

The Analytic Philosophy of Politics

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION FROM
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Below is the first complete English translation of the conference Foucault delivered under the title “La philosophie analytique de la politique” on his visit to Japan in 1978. The interest of this conference resides in the fact that it provides one of Foucault’s clearest accounts of his own approach to the analysis of power and practices of resistance. Foucault’s discourse is organized around the following initial question: how can philosophy still play its ancient role of “counter-power” in the face of the forms of domination marking 20th century Western societies? Foucault’s response to this question is premised upon his stark critique of the traditional juridico-political theories of power. As he argues at greater length in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, in fact, all these theories rely on a prior and universal representation of power as a homogeneous and unitarian essence, which not only remains inadequate to grasp the way “power is and was exercised”,¹ but also serves as a source of legitimation for modern institutions through the concealment of the concrete mechanisms of power. To the contrary, Foucault adopts a very different methodological attitude: rather than elaborating an overarching theory of power centred upon the study of the macro-level dimensions of the state and social hegemonies, Foucault engages in a series of historical investigations of “focal points of experience”² (like madness, criminality, and sexuality) in order to reveal the regional, unstable, and marginal cluster of force relations shaping our ordinary experience of power.

In this sense, Foucault delineates an unexpected convergence between his own approach and Anglo-American analytic philosophy, especially ordinary language philosophy as formulated by Ludwig Wittgenstein. The aim of ordinary language philosophy is to propose a “critical analysis of thought on the basis of the way one says things”, while rejecting any massive disqualification or qualification of language. Correspondingly, the task Foucault attributes to his “analytic philosophy of politics” or “analytico-political philosophy” is to examine “what ordinarily happens in power relations”, namely to describe the reality of power

without falling prey to sweeping condemnations or appreciations.³ To state it otherwise, excluding any return to the ancient models of philosophy as prophecy, pedagogy or lawgiver, Foucault holds that today philosophy can maintain its critical role of counter-power only insofar as it abandons the moral and juridical vocabulary of “good” and “bad”, “right” and “wrong”, “legitimate” and “illegitimate” in favour of an analysis of power relations “in terms of existence”,⁴ namely as games marked by specific tactics and strategies, rules and accidents, stakes and objectives.

Far from being concerned with the justification of our principles of justice like analytic political philosophy, therefore, Foucault’s analytic philosophy of politics clearly has a “realist spirit”:⁵ its ultimate function is to make visible the differentiated and concrete mechanisms of power constituting those apparently natural and familiar limits of the present we take for granted. However, the role of an analytico-political philosophy is not a purely descriptive and intellectual one. Rather, rendering visible how power actually works enables at the same time to “intensify the struggles that develop around power, the strategies of the antagonists within relations of power, the tactics employed, the *foyers* of resistance”.⁶

As it promotes a new picture of power, Foucault’s analytic philosophy of politics also entails a redefinition of the very notion of resistance. Indeed, if power can no longer be conceived as a top-down, uniform, and general form of domination stemming from a central point, then one should call into question the traditional, exclusive portrait of resistance as a revolutionary uprising aimed at a total liberation from power. For Foucault, this does not mean that one should turn towards reformism. Conversely, alongside revolutionary acts of liberation from states of domination, Foucault emphasises the existence of particular and diffused practices of resistance characterized by both a local point of emergence and a “transversal” dissemination across countries as well as political and economic regimes. Being irreducible to the structure of revolution, such practices are “anarchistic” struggles, whose immediate aim is to destabilize the “intolerable” games of power that develop around the different issues constituting the very “texture of our everyday life”, like madness, delinquency, illness, prison, sexuality, etc.⁷ Despite their diversity, however, all these practices of freedom have a common target, i.e. the individualising mechanisms of subjection resulting from the secular transposition of the Christian techniques of pastoral power into the modern state. As Foucault claims in 1982, in fact, “the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, [...] but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization linked to the state”,⁸ a problem that still haunts us in these critical times.

A mong the possible subjects of the conference, I had proposed an interview about prisons, about the particular problem of prisons. I was led to give up on it for several reasons: the first one is that, during the three weeks I've been to Japan, I've come to notice that the problem of penalty, criminality, and prison was posed according to very different terms in our society and yours. Through the experience of one prison—when I speak about the experience of one prison I do not mean that I've been jailed, but rather that I've visited one prison, even two, in the Fukuoka region—I've also come to notice that, in comparison to what we know in Europe, it represents not only an improvement, an advancement, but also a genuine modification that would require us to be able to reflect on and discuss with Japanese specialists on this issue. I felt ill at ease to talk to you about problems as they are currently posed in Europe, when you have so important experiences. And finally, to put it shortly, the problem of prisons is but one element, one piece within a set of more general problems. The interviews I had with various Japanese have persuaded me that it would be more interesting to bring up the general climate in which the issue of prison, the issue of penalty, arises together with a certain number of questions marked by an actuality just as real and urgent. Hence, you will forgive me for giving a talk more general than it would be if it had been limited to the problem of prison. If you hold it against me, you will tell me.

Surely, you know there exists in France a journal called *Le Monde*, which we are used to calling, with much solemnity, a “major evening journal”. In this “major evening journal”, a journalist once wrote the following, which caused my surprise and led me to reflect to the extent I can. “Why, he wrote, do so many people today raise the question of power?” “One day”, he continued, “one will be undoubtedly amazed that the question of power has so intensely troubled us during all the late 20th century”.

If they reflect a little bit more, I don't think that our successors can long be surprised that, precisely during all the late 20th century, the people of our generation have raised, with so much insistence, the question of power. After all, if the question of power faces us, that is not because we have raised it. It has come up, it was posed to us. It has been posed to us by our actuality, that's for sure, but also by our past, a quite recent past that has just barely come to an end. After all, the 20th century knew two great obsessions with power, two great fevers that exacerbated the manifestations of power. These two great obsessions, which dominated the core, the middle of the 20th century, are of course fascism and Stalinism. Certainly, both fascism and Stalinism replied to a precise and specific conjuncture. Undoubtedly, fascism and Stalinism brought their effects to dimensions unknown up to that moment and one can hope, if not reasonably think, that one won't know them again. They were exceptional phenomena, then, but one should not deny that with regard to many points, fascism and Stalinism didn't do anything but prolong a whole series of mechanisms that already existed within Western social and political systems. After all, the organisation of great parties, the development of police apparatuses, the existence of techniques of repression such as the labour camps, all this is a well and truly constituted heritage of liberal Western societies that Stalinism and fascism had just to take up.

It is precisely this experience that has compelled us to raise the question of power. Because one cannot avoid wondering and asking oneself: weren't fascism and Stalinism, and aren't they where they persist, just the response to particular conjunctures or situations? Or, on the contrary, is it necessary to consider that, in our societies, there exist permanent virtualities, in some way structural, intrinsic to our systems, which can reveal themselves at every turn, making perpetually possible these types of great excrescences of power, these excrescences of power represented by the major examples of Mussolini's, Hitler's, Stalin's systems and the actual systems of Chile and Cambodia?

I believe the great problem of the 19th century, at least in Europe, was that of poverty and misery. The great problem most of the thinkers and philosophers were confronted with at the beginning of the 19th century was the following: how is it possible that this production of wealth, whose spectacular effects commenced being recognized all over the West, how is it possible that this production of wealth is coupled with the absolute or relative (that's another question) impoverishment of those who produce it? Such a problem of the impoverishment of the people who produce wealth, of the simultaneous production of wealth and poverty, I do not say it has been completely solved in the West during the late 20th century, but it no longer has the same urgency. It's doubled by another problem that is not the

problem of too little wealth, but rather that of too much power. Western societies, in a more general fashion the industrial and developed societies of the end of this century, are societies that are traversed by this silent inquietude, or even by quite explicit movements of revolt challenging this kind of overproduction of power that Stalinism and fascism clearly manifested in its stark and monstrous state. So, as the 19th century needed an economy that had as its specific object the production and distribution of wealth, one could say we need an economy that would not be about the production and distribution of wealth, but rather an economy that would be about relations of power.

One of the philosopher's oldest functions in the West—the philosopher, I should as well say the sage and perhaps, to employ this ugly contemporary word, the intellectual—one of the philosopher's major roles in the West has been to put a limit, to put a limit to this excess of power, to this overproduction of power every time and in each case it threatened to become alarming. In the West, the philosopher has always more or less the profile of the anti-tyrant. One can see it take shape under multiple forms since the beginning of Greek philosophy:

- The philosopher was an anti-tyrant insofar as he defined the systems of laws according to which power should be exercise within a city, insofar as he defined the legal limits within which power could be exercised without danger: that's the role of the philosopher legislator. This was the role of Solon. After all, the moment when Greek philosophy started to separate itself from poetry, the moment when Greek prose began to appear was the day Solon formulated, still in a poetic vocabulary, the laws that would become the very prose of Greek history, of Hellenic history.

- Second possibility: the philosopher can be anti-tyrant by becoming the Prince's counselor, teaching him the wisdom, virtue, and truth that will be able to prevent him from abusing his power when he has to govern. That's the philosopher pedagogue; it's Plato visiting the tyrant Dionysus.

- Finally, third possibility: the philosopher can be anti-tyrant by saying that after all, whatever abuses power can perpetrate on him or others, in his philosophical practice and thought, as a philosopher, he will remain independent from power; he will laugh at power. These were the cynics.

Solon the legislator, Plato the pedagogue, and the cynics. The philosopher as moderator of power, the philosopher as a grimacing mask before power. If we could give an ethnological look at the West starting from ancient Greece, we would see these three figures of the philosopher replace one another; we would see a significative opposition between the philosopher and the Prince, between philosophical reflection and the exercise of power. And I wonder whether this

opposition between philosophical reflection and the exercise of power would not better characterize philosophy than its relation to science, because, after all, it's been a long time since philosophy could play the role of ground for science. On the contrary, the role of moderation against power is still worth perhaps being played.

When one observes the way in which, historically, philosophers have played or wished to play their role of moderators against power, one is led to a slightly disappointing conclusion. Antiquity knew philosopher legislators; it witnessed philosopher counselors of the Prince; nevertheless, it never knew Plato's ideal city. Though Alexander was a disciple of Aristotle, his empire was not Aristotelian. And if it is true that, during the Roman Empire, stoicism permeated the thought of everybody, at least of the elite, it is no less true that the Roman Empire was not stoic. Stoicism was a way for Marcus Aurelius to be emperor; it was neither an art nor a technique to govern the empire.

Put otherwise, and I think it's an important point, unlike what happened in the East, and particularly in China and Japan, there has been no philosophy in the West, at least for a long time, capable of being one with a political practice, a moral practice of a whole society. The West has never known the equivalent of Confucianism, which is to say a form of thought that, by reflecting the order of the world or establishing it, prescribed at the same time the structure of the state, the form of social relations, the conducts of individuals, and effectively prescribed them in the very reality of history. Whatever the importance of Aristotelian thought might have been, so much adopted by the dogmatism of the Middle Ages, Aristotle has never played a role like the one Confucius played in the East. There has never been a philosophical state in the West.

However, and I think there lies a major event, things changed starting from the French Revolution, namely from the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. At the time one sees the constitution of political regimes that have not only ideological, but also organic, I was going to say organisational, links to philosophy. The French Revolution, one can even say the Napoleonic Empire, maintained organic links with Rousseau, and more generally with the philosophy of the 18th century. Organic link between the Prussian state and Hegel; organic link, as much paradoxical as it may be, but it is another issue, between the Nazi state and Wagner as well as Nietzsche. Links, of course, between Leninism, the Soviet state and Marx. The 19th century saw the appearance in Europe of something that had never existed up to that time: philosophical states, I was going to say states-philosophies, philosophies that are at one and the same time states, and states that think, reflect, organize themselves and define their fundamental

choices on the basis of philosophical propositions, within philosophical systems, and as the philosophical truth of history. The phenomenon is clearly very surprising and becomes more than troubling when one thinks that these philosophies, all these philosophies that became states were without exception philosophies of liberty, philosophies of liberty like those of the 18th century, that's for sure, but also those of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Marx. Now, each and every time these philosophies of freedom gave birth to forms of power that, whether in the guise of terror, bureaucracy, or even bureaucratic terror, were the very opposite of the regime of freedom, the very opposite of freedom as history.

There is a comic self-love in modern Western philosophers: they reflected and conceived of themselves according to a relationship of essential opposition to power and its unlimited exercise, but the destiny of their thought has been such that the more one listens to them, the more power, the more political institutions soak up their thought, the more they serve to authorize excessive forms of power. After all, that is the unfortunate funny side of Hegel transformed within the Bismarckian regime; that is the unfortunate funny side of Nietzsche, whose complete works were given by Hitler to Mussolini on the occasion of his journey to Venice that had to sanction the *Anschluss*. More than the dogmatic support of religions, philosophy authenticates powers without restraints. This paradox became an acute crisis with Stalinism. More than anything else, Stalinism presented itself as a state which was at the same time a philosophy, a philosophy that had rightly announced and predicted the withering away of the state, and that, once turned into a state, became a really personal state, cut off from any philosophical reflection and any possibility of reflection whatsoever. That's the philosophical state becoming literally thoughtless under the form of the total state.

There are several possible attitudes before this situation that is precisely contemporary to ours, contemporary in a pressing way. One can, it is perfectly legitimate, I would even say recommendable, historically investigate the peculiar links the West has established or let establish between philosophy and power: how could these connections between philosophy and power appear precisely when philosophy presented itself as the principle of counter-power, or at least of the moderation of power, at the moment when philosophy had to tell power: there you shall stop, you shall not go any further? Is it about a betrayal of philosophy? Or is it because philosophy has always been secretly a certain philosophy of power, whatever it has said? Telling power: stop there, is it not precisely, virtually, and even secretly taking the place of power, laying down the law of the law, and consequently materializing as the law?

One can raise all these questions. To the contrary, one can tell oneself that,

after all, philosophy has nothing to do with power, that the deep, essential vocation of philosophy is to address the truth, or to question being; and that by digressing into these empirical domains like the issue of politics and power, philosophy cannot but get compromised. If one has so easily betrayed it, that's because philosophy has betrayed itself. Philosophy has betrayed itself by going where it shouldn't have gone, and by asking questions that weren't its own.

But maybe there would be yet another path. It is about that one I would like to tell you. Perhaps one could see that there is still a certain possibility for philosophy to play a role in relation to power, which would be a role neither of foundation nor of renewal of power. Perhaps philosophy can still play a role on the side of counter-power, on the condition that this role does not consist in exercising, in the face of power, the very law of philosophy, on the condition that philosophy stops thinking of itself as prophesy, on the condition that philosophy stops thinking of itself either as pedagogy, or as legislation, and that it gives itself the task to analyse, clarify, and make visible, and thus intensify the struggles that develop around power, the strategies of the antagonists within relations of power, the tactics employed, the *foyers* of resistance, on the condition in sum that philosophy stops posing the question of power in terms of good and bad, but rather poses it in terms of existence. The question is not: is power good or bad, legitimate or illegitimate, a question of right or morality? Rather, one should simply try to relieve the question of power of all the moral and juridical overloads that one has placed on it, and ask the following naïve question, which has not been posed so often, even if a certain number of people have actually posed it for a long while: what do power relations fundamentally consist in?

We have known for a long time that the role of philosophy is not to discover what is concealed, but rather to make visible what precisely is visible, which is to say to make appear what is so close, so immediate, so intimately connected with ourselves that we cannot perceive it. Where the role of science is to make known that which we do not see, the role of philosophy is to make visible that which we do see. After all, to this extent, the role of philosophy today could well be: what is it about these relations of power within which we are captured and within which philosophy itself has been entangled at least for one hundred and fifty years?

You will tell me that's a quite modest, empirical, limited task, but close to us we have a certain model of a similar usage of philosophy in Anglo-American analytic philosophy. After all, Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy does not give itself the task of reflecting on the being of language or the deep structures of speech; it reflects on the everyday use of speech we make in the different types of discourse. For Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy, it's a question of carrying out a critical

analysis of thought on the basis of the way one says things. In a similar manner, I think we could imagine a philosophy that would have as its task the analysis of what ordinarily happens in power relations, a philosophy that would seek to show what these relations of power are about, what their forms, stakes, and objectives are. As a result, a philosophy that would address the relations of power rather than the games of language, a philosophy that would address all these relations which traverse the social body rather than the effects of language which traverse and underlie our thought. We could imagine, we should imagine something like an analytico-political philosophy. In this sense, we have to recall that Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy of language refrains from those types of massive qualifications—disqualifications of language we find in Humboldt or Bergson—Humboldt for whom language was the creator of all possible relationships between man and the world, the very creator, then, of both the world and man, or Bergson's devaluation which does not stop repeating that language is powerless, frozen, dead, spatial, whereby it cannot but betray the experience of conscience and the duration [*durée*]. Instead of these massive disqualifications or qualifications, Anglo-Saxon philosophy seeks to tell that language never fails nor shows anything. Rather language is played. Hence, the importance of the notion of game.

In a roughly similar way, we could say that, in order to analyse and criticize relations of power, it's not a question of attributing them a massive, global, definitive, absolute, unilateral pejorative or laudatory qualification; it is not a question of saying that relations of power cannot do but one thing, i.e. coerce and force. One should no longer imagine that one can escape relations of power all at once, globally, massively, through a sort of radical rupture or a flight without return. Relations of power too are played; they are games of power that we should study in terms of tactics and strategy, rule and accident, stakes and objective. It's a little bit in this direction that I have tried to work and that I would like to indicate to you some of the lines of analysis one could follow.

We can address these games of power from several points of view. Rather than studying the state's grand game with its citizens and the other states, I've preferred—without doubt because of a tendency of my character or perhaps a disposition to obsessional neurosis—dealing with much more limited, lowly games of power, which do not have the noble, recognized philosophical status great problems have: games of power around madness, games of power around medicine, around illness, around the sick body, games of power around punishment and prison, that's a little bit what I've been concerned with up till now, and for two reasons.

What is at stake in these fine, a little specific, occasionally marginal games

of power? They involve the nature of reason and unreason, no more, no less; they involve the nature of life and death, the nature of crime and the law; that is to say a whole set of things constituting the texture of our everyday life and on the basis of which human beings have built their tragic discourse.

There is another reason why I became interested in these questions and games of power. More than state and institutional great struggles, it seems to me it is in those games that people's concern and interest lies nowadays. For example, we can look at the way in which the campaign for legislative elections in France has unfolded: whereas journals, media, politicians, government and state officials have not stopped telling French people that they were playing a crucial game for their future, whatever the result of the elections has been, whatever the number of the wise electors that have gone voting has been, one is struck by the fact that, deep down, people have not absolutely perceived what there could be of historically tragic or decisive in these elections.

On the other hand, what strikes me is the continuous agitation for years in several societies, and not only within French society, around questions that were previously marginal and a little bit theoretical: to know how one is going to die, to know what will be made of you when you are adrift in a hospital, to know what becomes of your reason and people's judgment on your reason, to know what one will be if one is mad, to know what one is if one is mad, to know what one is and what will happen the day one will commit an infraction and start entering the machine of penalty. All that deeply concerns our contemporaries' life, affectivity, and fear. If you tell me, rightly so, that after all it has always been like that, it seems to me anyway one of the first times (it is absolutely not the first). In any case, we are at one of those moments when these everyday, marginal questions, which have remained a little bit silent, access a level of explicit discourse, where people not just accept talking about them, but enter the game of discourse and participate in it. Madness and reason, death and illness, penalty, prison, crime, the law, all that is our everyday life, and it is that everyday life that appears to us as essential.

Indeed, I think we should go further and say not only that these games of power about life and death, reason and unreason, the law and crime have assumed an intensity nowadays that they didn't have at least in the immediately preceding period, but also that the resistance and struggles taking place no longer have the same form. The essential question is that of participating in these games of power in order for our freedom and our own rights to be respected: one simply does not want these games any more. The question is no longer that of engaging in a confrontation within the games, but rather that of resisting the game and refuse the game itself. That's exactly the feature of a certain number of these struggles

and battles.

Take the case of prison. For many years, I was going to say for centuries, in any case since prison exists as a type of punishment within Western penal systems, since the 19th century, a whole series of movements, critiques, sometimes even violent oppositions have developed in the attempt to modify the functioning of prison, the condition of prisoners, and their status both inside prison and once they are released. For the first time, we know that it is no longer a question of this game or that resistance, of the position within the game itself; it is a question of refusing the very same game. What one says is: no longer prison at all. And when, in the face of this kind of total critique, sensible people, legislators, technocrats, and governors ask: "but what do you want then?", the answer is: "it is not up to us to tell you the sauce with which we want to be eaten; We no longer want to play this game of penalty; we no longer want to play this game of penal sanctions; we no longer want to play this game of justice". In the story of Narita,¹ which has been going on for years here in Japan, it seems characteristic to me that the game of the adversaries or those who resist has not been that of obtaining as many advantages as possible, by asserting the law, obtaining indemnities. They didn't want to play the traditionally organized and institutionalized game of the state with its exigencies and of citizens with their rights. They didn't want to play the game at all; they impede the game from being played.

The second feature of the phenomena I seek to locate and analyse is that they constitute diffused and decentralized phenomena. Here is what I mean. Let's take the example of prison and the penal system. During the 18th century, around 1760, at the time when one started to pose the problem of a radical change of the penal system, who raised the question, and on what basis? It was theorists, theorists of right, philosophers as defined at the time that raised the problem not at all of prison itself, but rather the very general problem of what the law had to look like in a country of liberty, and of how, within what limits, and up to where the law had to be enforced. It is according to this crucial and theoretical reflection that, after a certain number of years, one came to wish that the punishment, the only possible punishment would be prison.

Recently, the problem has been posed in very different terms, and in a very different manner, in Western countries. The starting point has never been a global, broad demand for a better legal system. The starting points have always been lowly and minuscule: stories of malnutrition and discomfort inside prisons. And, on the basis of these local phenomena, these very particular starting points, in some determined places, one has noticed that the phenomenon spread very quickly and concerned a whole series of people who had neither the same situation nor

the same problems. We can also add that these resistances seem relatively indifferent to the political regimes and economic systems, sometimes even to the social structures of the countries in which they develop. For example, we have seen struggles, resistances, and strikes also in the prisons of Sweden, which presented an extremely progressive penal and penitentiary system vis-à-vis our own, as well as Italy and Spain, where the situation was much worse and the political context utterly different.

One could say the same thing with regard to the feminist movement and the struggles around the games of power between men and women. The feminist movement has developed both in Sweden and Italy, where the status of women, sexual relationships, the relationships between husband and wife, between man and woman was so different. This shows well that the objective of all these movements is not the same one of traditional political or revolutionary movements: it is definitely not a question of aiming for political power or the economic system.

Third feature: essentially this kind of resistance and struggle has as its target the very occurrences of power, more than something like economic exploitation or inequality. What is at issue in these struggles is the fact that a certain power is exerted, and that the mere fact that it is exerted is intolerable. I'll take as an example an anecdote, which you can smile about but you will also be able to take seriously: in Sweden, there are prisons where inmates can see their wives and make love with them. Every inmate has a room. Once, a young Swede, a student and activist full of enthusiasm, visited me in order to ask me to help him denounce fascism in Swedish prisons. I asked him what it was about. His answer was that the rooms in which the inmates can make love with their wives cannot be locked. Surely, that makes one laugh; at the same time it is very significant that it is power at issue here.

In a similar way, the series of reproaches and criticisms that have been addressed to the medical institution—I am thinking of Illich's ones but also others—did not focus essentially, primarily on the fact that the medical institutions would enable a medicine for profit, even if one could denounce the relations there can be between pharmaceutical companies and certain medical practices or certain hospital institutions. What one reproaches to medicine is not having at its disposal anything but a fragile and often false knowledge. Rather, it seems to me, what one essentially reproaches to medicine is the exercise of an uncontrolled power over the body, the patient's suffering, his life and death. I do not know whether it's the same thing in Japan, but I'm struck that in Western countries the problem of death is posed in the form of a reproach addressed to medicine not for being unable to keep us alive longer, but on the contrary for keeping us alive even

if we do not want it. We criticize medicine, medical knowledge, and the medical technostructure for deciding on life and death for us, for ensuring us a scientifically and technically sophisticated life, which we do not want any more. The right to death is the right to say no to medical knowledge, and not the exigency of practising medical knowledge. Its power is the real target.

As to the Narita affair, we would also find something like the following: the farmers of Narita could surely have enjoyed significant advantages in accepting some of the propositions that were made to them. What they refused was the exercise of a form of power over them they didn't want. More than the economic game, it's the very modality of the power exercised over them, the mere fact that it is about an expropriation decided from above in one way or another, which is at stake in the Narita affair: to this arbitrary power one replies through a violent inversion of power.

The last feature I would like to insist upon with regard to these struggles is the fact that they are immediate struggles. This has two meanings. On the one hand, they criticize instances of power that are the closest to them; they criticize all that which is exerted immediately on individuals. Put otherwise, in these struggles, it is not a matter of following the great Leninist principle of the chief enemy or of the weakest link. These immediate struggles no longer expect a future moment that would be the revolution, the liberation, the disappearance of classes, the withering of the state, the solution of all problems. In comparison with a theoretical scale of explanations or a revolutionary order that polarizes history and hierarchizes its moments, we can say that these struggles are anarchistic struggles; they are inscribed within a history that is immediate, that accepts and recognizes itself as indefinitely open.

Now I would like to return to the analytico-political philosophy I spoke about earlier on. It seems to me that the role of such an analytic philosophy of power should be to gauge the importance of these struggles and phenomena, which up to now have been granted just a marginal value. One should show how these processes, these unrests, these obscure, limited, and often modest struggles are different from the forms of struggle that have been so strongly valorised in the Western world under the mark of revolution. Whatever vocabulary one employs, whatever the theoretical references of those participating in these struggles are, it is absolutely clear that we have to do with a process which, albeit very important, is not at all a process characterized by a revolutionary form, a revolutionary morphology in the classical sense of the word "revolution", where revolution designates a global and unitary struggle of a whole nation, people or class, a struggle that promises to overturn the established power from top to bottom, to annihilate

it in its own principle, a struggle that ensures a total liberation, and an imperative struggle demanding in short that all other struggles be subordinated to it and depend on it.

As the 20th century draws to its close, do we witness something like the end of the age of revolution? This kind of prophecy, this kind of death sentence for revolution seems to me a little bit ridiculous. Perhaps, we are living the end of a historical period that, since 1789–1793, has been dominated, at least in the West, by the monopoly of revolution, with all the joint effects of despotism that could entail, though the disappearance of the monopoly of revolution does not mean a revalorisation of reformism. In the struggles I have just talked about, in fact, it is not at all a question of reformism, because the role of reformism is to stabilize a system of power after a certain number of changes, whereas in all these struggles the point is the destabilization of the mechanisms of power, a destabilization apparently without end.

Despite being decentred relative to the principles, primacies, and privileges of revolution, these struggles are not circumstantial phenomena that would be connected just to particular conjunctures. They aim at a historical reality that has existed for centuries within Western societies in a way that perhaps is not visible but is extremely solid. It seems to me that these struggles aim at one of the poorly known, but essential structures of our societies. Certain forms of power are perfectly visible and have led to struggles that one can recognize straight away because their target is visible in itself: against colonial, ethnical, and linguistic forms of domination, there have been national struggles, social struggles whose explicit and known target was economic forms of exploitation; there have been political struggles against juridical and political forms of power well visible and known. The struggles I am speaking about target a form of power that has existed in the West since the Middle Ages, a form of power that is strictly neither a juridical nor political power, nor an economic power, nor an ethnical domination, and that nonetheless has had large structuring effects within our societies—and this is maybe the reason why their analysis is more delicate to carry out than one of other struggles. This power has a religious origin. It is a power that aims to conduct and guide men during their entire life and in each circumstance of their life, a power that consists in taking charge of the life of men in their detail and their progress from their birth up to their death, in order to constrain them to behave in a certain way and ensure their salvation. That's what we could call pastoral power.

Etymologically, and taking the word literally, pastoral power is the power the shepherd exercises over his flock. Now, the ancient Greek and Roman societies did not know and probably did not desire a power of this kind, so watchful,

so full of solicitudes, so attached to the salvation of each and everyone. It is with Christianity, with the Church institution, its hierarchical and territorial organisation, but also the ensemble of dogmas regarding the afterlife, sin, salvation, the economy of merit, and with the definition of the role of the priest, that the conception of the Christians as constituting a flock has appeared, whereby a certain number of individuals, who enjoy a particular status, has the right and the duty to exert the responsibilities of the pastorate over it.

Pastoral power developed throughout the Middle Ages in tight and difficult relations with the feudal society. It developed even more intensely during the 16th century, with the Reformation and Counter Reformation. Through this history that starts with Christianity and continues up to the heart of the classical age, up to the eve of the Revolution itself, pastoral power kept an essential and singular character in the history of civilisations: while being exerted on the entire group as any other religious or political kind of power, pastoral power has as its main concern and task ensuring the salvation of everyone by taking charge of each element in particular, each sheep of the flock, each individual, so as not only to constrain him to act in one way or another, but also to know him, discover him, bring to light his subjectivity and structure the relationship he has with himself and his own conscience. The techniques of the Christian pastoral regarding spiritual direction, the care of the souls, the cure of the souls, all these practices that go from the exam to the confession, passing through the avowal, this obliged relationship of oneself to oneself in terms of truth and compelled discourse, it is this that seems to me to be one of the fundamental points of pastoral power and that makes the latter an individualising power. Within the Greek cities and the Roman Empire, power did not need to know individuals one by one, to construct about each one a kind of small core of truth that the avowal had to bring to light and that the pastor's attentive listening had to receive and judge. Nor did feudal power need this individualising economy of power. Even the absolute monarchy and its administrative apparatus did not need it. These powers focused on either the city as a whole, or some groups, or some territories, or categories of individuals. Those were societies of groups and statuses; one was not yet in an individualising society. Well before the great epoch of the development of industrial and bourgeois society, Christianity's religious power shaped the social body in order to constitute individuals as being tied to themselves in the guise of a subjectivity that is asked to become aware of oneself in terms of truth and under the form of the avowal.

I would like to make two remarks about pastoral power. The first one is that it might be worth comparing the pastorate, the pastoral power of Christian societies with what could be the role and the effects of Confucianism in the societies

of the Far-East. One should note the chronological quasi-coincidence of the two and how the role of pastoral power was important for the development of the state during the 16th and 17th century in Europe, a little bit like Confucianism in Japan at the time of the Tokutawa. But we should also tell the difference between pastoral power and Confucianism: the pastorate is essentially religious, Confucianism is not; the pastorate essentially aims at an objective situated in the afterlife and intervenes here on earth only according to this afterlife, while Confucianism essentially plays an earthly role; Confucianism aims at a general stability of the social body through a set of general rules that are forced upon either all individuals or all categories of individuals, while the pastorate establishes individualized relations of obedience between the pastor and his flock; finally, for the techniques it employs (spiritual direction, care of the souls, etc.), the pastorate has individualising effects that Confucianism does not entail. There is a whole world of important studies one could develop on the basis of the fundamental works that have been carried out in Japan by Masao Muruyama.

My second remark is the following: in a paradoxical and quite unexpected way, from the 18th century, capitalist and industrial societies as well as the modern forms of the state accompanying and supporting them found themselves in need of the procedures, the mechanisms, essentially the procedures of individuation that the religious pastorate had put in place. Regardless of the discharge of a certain number of religious institutions and of the mutations we shall briefly call ideological, which without doubt deeply modified the relationship of the Western man to the religious dogmas, there was an implantation, even multiplication of the pastoral techniques within the framework of the apparatus of the state. Little is known and little is told, certainly because the great state forms that developed from the 18th century were justified much more in terms of assured freedom than implanted mechanisms of power, and perhaps also because these small mechanisms seemed lowly and shameful, thereby unworthy of analysis and discussion. As the author of the novel entitled *An ordinary man* [*Un homme ordinaire*] says, the order prefers to ignore the mechanism organising its accomplishment if the mechanism is clearly so sordid that it would destroy any appeal to justice.

It is precisely these small, slowly, and almost sordid mechanisms that we have to extrapolate from the society where they operate. During the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe, one witnessed a whole redeployment, a whole transplantation of what had been the traditional objectives of the pastorate. One often says that the modern state and society ignore the individual. To the contrary, when one takes a closer look, one is struck by all the techniques that were put in place and developed so that the individual does not escape power in

any way, or surveillance, or control, or wisdom, or rectification, or correction. All the great disciplinary machineries: barracks, schools, workshops, and prisons, are the machineries that enable to define the individual, to know what he is, what he does, where he is to be placed, how he is to be inserted among others. In addition, human sciences are knowledges that allow the recognition of what individuals are, who is capable and to do what, what are individuals' predictable behaviours, who are those one has to eliminate. The importance of statistics comes precisely from the fact that it allows the quantitative measurement of the mass effects of individual behaviours. We should also add that, besides their objectives of economic rationalization and political stabilization, the mechanisms of assistance and assurance have individualizing effects: they turn the individual, his existence and behaviour, the life and existence not only of everyone but also of each one into an event that is relevant, even necessary, indispensable for the exercise of power in modern societies. The individual has become an essential concern for power. Paradoxically, power is much more individualizing as it becomes more bureaucratic and state-centred. If it has lost the bulk of its powers in its strictly religious form, the pastorate has found in the state a new support and a principle of transformation.

I would like to conclude by returning to those struggles, those games of power about which I spoke earlier on and of which the struggles around prison and the penal system are just one of the examples and one of the possible cases. Whether they concern madness, mental illness, reason and unreason, the sexual relationships between individuals, the relationships between the sexes, the environment and what we call ecology, or medicine, health, and death, these struggles have a very precise object and stakes, stakes that are utterly different from those of revolutionary struggles and that deserve at least to be considered as much as the latter. What we call, from the 20th century, the Revolution, what the parties and movements we call revolutionary aim at, is essentially what constitutes the economic power...

NOTES

Introduction

- 1 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume I*, trans. Robert Hurley, Pantheon, 1978, 87–8.
- 2 Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France (1982–83)*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell, Palgrave MacMillan, 2010, 3.
- 3 Michel Foucault, “La philosophie analytique de la politique”, in *Dits et Écrits II*, eds. Daniel Defert, François Ewald, and Jacques Lagrange, Gallimard, 2001, 541.
- 4 Ibid., 540.
- 5 Daniele Lorenzini, *Éthique e politique de soi. Foucault, Hadot, Cavell et les techniques de l'ordinaire*, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2015, 23–6.
- 6 Foucault, “La philosophie analytique de la politique”, 540.
- 7 Ibid., 542–45.
- 8 Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power”, in *Essential Works of Foucault, Volume 3: Power*, ed. James Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al., New Press, 2000, 336.

The Analytic Philosophy of Politics

- 1 For years the construction of the new airport of Tokyo on the agricultural site of Narita has been facing the opposition of farmers and the Japanese extreme left.

In one of the clearest accounts of his own analytical approach, Foucault asks: how can philosophy still play its ancient role of counter-power in the face of the forms of domination marking 20th century Western societies?