juridical model of sovereignty was not, I believe, able to provide a concrete analysis of the multiplicity of power relations. In fact, it seems to me—to sum it all up in a few words, in three words to be precise—that the theory of sovereignty necessarily tries to establish what I would call a cycle—the subject-to-subject cycle—and to show how a subject—understood as meaning an individual who is naturally endowed (or endowed by nature) with rights, capabilities, and so on—can and must become a subject, this time in the sense of an element that is subjectified in a power relationship. Sovereignty is the theory that goes from subject to subject, that establishes the political relationship between subject and subject. Second, it seems to me that the theory of sovereignty assumes from the outset the existence of a multiplicity of powers that are not powers in the political sense of the term; they are capacities, possibilities, potentials, and it can constitute them as powers in the political sense of the term only if it has in the meantime established

a moment of fundamental and foundational unity between possibilities and powers, namely the unity of power. Whether this unity of power takes on the face of the monarch or the form of the State is irrelevant; the various forms, aspects, mechanisms, and institutions of power will be derived from this unitary power. The multiplicity of powers, in the sense of political powers, can be established and can function only on the basis of this unitary power, which is founded by the theory of sovereignty. Third and finally, it seems to me that the theory of sovereignty shows, or attempts to show, how a power can be constituted, not exactly in accordance with the law, but in accordance with a certain basic legitimacy that is more basic than any law and that allows laws to function as such. The theory of sovereignty is, in other words, the subject-to-subject cycle, the cycle of power and powers, and the cycle of legitimacy and law. So we can say that in one way or another—and depending, obviously, upon the different theoretical schemata in which it is deployed—the theory of sovereignty presupposes the subject; its goal is to establish the essential unity of power, and it is always deployed within the preexisting element of the law. It therefore assumes the existence of three “primitive” elements: a subject who has to be subjectified, the unity of the power that has to be founded, and the legitimacy that has to be respected. Subject, unitary power, and law: the theory of sovereignty comes into play, I think, among these elements, and it both takes them as given and tries to found them. My project—which I immediately abandoned—was to show you how the instrument that politico-psychological analysis acquired almost three or four hundred years ago, or in other words the notion of repression—which does look, rather, as though it was borrowed from Freudianism or Freudo-Marxism—was in fact inscribed in an interpretation of power as sovereignty. To do that would, however, take us back over things that have already been said, so I will move on, though I may come back to this at the end of the year if we have enough time left.

The general project, both in previous years and this year, is to try to release or emancipate this analysis of power from three assump-

tions—of subject, unity, and law—and to bring out, rather than these basic elements of sovereignty, what I would call relations or operators of domination. Rather than deriving powers from sovereignty, we should be extracting operators of domination from relations of power, both historically and empirically. A theory of domination, of dominations, rather than a theory of sovereignty: this means that rather than starting with the subject (or even subjects) and elements that exist prior to the relationship and that can be localized, we begin with the power relationship itself, with the actual or effective relationship of domination, and see how that relationship itself determines the elements to which it is applied. We should not, therefore, be asking subjects how, why, and by what right they can agree to being subjugated, but showing how actual relations of subjugation manufacture subjects. Our second task should be to reveal relations of domination, and to allow them to assert themselves in their multiplicity, their differences, their specificity, or their reversibility; we should not be looking for a sort of sovereignty from which powers spring, but showing how the various operators of domination support one another, relate to one another, at how they converge and reinforce one another in some cases, and negate or strive to annul one another in other cases. I am obviously not saying that great apparatuses of power do not exist, or that we can neither get at them nor describe them. But I do think that they always function on the basis of these apparatuses of domination. To put it in more concrete terms, we can obviously describe a given society's school apparatus or its set of educational apparatuses, but I think that we can analyze them effectively only if we do not see them as an overall unity, only if we do not try to derive them from something like the Statist unity of sovereignty. We can analyze them only if we try to see how they interact, how they support one another, and how this apparatus defines a certain number of global strategies on the basis of multiple subjugations (of child to adult, progeny to parents, ignorance to knowledge, apprentice to master, family to administration, and so on). All these mechanisms and operators of domination are the actual plinth of the global ap-

paratus that is the school apparatus. So, if you like, we have to see the structures of power as global strategies that traverse and use local tactics of domination.

Third and finally, revealing relations of domination rather than the source of sovereignty means this: We do not try to trace their origins back to that which gives them their basic legitimacy. We have to try, on the contrary, to identify the technical instruments that guarantee that they function. So to sum up and to, if not settle the issue for the moment, at least clarify it somewhat: Rather than looking at the three prerequisites of law, unity, and subject—which make sovereignty both the source of power and the basis of institutions—I think that we have to adopt the threefold point of view of the techniques, the heterogeneity of techniques, and the subjugation-effects that make technologies of domination the real fabric of both power relations and the great apparatuses of power. The manufacture of subjects rather than the genesis of the sovereign: that is our general theme. But while it is quite clear that relations of domination provide the access road that leads to the analysis of power, how can we analyze these relations of domination? While it is true that we should be studying domination and not sovereignty, or rather that we should be studying dominations and operators of domination, how can we pursue our analysis of relations of domination? To what extent can a relationship of domination boil down to or be reduced to the notion of a relationship of force? To what extent and how can the relationship of force be reduced to a relationship of war?

That is, so to speak, the preliminary question I would like to look at a bit this year: Can war really provide a valid analysis of power relations, and can it act as a matrix for techniques of domination? You might say to me that we cannot, from the outset, confuse power relations with relations of war. Of course not. I am simply taking an extreme [case] to the extent that war can be regarded as the point of maximum tension, or as force-relations laid bare. Is the power relationship basically a relationship of confrontation, a struggle to the death, or a war? If we look beneath peace, order, wealth, and authority, beneath the calm order of subordinations, beneath the State

and State apparatuses, beneath the laws, and so on, will we hear and discover a sort of primitive and permanent war? I would like to begin by asking this question, not forgetting that we will also have to raise a whole series of other questions. I will try to deal with them in years to come. As a first approximation, we can simply say that they include the following questions. Can the phenomenon of war be regarded as primary with respect to other relations (relations of inequality, dissymmetries, divisions of labor, relations of exploitation, et cetera)? Must it be regarded as primary? Can we and must we group together in the general mechanism, the general form, known as war, phenomena such as antagonism, rivalry, confrontation, and struggles between individuals, groups, or classes? We might also ask whether notions derived from what was known in the eighteenth century and even the nineteenth century as the art of war (strategy, tactics, et cetera) constitute in themselves a valid and adequate instrument for the analysis of power relations. We could, and must, also ask ourselves if military institutions, and the practices that surround them—and in more general terms all the techniques that are used to fight a war—are, whichever way we look at them, directly or indirectly, the nucleus of political institutions. And finally, the first question I would like to study this year is this: How, when, and why was it noticed or imagined that what is going on beneath and in power relations is a war? When, how, and why did someone come up with the idea that it is a sort of uninterrupted battle that shapes peace, and that the civil order—its basis, its essence, its essential mechanisms—is basically an order of battle? Who came up with the idea that the civil order is an order of battle? [...] Who saw war just beneath the surface of peace; who sought in the noise and confusion of war, in the mud of battles, the principle that allows us to understand order, the State, its institutions, and its history?

That, then, is the question I am going to pursue a bit in coming lectures, and perhaps for the rest of the year. Basically, the question can be put very simply, and that is how I began to put it myself: Who, basically, had the idea of inverting Clausewitz's principle, and who thought of saying: "It is quite possible that war is the continu-

ation of politics by other means, but isn't politics itself a continuation of war by other means?" Now I think that the problem is not so much who inverted Clausewitz's principle as it is the question of the principle Clausewitz inverted, or rather of who formulated the principle Clausewitz inverted when he said: "But, after all, war is no more than a continuation of politics." I in fact think—and will attempt to prove—that the principle that war is a continuation of politics by other means was a principle that existed long before Clausewitz, who simply inverted a sort of thesis that had been in circulation since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and which was both diffuse and specific.

So: Politics is the continuation of war by other means. This thesis—and the very existence of this thesis, which predates Clausewitz—contains a sort of historical paradox. We can indeed say, schematically and somewhat crudely, that with the growth and development of States throughout the Middle Ages and up to the threshold of the modern era, we see the practices and institutions of war undergoing a marked, very visible change, which can be characterized thus: The practices and institutions of war were initially concentrated in the hand of a central power; it gradually transpired that in both *de facto* and *de jure* terms, only State powers could wage wars and manipulate the instruments of war. The State acquired a monopoly on war. The immediate effect of this State monopoly was that what might be called day-to-day warfare, and what was actually called "private warfare," was eradicated from the social body, and from relations among men and relations among groups. Increasingly, wars, the practices of war, and the institutions of war tended to exist, so to speak, only on the frontiers, on the outer limits of the great State units, and only as a violent relationship—that actually existed or threatened to exist—between States. But gradually, the entire social body was cleansed of the bellicose relations that had permeated it through and through during the Middle Ages.

So, thanks to the establishment of this State monopoly and to the fact that war was now, so to speak, a practice that functioned only at the outer limits of the State, it tended to become the technical and

professional prerogative of a carefully defined and controlled military apparatus. This led, broadly speaking, to the emergence of something that did not exist as such in the Middle Ages: the army as institution. It is only at the end of the Middle Ages that we see the emergence of a State endowed with military institutions that replace both the day-to-day and generalized practice of warfare, and a society that was perpetually traversed by relations of war. We will have to come back to this development, but I think we can accept it as at least a first historical hypothesis.

So where is the paradox? The paradox arises at the very moment when this transformation occurs (or perhaps immediately afterward). When war was expelled to the limits of the State, or was both centralized in practice and confined to the frontier, a certain discourse appeared. A new discourse, a strange discourse. It was new, first, because it was, I think, the first historico-political discourse on society, and it was very different from the philosophico-juridical discourse that had been habitually spoken until then. And the historico-political discourse that appeared at this moment was also a discourse on war, which was understood to be a permanent social relationship, the ineradicable basis of all relations and institutions of power. And what is the date of birth of this historico-political discourse that makes war the basis of social relations? Symptomatically, it seems, I think—and I will try to prove this to you—to be after the end of the civil and religious wars of the sixteenth century. The appearance of this discourse is, then, by no means the product of a history or an analysis of the civil wars of the sixteenth century. On the contrary, it was already, if not constituted, at least clearly formulated at the beginning of the great political struggles of seventeenth-century England, at the time of the English bourgeois revolution. We then see it reappear in France at the end of the seventeenth century, at the end of the reign of Louis XIV, and in other political struggles—let us say, the rearguard struggle waged by the French aristocracy against the establishment of the great absolute-administrative monarchy. So you see, the discourse was immediately ambiguous. In England it was one of the instruments used in bourgeois, petit bourgeois—and some-

times popular—struggles and polemics against the absolute monarchy, and it was a tool for political organization. It was also an aristocratic discourse directed against that same monarchy. Those who spoke this discourse often bore names that were at once obscure and heterogeneous. In England we find people such as Edward Coke¹ or John Lilburne,² who represented popular movements; in France, too, we find names such as those of Boulainvilliers,³ Freret,⁴ and a gentleman from the Massif Central called the Comte d'Estaing.⁵ The same discourse was then taken up by Sieyès,⁶ but also by Buonarroti,⁷ Augustin Thierry,⁸ and Courtet.⁹ And, finally, you will find it in the racist biologists and eugenicists of the late nineteenth century. It is a sophisticated discourse, a scientific discourse, an erudite discourse spoken by people with dust in their eyes and dust on their fingers, but it is also—as you will see—a discourse that certainly had an immense number of popular and anonymous speakers. What is this discourse saying? Well, I think it is saying this: No matter what philosophico-juridical theory may say, political power does not begin when the war ends. The organization and juridical structure of power, of States, monarchies, and societies, does not emerge when the clash of arms ceases. War has not been averted. War obviously presided over the birth of States: right, peace, and laws were born in the blood and mud of battles. This should not be taken to mean the ideal battles and rivalries dreamed up by philosophers or jurists: we are not talking about some theoretical savagery. The law is not born of nature, and it was not born near the fountains that the first shepherds frequented: the law is born of real battles, victories, massacres, and conquests which can be dated and which have their horrific heroes; the law was born in burning towns and ravaged fields. It was born together with the famous innocents who died at break of day.

This does not, however, mean that society, the law, and the State are like armistices that put an end to wars, or that they are the products of definitive victories. Law is not pacification, for beneath the law, war continues to rage in all the mechanisms of power, even in the most regular. War is the motor behind institutions and order. In the smallest of its cogs, peace is waging a secret war. To put it

another way, we have to interpret the war that is going on beneath peace; peace itself is a coded war. We are therefore at war with one another; a battlefield runs through the whole of society, continuously and permanently, and it is this battlefield that puts us all on one side or the other. There is no such thing as a neutral subject. We are all inevitably someone's adversary.

A binary structure runs through society. And here you see the emergence of something I will try to come back to, as it is very important. The great pyramidal description that the Middle Ages or philosophico-political theories gave of the social body, the great image of the organism or the human body painted by Hobbes, or even the ternary organization (the three orders) that prevailed in France (and to a certain extent a number of other countries in Europe) and which continued to articulate a certain number of discourses, or in any case most institutions, is being challenged by a binary conception of society. This had happened before, but this is the first time the binary conception has been articulated with a specific history. There are two groups, two categories of individuals, or two armies, and they are opposed to each other. And beneath the lapses of memory, the illusions, and the lies that would have us believe that there is a ternary order, a pyramid of subordinations, beneath the lies that would have us believe that the social body is governed by either natural necessities or functional demands, we must rediscover the war that is still going on, war with all its accidents and incidents. Why do we have to rediscover war? Well, because this ancient war is a [...] permanent war. We really do have to become experts on battles, because the war has not ended, because preparations are still being made for the decisive battles, and because we have to win the decisive battle. In other words, the enemies who face us still pose a threat to us, and it is not some reconciliation or pacification that will allow us to bring the war to an end. It will end only to the extent that we really are the victors.

That is a first, and obviously very vague, characterization of this type of discourse. I think that, even on this basis, we can begin to understand why it is important. It is, I think, important because it is

the first discourse in postmedieval Western society that can be strictly described as being historico-political. First because the subject who speaks in this discourse, who says "I" or "we," cannot, and is in fact not trying to, occupy the position of the jurist or the philosopher, or in other words the position of a universal, totalizing, or neutral subject. In the general struggle he is talking about, the person who is speaking, telling the truth, recounting the story, rediscovering memories and trying not to forget anything, well, that person is inevitably on one side or the other: he is involved in the battle, has adversaries, and is working toward a particular victory. Of course, he speaks the discourse of right, asserts a right and demands a right. But what he is demanding and asserting is "his" rights—he says: "We have a right." These are singular rights, and they are strongly marked by a relationship of property, conquest, victory, or nature. It might be the right of his family or race, the right of superiority or seniority, the right of triumphal invasions, or the right of recent or ancient occupations. In all cases, it is a right that is both grounded in history and decentered from a juridical universality. And if this subject who speaks of right (or rather, rights) is speaking the truth, that truth is no longer the universal truth of the philosopher. It is true that this discourse about the general war, this discourse that tries to interpret the war beneath peace, is indeed an attempt to describe the battle as a whole and to reconstruct the general course of the war. But that does not make it a totalizing or neutral discourse; it is always a perspectival discourse. It is interested in the totality only to the extent that it can see it in one-sided terms, distort it and see it from its own point of view. The truth is, in other words, a truth that can be deployed only from its combat position, from the perspective of the sought-for victory and ultimately, so to speak, of the survival of the speaking subject himself.

This discourse established a basic link between relations of force and relations of truth. This also means that the identification of truth with peace or neutrality, or with the median position which, as Jean-Pierre Vernant has clearly demonstrated, was, at least from a certain point onward, a constituent element of Greek philosophy, is being

dissolved.¹⁰ In a discourse such as this, being on one side and not the other means that you are in a better position to speak the truth. It is the fact of being on one side—the decentered position—that makes it possible to interpret the truth, to denounce the illusions and errors that are being used—by your adversaries—to make you believe we are living in a world in which order and peace have been restored. "The more I decenter myself, the better I can see the truth; the more I accentuate the relationship of force, and the harder I fight, the more effectively I can deploy the truth ahead of me and use it to fight, survive, and win." And conversely, if the relationship of force sets truth free, the truth in its turn will come into play—and will, ultimately, be sought—only insofar as it can indeed become a weapon within the relationship of force. Either the truth makes you stronger, or the truth shifts the balance, accentuates the dissymmetries, and finally gives the victory to one side rather than the other. Truth is an additional force, and it can be deployed only on the basis of a relationship of force. The fact that the truth is essentially part of a relationship of force, of dissymmetry, decentering, combat, and war, is inscribed in this type of discourse. Ever since Greek philosophy, philosophico-juridical discourse has always worked with the assumption of a pacified universality, but it is now being seriously called into question or, quite simply, cynically ignored.

We have a historical and political discourse—and it is in that sense that it is historically anchored and politically decentered—that lays a claim to truth and legitimate right on the basis of a relationship of force, and in order to develop that very relationship of force by therefore excluding the speaking subject—the subject who speaks of right and seeks the truth—from juridico-philosophical universality. The role of the person who is speaking is therefore not the role of the legislator or the philosopher who belongs to neither side, a figure of peace and armistices who occupies the position dreamed of by Solon and that Kant was still dreaming of.¹¹ Establishing oneself between the adversaries, in the center and above them, imposing one general law on all and founding a reconciliatory order: that is precisely what this is not about. It is, rather, about establishing a right marked

by dissymmetry, establishing a truth bound up with a relationship of force, a truth-weapon and a singular right. The subject who is speaking is—I wouldn't even say a polemical subject—a subject who is fighting a war. This is one of the first points that makes a discourse of this type important, and it certainly introduced a rift into the discourse of truth and law that had been spoken for thousands of years, for over a thousand years.

Second, this is a discourse that inverts the values, the equilibrium, and the traditional polarities of intelligibility, and which posits, demands, an explanation from below. But in this explanation, the "below" is not necessarily what is clearest and simplest. Explaining things from below also means explaining them in terms of what is most confused, most obscure, most disorderly and most subject to chance, because what is being put forward as a principle for the interpretation of society and its visible order is the confusion of violence, passions, hatreds, rages, resentments, and bitterness; and it is the obscurity of contingencies and all the minor incidents that bring about defeats and ensure victories. This discourse is essentially asking the elliptical god of battles to explain the long days of order, labor, peace, and justice. Fury is being asked to explain calm and order.

So what is the principle that explains history? First, a series of brute facts, which might already be described as physico-biological facts: physical strength, force, energy, the proliferation of one race, the weakness of the other, and so on. A series of accidents, or at least contingencies: defeats, victories, the failure or success of rebellions, the failure or success of conspiracies or alliances; and finally, a bundle of psychological and moral elements (courage, fear, scorn, hatred, forgetfulness, et cetera). Intertwining bodies, passions, and accidents: according to this discourse, that is what constitutes the permanent web of history and societies. And something fragile and superficial will be built on top of this web of bodies, accidents, and passions, this seething mass which is sometimes murky and sometimes bloody: a growing rationality. The rationality of calculations, strategies, and

*The manuscript has "and right."

ruses; the rationality of technical procedures that are used to perpetuate the victory, to silence, or so it would seem, the war, and to preserve or invert the relationship of force. This is, then, a rationality which, as we move upward and as it develops, will basically be more and more abstract, more and more bound up with fragility and illusions, and also more closely bound up with the cunning and wickedness of those who have won a temporary victory. And given that the relationship of domination works to their advantage, it is certainly not in their interest to call any of this into question.

In this schema, we have, then, an ascending axis which is, I believe, very different, in terms of the values it distributes, from the traditional axis. We have an axis based upon a fundamental and permanent irrationality, a crude and naked irrationality, but which proclaims the truth; and, higher up, we have a fragile rationality, a transitory rationality which is always compromised and bound up with illusion and wickedness. Reason is on the side of wild dreams, cunning, and the wicked. At the opposite end of the axis, you have an elementary brutality: a collection of deeds, acts, and passions, and cynical rage in all its nudity. Truth is therefore on the side of unreason and brutality; reason, on the other hand, is on the side of wild dreams and wickedness. Quite the opposite, then, of the discourse that had until now been used to explain right and history. That discourse's attempts at explanation consisted in extracting from all these superficial and violent accidents, which are linked to error, a basic and permanent rationality which is, by its very essence, bound up with fairness and the good. The explanatory axis of the law and history has, I believe, been inverted.

The third reason why the type of discourse I would like to analyze a bit this year is important is, you see, that it is a discourse that develops completely within the historical dimension. It is deployed within a history that has no boundaries, no end, and no limits. In a discourse like this, the drabness of history cannot be regarded as a superficial given that has to be reordered about a few basic, stable principles. It is not interested in passing judgment on unjust governments, or on crimes and acts of violence, by referring them to a certain

ideal schema (that of natural law, the will of God, basic principles, and so on). On the contrary, it is interested in defining and discovering, beneath the forms of justice that have been instituted, the order that has been imposed, the forgotten past of real struggles, actual victories, and defeats which may have been disguised but which remain profoundly inscribed. It is interested in rediscovering the blood that has dried in the codes, and not, therefore, the absolute right that lies beneath the transience of history; it is interested not in referring the relativity of history to the absolute of the law, but in discovering, beneath the stability of the law or the truth, the indefiniteness of history. It is interested in the battle cries that can be heard beneath the formulas of right, in the dissymmetry of forces that lies beneath the equilibrium of justice. Within a historical field that cannot even be said to be a relative field, as it does not relate to any absolute, it is the indefiniteness of history that is in a sense being "irrelativized." It is the indefiniteness of its eternal, the eternal dissolution into the mechanisms and events known as force, power, and war.

You might think—and this is, I think, another reason why this discourse is important—that this must be a sad, gloomy discourse, a discourse for nostalgic aristocrats or scholars in a library. It is in fact a discourse which has, ever since it began and until very late in the nineteenth century, and even the twentieth, also been supported by very traditional mythical forms, and it is often invested in those forms. This discourse twins subtle knowledge and myths that are—I wouldn't say crude, but they are basic, clumsy, and overloaded. We can, after all, easily see how a discourse of this type can be articulated (and, as you will see, was actually articulated) with a whole mythology: [the lost age of great ancestors, the imminence of new times and a millenary revenge, the coming of the new kingdom that will wipe out the defeats of old].¹² This mythology tells of how the victories of giants have gradually been forgotten and buried, of the twilight of the gods, of how heroes were wounded or died, and of how kings fell asleep in inaccessible caves. We also have the theme of the rights and privileges of the earliest race, which were flouted by cunning invaders, the theme of the war that is still going on in secret, of

the plot that has to be revived so as to rekindle that war and to drive out the invaders or enemies; the theme of the famous battle that will take place tomorrow, that will at last invert the relationship of force, and transform the vanquished into victors who will know and show no mercy. Throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, and even later, the theme of perpetual war will be related to the great, undying hope that the day of revenge is at hand, to the expectation of the emperor of the last years, the *dux novus*, the new leader, the new guide, the new Führer; the idea of the fifth monarchy, the third empire or the Third Reich, the man who will be both the beast of the Apocalypse and the savior of the poor. It's the return of Alexander, who got lost in India; the return, expected for so long in England, of Edward the Confessor; it's the two Fredericks—Barbarossa and Frederick II—waiting in their caves for their people and their empires to reawaken; it's Charlemagne sleeping in his tomb, and who will wake up to revive the just war; it's the king of Portugal, lost in the sands of Africa, returning for a new battle and a new war which, this time, will lead to a final, definitive victory.

This discourse of perpetual war is therefore not just the sad brain-child of a few intellectuals who were indeed marginalized long ago. It seems to me that, because it bypasses the great philosophico-juridical systems, this discourse is in fact tied up with a knowledge which is sometimes in the possession of a declining aristocracy, with great mythical impulses, and with the ardor of the revenge of the people. In short, this may well be the first exclusively historico-political discourse—as opposed to a philosophico-juridical discourse—to emerge in the West; it is a discourse in which truth functions exclusively as a weapon that is used to win an exclusively partisan victory. It is a somber, critical discourse, but it is also an intensely mythical discourse; it is a discourse of bitterness [...] but also of the most insane hopes. For philosophers and jurists, it is obviously an external, foreign discourse. It is not even the discourse of their adversary, as they are not in dialogue with it. It is a discourse that is inevitably disqualified, that can and must be kept in the margins, precisely because its negation is the precondition for a true and just

discourse that can at last begin to function—in the middle, between the adversaries, above their heads—as a law. The discourse I am talking about, this partisan discourse, this discourse of war and history, can therefore perhaps take the form of the cunning sophist of the Greek era. Whatever form it takes, it will be denounced as the discourse of a biased and naive historian, a bitter politician, a dispossessed aristocracy, or as an uncouth discourse that puts forward inarticulate demands.

Now this discourse, which was basically or structurally kept in the margins by that of the philosophers and jurists, began its career—or perhaps its new career in the West—in very specific conditions between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries and represented a twofold—aristocratic and popular—challenge to royal power. From this point onward, I think, it proliferated considerably, and its surface of extension extended rapidly and considerably until the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. It would, however, be a mistake to think that the dialectic can function as the great reconversion of this discourse, or that it can finally convert it into philosophy. The dialectic may at first sight seem to be the discourse of the universal and historical movement of contradiction and war, but I think that it does not in fact validate this discourse in philosophical terms. On the contrary, it seems to me that it had the effect of taking it over and displacing it into the old form of philosophico-juridical discourse. Basically, the dialectic codifies struggle, war, and confrontations into a logic, or so-called logic, of contradiction; it turns them into the twofold process of the totalization and revelation of a rationality that is at once final but also basic, and in any case irreversible. The dialectic, finally, ensures the historical constitution of a universal subject, a reconciled truth, and a right in which all particularities have their ordained place. The Hegelian dialectic and all those that came after it must, I think and as I will try to demonstrate to you, be understood as philosophy and right's colonization and authoritarian colonization of a historico-political discourse that was both a statement of fact, a proclamation, and a practice of social warfare. The dialectic colonized

a historico-political discourse which, sometimes conspicuously and often in the shadows, sometimes in scholarship and sometimes in blood, had been gaining ground for centuries in Europe. The dialectic is the philosophical order's, and perhaps the political order's, way of colonizing this bitter and partisan discourse of basic warfare. There you have the general frame within which I would like to try this year to retrace the history of this discourse.

I would now like to tell you how we should study this, and what our starting point should be. First of all, we have to get rid of a number of false paternities that are usually mentioned in connection with this historico-political discourse. As soon as we begin to think about the power/war relationship or about power/relations of force, two names immediately spring to mind: we think of Machiavelli and we think of Hobbes. I would like to show that they have nothing to do with it, that this historico-political discourse is not, and cannot be, that of the Prince's politics¹³ or, obviously, that of absolute power. It is in fact a discourse that inevitably regards the Prince as an illusion, an instrument, or, at best, an enemy. This is, basically, a discourse that cuts off the king's head, or which at least does without a sovereign and denounces him. Having eliminated these false paternities, I would then like to show you this discourse's point of emergence. And it seems to me that we have to try to situate it in the seventeenth century, which has a number of important characteristics. First, this discourse was born twice. On the one hand, we see it emerging roughly in the 1630s, and in the context of the popular or petit bourgeois demands that were being put forward in prerevolutionary and revolutionary England. It is the discourse of the Puritans, the discourse of the Levellers. And then fifty years later, in France at the end of the reign of Louis XIV, you find it on the opposite side, but it is still the discourse of a struggle against the king, a discourse of aristocratic bitterness. And then, and this is the important point, we find even at this early stage, or in other words from the seventeenth century onward, that the idea that war is the uninterrupted frame of history takes a specific form: The war that is going on beneath order and peace, the war that undermines our society and divides it in a

binary mode is, basically, a race war. At a very early stage, we find the basic elements that make the war possible, and then ensure its continuation, pursuit, and development: ethnic differences, differences between languages, different degrees of force, vigor, energy, and violence; the differences between savagery and barbarism; the conquest and subjugation of one race by another. The social body is basically articulated around two races. It is this idea that this clash between two races runs through society from top to bottom which we see being formulated as early as the seventeenth century. And it forms the matrix for all the forms beneath which we can find the face and mechanisms of social warfare.

I would like to trace the history of this theory of races, or rather of race war, during the French Revolution and especially in the early nineteenth century with Augustin and Amédée Thierry,¹⁴ and to show how it underwent two transcriptions. On the one hand, there was an openly biological transcription, which occurred long before Darwin and which borrowed its discourse, together with all its elements, concepts, and vocabulary, from a materialist anatomo-physiology. It also has the support of philology, and thus gives birth to the theory of races in the historico-biological sense of the term. Once again and almost as in the seventeenth century, this is a very ambiguous theory, and it is articulated with, on the one hand, nationalist movements in Europe and with nationalities' struggles against the great State apparatuses (essentially the Russian and the Austrian); you will then see it articulated with European policies of colonization. That is the first—biological—transcription of the theory of permanent struggle and race struggle. And then you find a second transcription based upon the great theme and theory of social war, which emerges in the very first years of the nineteenth century, and which tends to erase every trace of racial conflict in order to define itself as class struggle. We have, then, a sort of major parting of the ways, which I will try to reconstruct. It corresponds to a recasting of the theme of the analysis of these struggles in the form of the dialectic, and to a recasting of the theme of racial confrontations in terms of the theory of evolutionism and the struggle for existence. Having established this, and

placing special emphasis on the latter argument—the biological transcription—I will try to trace the full development of a biológico-social racism. By this, I mean the idea—which is absolutely new and which will make the discourse function very differently—that the other race is basically not the race that came from elsewhere or that was, for a time, triumphant and dominant, but that it is a race that is permanently, ceaselessly infiltrating the social body, or which is, rather, constantly being re-created in and by the social fabric. In other words, what we see as a polarity, as a binary rift within society, is not a clash between two distinct races. It is the splitting of a single race into a superrace and a subrace. To put it a different way, it is the reappearance, within a single race, of the past of that race. In a word, the obverse and the underside of the race reappears within it.

This has one fundamental implication: The discourse of race struggle—which, when it first appeared and began to function in the seventeenth century, was essentially an instrument used in the struggles waged by decentered camps—will be recentered and will become the discourse of power itself. It will become the discourse of a centered, centralized, and centralizing power. It will become the discourse of a battle that has to be waged not between races, but by a race that is portrayed as the one true race, the race that holds power and is entitled to define the norm, and against those who deviate from that norm, against those who pose a threat to the biological heritage. At this point, we have all those biological-racist discourses of degeneracy, but also all those institutions within the social body which make the discourse of race struggle function as a principle of exclusion and segregation and, ultimately, as a way of normalizing society. At this point, the discourse whose history I would like to trace abandons the initial basic formulation, which was "We have to defend ourselves against our enemies because the State apparatuses, the law, and the power structures not only do not defend us against our enemies; they are the instruments our enemies are using to pursue and subjugate us." That discourse now disappears. It is no longer: "We have to defend ourselves against society," but "We have to defend society against all the biological threats posed by the other race, the subrace,

the counterrace that we are, despite ourselves, bringing into existence." At this point, the racist thematic is no longer a moment in the struggle between one social group and another; it will promote the global strategy of social conservativisms. At this point—and this is a paradox, given the goals and the first form of the discourse I have been talking about—we see the appearance of a State racism: a racism that society will direct against itself, against its own elements and its own products. This is the internal racism of permanent purification, and it will become one of the basic dimensions of social normalization. This year, I would like to look a little at the history of this discourse of race struggle and war from the seventeenth century to the emergence of State racism in the early nineteenth century.

1. Edward Coke's most important works are *A Book of Entries* (London, 1614); *Commentaries on Littleton* (London, 1628); *A Treatise of Bail and Mainprize* (London, 1635); *Institutes of the Laws of England* (London, vol. 1, 1628; vol. 2, 1642; vols. 3-4, 1644); *Reports* (London, vols. 1-11, 1600-1615; vol. 12, 1656; vol. 13, 1659). On Coke, see the lecture of 4 February in the present volume.
2. On Lilburne, see the lecture of 4 February in the present volume.
3. On H. de Boulainvilliers, see the lectures of 11 February, 18 February, and 25 February in the present volume.
4. Most of Freret's works were first published in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences*. They were subsequently collected in his *Oeuvres complètes*, 20 vols. (Paris, 1796-1799). See, inter alia, *De l'origine des Français et de leur établissement dans la Gaule* (vol. 5), *Recherches historiques sur les moeurs et le gouvernement des Français, dans les divers temps de la monarchie* (vol. 6), *Réflexions sur l'étude des anciennes histoires et sur le degre de certitude de leurs preuves* (vol. 7), *Vues générales sur l'origine et le mélange des anciennes nations et sur la manière d'en étudier l'histoire* (vol. 18), and *Observations sur les Mérovingiens* (vol. 20). On Freret, see the lecture of 18 February in the present volume.
5. Joachim, comte d'Estaing, *Dissertation sur la noblesse d'extraction et sur les origines des fiefs, des surnoms et des armoiries* (Paris, 1690).
6. Foucault's lecture on 10 March, and now in the present volume, is based mainly on E.-J. Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?* (1789). (Cf. the reprinted editions, Paris: PUF, 1982 and Paris: Flammarion, 1988.)
7. Cf. F. Buonarroti, *Conspiration pour l'égalité, dite de Babeuf, suivie du procès auquel elle donna lieu et les pièces justificatives*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1828).
8. The historical works by Augustin Thierry referred to by Foucault, particularly in his lecture of 10 March, are as follows: *Vues des révolutions d'Angleterre* (Paris, 1917); *Histoire de la conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands, de ses causes et de ces suites jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1825); *Lettres sur l'histoire de France pour servir d'introduction à l'étude de cette histoire* (Paris, 1827); *Dix ans d'études historiques* (Paris, 1834); *Récits des temps mérovingiens, précédés de considérations sur l'histoire de France* (Paris, 1834); *Essais sur l'histoire de la formation et des progrès du Tiers-Etat* (Paris, 1853).
9. See in particular A. V. Courtet de l'Isle, *La Science politique fondée sur la science de l'homme* (Paris, 1837).
10. Cf. J.-P. Vernant, *Les Origines de la pensée grecque* (Paris: PUF, 1965), especially chapters 7 and 8; *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs: Études de psychologie historique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1965), especially chapters 3, 4, and 7; *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: Seuil, 1974); J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: La Découverte, 1972), particularly chapter 3. English translations: *The Origins of Greek Thought* (London: Methuen, 1982); *Myth and Thought among the Greeks* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982); *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, tr. Janet Lloyd (New York: Zone Books, 1990).
11. For Solon (see in particular fragment 16 in the Diehl edition), the reader is referred to the analysis of "mesure" made by Michel Foucault in his lectures at the Collège de France in 1970-1971 on *The Will to Knowledge*. On Kant, the reader is simply referred to "What Is Enlightenment?" trans. Catherine Porter, in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 32-50, reprinted with emendations in *Ethics: The Essential Works*, vol. 1, pp. 303-20 (French original, *Dits et écrits* vol. 4, pp. 562-84); "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?" *Dits et écrits* vol. 4, pp. 679-88 (English translation by Colin Gordon, "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution," *Economy and Society*, vol. 15, no. 1 [February 1986], pp. 88-96); and the lecture given to the Société Française de Philosophie on 27 May 1978 on "Qu'est-ce que la critique," *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie*, April-June 1990, pp. 35-67; see also I. Kant, *Zum weigen Frieden: ein philoso-*

phischer Entwurf (Königsberg, 1795; see in particular the second edition of 1796) in *Werke in zwölf Bänden* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1968), vol. 11, pp. 191-251; *Der Streit der Fakultäten in drei abschnitten* (Königsberg, 1798), *ibid.*, pp. 261-393. (English translation: *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* and "The Conflict of Faculties," in *Political Writings*, ed. Hanns Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970].) Foucault owned the complete works of Kant in Ernst Cassirer's 12-volume edition (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1912-1922), and Ernst Cassirer's *Kants Leben un Lehre* (Berlin, 1921) (English translation by Haden James, *Kant's Life and Work* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983]).

12. The interpolation is based upon the course summary for the year 1975-1976, in *Dits et écrits*, vol 3, no. 187, pp. 124-130.
13. On Machiavelli, see the lecture of 1 February 1978 ("Governmentality") in the course of lectures given at the Collège de France on "Sécurité territoire et population en 1977-1978" (English translation: "Governmentality," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* [Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991]); "Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Critique of Political Reason" (1981), in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, ed. Sterling M. McMurrin, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); "The Political Technology of Individuals" (1982), *Dits et écrits* vol. 3, no. 239, and vol. 4, no. 219, no. 364, in Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton, eds., *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (London: Tavistock, 1988).
14. On Augustin Thierry, see note 8 above. For Amédée Thierry, see his *Histoires des Gaulois, depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à l'entière soumission de la Gaule à la domination romaine* (Paris, 1828); *Histoire de la Gaule sous l'administration romaine* (Paris, 1840-1847).

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Historical discourse and its supporters. - The counterhistory of race struggle. - Roman history and biblical history. - Revolutionary discourse. - Birth and transformations of racism. - Race purity and State racism: the Nazi transformation and the Soviet transformation.

YOU MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT, last time, that I was trying to both trace the history of racist discourse and praise it. And you would not have been entirely wrong, except in one respect. It was not exactly racist discourse whose history I was tracing and that I was praising: it was the discourse of race war or race struggle. I think we should reserve the expression "racism" or "racist discourse" for something that was basically no more than a particular and localized episode in the great discourse of race war or race struggle. Racist discourse was really no more than an episode, a phase, the reversal, or at least the reworking, at the end of the nineteenth century, of the discourse of race war. It was a reworking of that old discourse, which at that point was already hundreds of years old, in sociobiological terms, and it was reworked for purposes of social conservatism and, at least in a certain number of cases, colonial domination. Having said that to situate both the link and the difference between racist discourse and the discourse of race war, I was indeed praising the discourse of race war. I was praising it in the sense that I wanted to show you how—at least for a time, or in other words up to the end of the nineteenth